

Religious Education & Collective Worship Policy



1. Rationale

Samuel Whitbread Academy's Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy aims to provide a caring community in which young people can learn to respect themselves and others, and take responsibility for their own actions.

Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA) believe that Collective Worship is a worthwhile educational activity, which adds value to academy life. Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of students. It provides a focus for the academy community and helps to reflect the tone and ethos of the academy.

2. Policy

Links with other Policies / subjects

Equal Opportunities In keeping with the Trust's aims for equal opportunities, the teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images and RE aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society.

Aims

Fundamental to SWA's values and practice is the principle of enabling students to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of the potential influence of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions on individuals, communities, societies and culture. It also aims to enhance the students' own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:

- Developing awareness of the fundamental questions raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them.
- Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions, and to their own understanding and experience; considering and explaining what might be learned from the religions they study in the light of their own beliefs and experiences.
- Reflecting on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.
- Developing positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.

The aim of Collective Worship is to provide the opportunity for students to:

- Worship God
- Reflect on values that are of a religious nature and on their own beliefs
- Develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Respond to the worship offered

In order to develop satisfactory and meaningful Collective Worship, the following are required:

- Provision for a daily act of collective reflection for all students if they request it.
- Participation of students as fully as possible.
- A rich and varied assembly experience using a wide variety of forms of presentation.
- Opportunities to lead various assemblies.

Assemblies

Themes

We have a sequenced wellbeing curriculum which includes our assembly schedule. This enables us to have a clear and strategic plan for developing themes around our values. All leaders are given the freedom to respond to appropriate stimuli although they are encouraged to maintain the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

Withdrawal from Assembly

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw a child from Collective Worship and arrangements will be made for adequate supervision. Teachers are expected to attend assembly but may exercise their freedom under the 1944 Act to withdraw from those parts of the assembly where worship is taking place.

Religious Education

Every student has a statutory entitlement to Religious Education. In SWA, Religious Education is taught according to the Agreed Syllabus for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton¹, following one of the nationally accredited courses as well as incorporating the academy's own existing practice. This syllabus and the schemes taught at SWA are in line with The Education Act 1996.

The aim of Religious Education (as delivered within the curriculum) is to:

- Enable students to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions represented in Great Britain and their associated beliefs, experiences and practices.
- Enable students to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influence of life experiences, beliefs and values and faith traditions on individuals, communities and culture.

Religious Education is a timetabled subject. It is open to parents to withdraw their children from Religious Education and Collective Worship. This should be done in writing and addressed to the Principal of the academy. This information will be shared with the Governing Body.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by all stakeholders. All staff will support this policy.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out through:

- Lesson observations
- Collecting samples of students' books
- Learning Walks

¹ <http://www.beds-re-resources.org.uk/>

4. Implementation and Review

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and published on the academy website. Copies are also available upon request from the academy office. This policy will be reviewed two yearly or as required.

Links to other policies

Due to the diverse nature of Collective Worship and Religious Education, this policy should be read in conjunction with the SWA's Drugs & Alcohol Policy².

5. Author and Date

Drafted by HoD RS (R. Jackman), approved by BEST Academy Principals – October 2014

Updated by Associate Principal (K. Bridge) – June 2016

Updated by HoD RS (S. Tawede) – November 2018

Updated by HoD RS (S.Tawede) - March 2021

Updated by HoD RS (S.Tawede) - March 2023

Reviewed by HoD RS (S.Tawede) - October 2025

Date ratified by Governors – December 2025

Next review date – November 2027

² <https://www.samuelwhitbread.org.uk/policies/>