

Religious Education policy

Summary

This policy document is to detail the approach to the religious education and accompanying strategies.



If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees

Policy owner	Trust Board
Policy holder	Director of Education
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Approved by

Consultation Group	Board
Approval Committee	Board
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Version Control

Control No	Change summary	Consultation Group	Effective date
01	Policy aligned with relevant up to date legislation. Additional wording regarding accountability added.	Board	March 2024

Aims

This policy reflects guidance and instruction from [Religious education \(RE\) and collective worship in academies and free schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/religious-education-re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools)

Under the terms of the funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, all academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal. The type of RE specified in the funding agreement depends on whether or not the academy has a religious designation, and for converter academies, on whether the predecessor school was a voluntary-controlled (VC), voluntary-aided (VA) or foundation school.

The RE provision across Eastern Multi Academy Trust must reflect clauses 36, 38, 40 and 42 of the funding agreement that is in place.

The Trust has no designated religious character.

Provision

RE provision must be given to all pupils at each Academy in accordance with the requirements for Agreed Syllabuses in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2 (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998...having regard to the requirements of the QCDA's national framework for Religious Education in schools.

There is, therefore, no requirement for academies within the trust to follow an Agreed Syllabus. However, the curriculum offered must be compliant with the standards required of an Agreed Syllabus as set out in the Education Act 1996 and School Standards and Framework Act 1998, academies within the Trust will follow the Norfolk or Suffolk agreed syllabus.

An agreed syllabus is a religious education syllabus that is designed by a local authority's Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). The syllabus, like the provision for RE in academies, must reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain.

<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/teaching-and-learning/religious-education-agreed-syllabus>

<https://suffolklearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Suffolk-Agreed-Syllabus-Where-do-I-stand-2023-28.pdf>

These require an agreed syllabus to:

- reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practice of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (section 375 (3) Education Act 1996)
- agree no syllabus shall provide for Religious Education to be given to pupils at a school (academy) to which this paragraph applies by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination (but this is not to be taken as prohibiting provision in such a syllabus for the study of such catechisms or formularies

(Paragraph 2(5) Schedule 19 School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

The RE provision within the Academy Trust must therefore:

- reflect the fact that the majority religion in the UK is Christianity and therefore allocate a proportionate amount of time to the study of this faith.
- reflect the fact that there is a range of other religions represented in the UK and allow proportionate time for the study of these; to include Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism.
- take account and allow consideration of the views of Humanism as an alternative to traditional religion.

- foster a non-apologetic and objective approach to the study of all faiths and their tenets.
- be offered to all pupils within the EMAT.

Collective Worship

Academies should follow paragraphs 50 to 88 of the Department for Education's [guidance on collective worship in schools](#). The main points of this are detailed below.

Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents. This applies to academies with and without a religious designation.

Academies without a religious designation must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.

RE Curriculum

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the Self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith, ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different from their own.

There are two aspects of learning in Religious Education which are therefore important considerations when reflecting on the nature of a Religious Education curriculum:

Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion

These two aspects set out broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum. RE is most effective when these two aspects are closely related in the learning experience.

Learning about Religion

The RE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- identify, name, describe, explain and give an account of, in order to build a clear and coherent picture of each religion under consideration.
- explain the meanings or religious language, stories, symbolism and actions.
- explain the similarities and differences between, and within, religions.
- explain a range of responses to ultimate questions of human existence.
- explain the contributions of a range of disciplines, such as philosophy and the social sciences, to the study and understanding of religious belief.
- apply and analyse knowledge and understanding as outlined above to the world around them.

Learning from Religion

The RE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- respond to religious and moral issues in an informed and considered manner.
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in light of personal beliefs and life experience.
- identify and respond to questions of meaning within religion.

- challenge and defend personal views and the views of others in an informed and considered manner.

Teaching

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning experiences.

In order to achieve this, RE teaching should:

- be engaging, relevant and challenging
- encourage creativity, problem solving and risk taking
- develop confident, independent learners
- facilitate the further development of English and numeracy.
- encourage the use of new technologies
- be coherent through the Key Stages and supporting of transition.
- support personal growth and good behaviour
- enable pupils to develop a view of the wider world and their place in it
- facilitate the accurate use of assessment

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The Religious Education curriculum must be compliant with Academy Trust policy on assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress.

Time Allocation

The allocation for RE across the Trust must reflect clauses 37 and 38 of the funding agreement:

37)...not required to teach ... a group of pupils in one or more subjects where, in the opinion of the Principal, it is inappropriate to do so by reason of the ...group's ability or attainment.

38)The Academy Trust must make provision for the teaching of Religious Education... at the Academy.

As such, all pupils within the Trust must be offered a Religious Education curriculum. In Key Stage 4 this offer may take the form of:

- a GCSE course of study
- cross curricular provision of Religious Education through PHSE and other subject areas which allows for the objectives of the curriculum as outlined above to be met.
- extra-curricular provision of Religious Education through visits, visitors and themed days which allow for the objectives of the curriculum as outlined above to be met.

Right to withdraw

The Trust must recognise, support and provide provision for pupils to be withdrawn from Religious Education at parental request or in pursuance of clause 37 of the funding agreement.

Who is responsible for compliance with this policy?

The Academy Council and Principal of each academy is responsible for the compliance of this policy.

Accountability for the implementation of this policy sits with each academy with associated oversight from the Academy Committee.

In addition, a further layer of assurance is provided by the trust executive in the form of the School Improvement Directors and the Director for Education who are responsible for reporting to the trust board and for review of the policy. Safeguarding reviews, academy audits and notes of visit provide a

line of sight from the academies as part of the quality assurance process.

Strategic approval remains the responsibility of the trust Board.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years.