**Religious Education Policy**

Religious Education is taught as part of a cross-curricular approach. Through this, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of all pupils.

Religious Education is a compulsory subject and forms part of the national curriculum. The RE syllabus used at Kisharon School has been developed specifically for this special school which has a Jewish ethos.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from RE. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. The Governing Body will make arrangements with the Headteacher for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

## School Context

Religious representation at Kisharon School is currently (July 2016):

Jewish: 100%

RE is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting from the pupils’ own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and in the wider national and international community. The background of our children is currently Jewish. We are aware that as a Free School this may change.

## Aims of the RE Curriculum

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught relevant to the child’s stage of development and experience. We seek to provide a clearer idea of what religion is about, the importance that it plays in many people’s lives and how that faith is expressed in their daily lives and routines. The overall aims are:

* That all children develop an understanding and tolerance of people who hold a strong faith.
* That children enjoy learning about religion because it is taught in a stimulating and interesting way that arouses their curiosity and develops positive skills and attitudes.
* That children develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.
* To help pupils understand some of the impact of religion throughout the world, its influnces on the lives of individuals and communities and its effect on the cultural diversity of their own and other societies both presently and in the past.
* To support pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development by encouraging self awareness and self respect.
* To help pupils develop their social and moral development by encouraging a positive attitude and valuing the beliefs of others, however different from their own.
* To develop knowledge and understanding of Judaism and other major religion in Britain as a whole and in the local community.

## Equal Opportunities

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil.

The teaching of RE is approached sympathetically to all religious beliefs and teachers must remain mindful of the PREVENT and British Values Policy throughout their planned approach to teaching RE.

(Please see the Equality Policy)

## Health, Safety and Well-Being

Visits to places of worship and other RE related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child’s understanding of the role religion plays in communities. Prior to all visits, staff will carry out a formal risk assessment, if necessary, visiting the venue prior to creating the risk assessment.

Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit, will not undermine a child’s own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith.

Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship, staff must ensure that they do all they can to assure parents and encourage pupil participation.

## Time-Tabling for RE

The children in the Foundation Stage are taught RE through the area of Knowledge and Understanding of The World.

In KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 RE is taught both discreetly and as part of a cross-curricular approach

* 1. through PSHE, history, geography, art or as part of a focus day or period of time.

(Collective Worship is separate to the teaching of RE, though strands of Collective Worship may be used to enhance the RE curriculum. See Collective Worship Policy)

**Teaching and Learning**

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE, such as role play/drama, stories and music.

The Foundation Stage and throughout the school forms the basis of children’s future understanding and therefore should begin with children’s own experiences and feelings, particularly around ‘special times, people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities should be given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Much emphasis should be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community.

## It is likely that a teacher may have their own religious beliefs/faiths/ The teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own.

## Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We use texts with religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, which promotes speaking and listening.

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our society.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through RE and assemblies in school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. We help them to recognize the difference between right and wrong, through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## Planning for RE

RE is planned using the agreed school curriculum. This has two main attainment targets;

* + - Learning about religion

This will include an investigation of the nature of religion, the range of beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. Through this, the pupils should develop an understanding of ethical issues and an understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other. Pupils should also develop an understanding of the nature and characteristics of religions.

* + - Identify, name, describe and give accounts in order to build a coherent picture of other religions if this is developmentally appropriate.
		- Explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.
		- Learning from religion

This focuses on developing pupils’ reflection on and in response to their own and other’s experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils should develop the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they have learned about religion. Pupils should learn to communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments.

## Assessment

As RE involves a process of personal development and emerging/changing views, it is difficult to formally assess all but the ability of children to recall facts and to be able to express a view about religion.

Planning should be part of a child-initiated process, beginning with children’s’ current levels of understanding and following areas that children would wish to explore further. Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved. This should be straightforward and manageable.

## Role of the Co-ordinator

There is a named co-ordinator: Mr M Cohen, responsible for co-ordinating the teaching of RE throughout the school.

Their role is to:

* + - Provide support, advice and resources to members of staff
		- Monitor the teaching or RE and outcomes for all children, revising policies and supporting staff with planning of RE where necessary.
		- Monitor the teaching of RE across the school highlighting the continuity and progression of the areas taught across the school
		- Attend relevant training and support staff through relevant INSET sessions
		- Monitor the use and need of resources throughout the school
		- Liaise with parents

## Monitoring

In order to ensure continuity and progression, it will be necessary to monitor the teaching of RE across the school. This should be done through liaison with staff to be able to observe lessons, monitoring planning and coverage.

The result of any monitoring should be discussed with the Headteacher/SLT and any actions resulting from this should be acted upon within a given time frame.

## Resources

Resources are stored in the RE room and include books, pictures, artefacts, posters. All materials should be handled very sensitively and with respect.

## Programme of Study

Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education is statutory for all children of compulsory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday. Religious Education can form a valuable part of the educational experience of all children and although schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age there are many instances of good practice where it is taught to these pupils.

RE in the Early Years Foundation Stage, should be taught in a developmentally appropriate way. It should be well thought through and it should adhere to the themes, principles and commitments enshrined in the EYFS.

Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation stage should help children to develop empathy, values, and a capacity to make moral judgments and healthy choices. It should also help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Religious Education should also help children to understand cultural diversity, well-being and community cohesion and so contribute to the preparation of children for adult life.

Religious Education during the Foundation Stage should be planned using where possible the three prime areas and the four specific areas of learning and development identified in the EYFS. Expressive arts and design; Religious Education can make a valuable contribution to many of these areas particularly, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, literacy, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

# Personal, social and emotional development

Explicit religious stories and stories which are not explicitly religious may be used to encourage young people to reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They may be used to encourage young people to think about and express their view of the words and actions of characters in the story and decide how they might have felt or responded in a similar situation. Using role-play or guided reflection children might be asked to think about the ways in which people show love, kindness and concern for others and how humans help each other. Stories may be used to stimulate the thought of young children about what is right and wrong and what justification or reasons there are for deciding that something is right or wrong.

# Communication and language

Children may communicate using non-verbal methods like facial expression, eye contact and hand gesture. However, children may also be encouraged to listen and speak so that in RE they may express their view or feelings in response to material of a religious nature, for example, a religious artefact, a story, a piece of music, image or food. Or may be stimulated by giving young children an opportunity to encounter objects from the natural world, for example, a leaf, a flower, the bark of a tree, a pebble, a rainbow or a butterfly. By doing so the vocabulary of young people may be extended so that they become familiar with some basic religious vocabulary. Young children may also become acquainted with some of the language and basic grammar that may be used to express emotion, values, reasons and personal views. They begin to acquire the language used for thinking, for example the words used to express feelings, ideas, values, likes and dislikes.

# Literacy

Children should be encouraged to handle books which contain information about religion. Religious stories may be read to children using puppets, soft toys, or real objects as props. Children should also be permitted to handle sacred books. However, this should be undertaken with care, and with the intention of helping children understand the importance of showing respect towards an object which is deeply respected by others.

Children can be encouraged to suggest what happens next or how a religious story

might end. While reading a story the teacher might pause and encourage a child to ‘read’ the next word.

# Understanding of the World

This area of learning engages children in an investigation of objects and materials and their properties. Children learn about change and pattern, about similarities and differences. They begin to question how and why things work. Children also learn about the world in relationship to time so they find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families. They become aware of and interested in the natural world. They find out about their local area and learn about what they like and dislike about it. Children are also beginning to know about their own culture and about the culture of others in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences that exist in a diverse society.

Children may be encouraged to learn about explicit and very concrete examples of religious life and behaviour in the world, e.g. food associated with religion and religious symbols. Children should be encouraged to notice and be curious about such objects in their immediate neighbourhood and in the larger world. Young children’s natural curiosity and desire to know should be encouraged by providing opportunities to visit places of worship and to learn about festivals, clothes, symbols, special ceremonies, rituals and other forms of religious expression. Young children should be encouraged to ask questions and to learn about religion which is of a direct factual nature, e.g. ‘What is it called?’ ‘Where is it?’ Young children should also be introduced to asking questions and learning answers which require a level of understanding and insight, e.g. ‘Why do you do that?’ ‘What makes it special?’

# Expressive Arts and Design

Children respond in a variety of ways to what they encounter through what they see, hear, smell, taste or touch. As a result of these encounters children may express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings in a wide variety of ways. This means that in RE young children should be introduced to ways in which religious life and belief may be expressed in creative and imaginative ways, for example, though song, music, dance,

play and art. They should be given opportunities to learn and be encouraged to express their experiences and feelings in ways which are imaginative and creative drawing upon a large range of senses like touching, smelling, hearing and tasting. Young children should be encouraged to use their imagination when learning about religion in the world by inventing stories, situations, role-play, dance and designs of their own. To be creative such work should not simply be different but should be genuinely expressive and respectful of the views of others.

Rest of school KS1-Post 16

**Stories -** Stories from the Bible as well as more contemporary story books should be used and available in book corners.

**Artefacts -** Children should be taught to recognise religious artefacts . If developmentally appropriate, opportunities should be taken to encourage pupils to ask questions about the values or beliefs these artefacts may represent or express. They should also be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or beliefs these artefacts may express and begin to make the attempt to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

**Festivals -** Pupils should be taught about the main religious festivals. They should be taught the outline of the festivals and explore what these stories suggest, mean or give expression to. They should learn about some of the traditions, symbols, special food and beliefs associated with these festivals. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to any beliefs or values a festival they have explored may suggest.

**Prayer -** Pupils should be taught about prayer. Pupils should learn about different types of prayer, and how music or song may be used in prayer. Pupils should be encouraged to be curious and to raise questions of their own about prayer and religious traditions. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to their enquiry into prayer.