St John's C of E First School

Religious Education Policy

'Let us love one another, for love comes from God.' 1 John 4:7

1. Vision and Values

At St John's C of E First School, our approach to Religious Education is rooted in the **Initio Learning Trust** vision: to develop character through a love of learning so that pupils achieve and thrive as responsible citizens with a global perspective.

Our RE curriculum is underpinned by the Trust's core values:

- **Excellence:** Striving for the highest standards of "disciplinary knowledge" and academic rigour in RE.
- **Collaboration:** Learning with and from one another, exploring the diversity of worldviews within our community and beyond.
- **Respect:** Fostering a deep respect for different faiths, feelings, and values, ensuring every pupil feels secure and valued.

2. Statutory Framework

This policy is based on the **Dorset Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025-2030 (The Refresh Document)**. While RE is a statutory requirement for all pupils, it is not part of the National Curriculum but is instead governed by the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education).

3. Curriculum Intent

In line with the Dorset Refresh document, our intent is to provide a "Religion and Worldviews" approach that:

- **Provokes Challenging Questions:** Exploring the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, and ultimate questions of human identity.
- **Develops Three Types of Knowledge:**
    1. **Substantive Knowledge:** Learning about various religious and non-religious traditions.
    2. **Disciplinary Knowledge:** Learning *how* to study religion (e.g., through the lens of a historian, theologian, or philosopher).
    3. **Personal Knowledge:** Allowing pupils to reflect on their own developing worldview in conversation with the curriculum.

4. Implementation: The Initio Learning Principles

We apply the **Initio Fundamentals of Learning** to ensure high-quality RE delivery:

- **Activating Prior Knowledge:** RE lessons begin by connecting new concepts to what pupils already know, ensuring a "rigorous and challenging" progression (Dorset Refresh recommendation).
- **Enquiry-Based Pedagogy:** Following the Dorset syllabus, we use "Enquiry Questions" (e.g., *Is happiness the purpose of life?*) to drive active learning and independent exploration.
- **Inclusive Practice:** We provide a "safe space" for all pupils, ensuring that both religious and non-religious worldviews (such as Humanism) are afforded equal respect and are not oversimplified.
- **High Expectations & Time on Task:** In accordance with the syllabus, we dedicate at least **5% of curriculum time** to RE:
    - **EYFS/KS1:** ~36 hours per year.
    - **KS2/KS3:** ~45 hours per year.

5. Subject Content

The curriculum follows the Dorset systematic study requirements:

- **Christianity:** Taught at every Key Stage as a core component.
- **World Faiths:** Systematic study of **Islam** (Ages 5-14), **Judaism**, and at least one other tradition (**Hinduism, Buddhism, or Sikhism**) as pupils progress.
- **Worldviews:** Inclusion of non-religious perspectives to reflect the "complex and diverse world" of modern Britain.

6. Assessment and Monitoring

- **Baseline Assessments:** Used to identify existing knowledge and address misconceptions.
- **Progression:** We track pupil progress against the "Developing, Secure, and Excelling" descriptors outlined in the Dorset Syllabus.
- **Evidence:** Learning is captured through a blend of "oral, written, and expressive" outcomes, celebrating the "imagination and creativity" of our pupils.

7. The Right of Withdrawal

In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE. We encourage parents to discuss this with the Headteacher to understand the inclusive, "Religion and Worldviews" nature of our curriculum before making a final decision.

8. Inclusion and Diversity

RE at St John's C of E First School is a vehicle for the **Initio Behaviour Curriculum**—specifically promoting "Human Connection" and "Inclusivity." We use RE to combat extremism (Prevent Duty) and to model "respectful relationships" in a global context.

Date of Policy: January 2026

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