Religious Education Policy

St Laurence School Academy Trust

Date of last review:	March 2025	**Review period:**	2 years
Date of next review:	March 2027	**Owner:**	Headteacher

St Laurence School

Religious Education Policy

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils.

St Laurence School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Academy therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The school's vision 'people are our treasure' is supported by the decision, made by the Trustees in consultation with the headteacher and following advice from the diocese, to adopt the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus and supplement this with material from the diocese and elsewhere. At GCSE, we follow Eduqas Religious Studies: Route A.

In Religious Education at St Laurence School we aim:

- To enable students to encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influenced the lives of millions of people today.
- To enable students to learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and non-religious worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To develop understanding of religious faith as the search for expression and truth.
- To contribute to the development of students' own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faiths and beliefs.

Approaches to the teaching of RE

Religious Education is delivered to all students who are taught in mixed ability classes. At Key Stage 3, students receive 2 lessons per fortnight in Year 7 and 3 lessons a fortnight for Year 8 and 9. At Key Stage 4 all students are expected to take GCSE Philosophy and Ethics and receive 5 lessons over a fortnight. Where GCSE provision is not possible, we aim to offer the AQA Life Skills qualification which includes units on values and beliefs, where students receive 1 lesson a fortnight. Those who teach about religions and beliefs at St Laurence should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way. Teachers need not only subject-matter competence, but pedagogical skills so that they can interact with students and help students interact with each other in sensitive and respectful ways. A variety of teaching styles are incorporated within RE lessons including group work, class discussion, debates, problem solving or case studies, stories, art, music and media clips.

The wider contribution of RE at St Laurence

'Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.

Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people

in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding. This is a great preparation for our students becoming courageous advocates for social change.

The school's Christian values

RE should contribute to the promotion of the school's distinctively Christian values. Making connections between the values and learning in RE will bring about greater understanding of the values and how they can be put into practice across a range of experiences.

Respect for All & Global Learning

RE makes an important contribution to a school's responsibility to promote British values, respect for all & global learning. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism, discrimination & extremism.

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area in particular local churches.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Headteacher and Trustees)

RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress. This means we are able to live up to the school's dual foundation as a Church of England school.

Legal Requirements

The National Curriculum states that: Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

• promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and

• prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. All state schools must teach religious education. All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online. DfE, The National Curriculum in England: Framework 2013

Breadth of RE: St Laurence School recognises that RE 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para 5). The breadth of RE is referred to in more detail in the curriculum maps, which are available on the school website.

Right of withdrawal:

Parents (or students who are over 18) have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from RE. In addition, teachers have the right not to teach the subject. Our approach to RE,

however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at St Laurence School.