

August 2015

# Faith Policy



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# 1 Introduction

Akaal Primary School is a Sikh faith school established to provide an excellent education that is grounded in Sikh values and the key principles of the Sikh faith, also referred to as Sikhi. The term Sikhi has growing preference amongst the Sikh community since the 'ism' denotes a prescribed dogma which is rather contradictory to the lived experience of Sikhi.

The philosophical foundations of Akaal Primary school are based on key Sikh principles, at the heart of which lie equality, integrity and hard work. The tenets of the Sikh faith encourage good citizenship through the principle of *Sarbat da bhalla*, which translates into considering the welfare of humanity as a whole. Staff and Trustees (governors) at Akaal Primary School will ensure that every child achieves educational excellence in addition to holistic personal development. The ethos of equality for all at Akaal Primary School also extends to the community by providing opportunities for parents to be involved in both the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school.

The term 'Akaal' is a Gurmukhi term meaning the Eternal or Timeless Being (Godhead). Our vision at Akaal Primary School is to embed Sikh principles of equality and tolerance amongst our pupils. The concept of the unity of God according to Sikh teachings is one which sees the world and every material aspect of creation as existing within the Divine. Equality amongst all human beings is a central tenet of the egalitarian spirit of the Sikh faith.

The major tenets of the Sikh faith encourage working towards four main goals:

1. **Economic independence through honest earning (*Kirat Karni*)**, hence minimising dependency on the state or others. Everyone should exercise their God-given skills, abilities and talents for the benefit and improvement of the individual and society at large, and practice truthfulness and honesty in all dealings.
2. **Individual and collective welfare (*Naam Japna*)** or creating mental peace and self-management to reduce impulsive anti-social behaviour and to realise corporate responsibility or well-being for all. The singing, quiet meditation and the listening to sacred scriptures are of critical importance in Sikhi.
3. **Learning to share (*Vand Chhakana*)** all forms of wealth such as money, skills, knowledge and other resources with all to create equality in society. Such a life is an inspiration and a support to the entire community. This concept acknowledges the fact that everything one receives is by the Hukam (God's Will).
4. **Service beyond self (*Sewa*)** as selfless service to humanity equals service to God in the Sikh faith. Giving and serving others should form part of the normal school environment. Teachers, other staff, parents and volunteers can serve as exemplary role models.

This policy articulates the school's commitment to its Sikh faith values and to the religious and moral development of our pupils. Its implementation will ensure that, in striving to achieve academic excellence, this school will also provide holistic educational and spiritual development so that each pupil may develop into well-rounded, confident citizens.

Sikh teachings emphasize that the essence of the Divine is immanent (*that is, dwelling within, inherent, all pervading*) in the hearts of all human beings. This, in turn, means that all human beings are equal. Thus, the Sikh faith rejects any form of discrimination.

Hence Akaal Primary School places emphasis upon reaching one's potential by making the most of each and every day through hard work, moral awareness and ethical conduct. *Bhakti* (loving devotion to the Divine) is central to Sikh teachings and thus further highlights the importance of recognizing the Divine light in all beings. Sikh teachings allow for accepted scientific views to be incorporated alongside religious philosophy and metaphysics. At Akaal Primary School, our pupils will be encouraged to use their skills of critical analysis when learning about topics such as the origin of life, evolution and the 'Big Bang' theory. Sikh teachings are accommodating also to the *ex nihilo* theory which stems from the belief that God is indeed the First Cause and the Unmoved Mover.

At Akaal Primary School, our ethos makes it essential to treat others in the same manner in which we would like to be treated. According to Sikh religious philosophy, the Divine spark is within all human beings, so it does not make sense to regard oneself as being better than others. We are all the same, according to Sikh teachings, regardless of background, creed, gender or caste. The Sikh faith promotes equality in the most practical of all areas of life. The Sikh Scriptural authority, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, is the only world scripture that contains the teachings from contributors of more than one faith. In this respect, the Sikh faith is positive towards claims of truth in all faiths. It is truly inclusive in acknowledging that all religious paths lead to the same goal. Hence many Sikhs are involved in inter-faith matters around the globe.

The all-inclusive policy of Akaal Primary School is based on the egalitarian principles of the Sikh faith which is clearly portrayed through the fact that the Sikh place of worship, the *Gurdwara*, is open to all. The distribution of *karah prasad* (a sweetmeal) and *langar* (the free kitchen) in the *Gurdwara* highlights the fact that all visitors to the *Gurdwara* are equally welcome. Our vision reflects the Sikh principles of liberty, fraternity and equality, which ensure no discrimination takes place in respect of gender, faith (or having none) or ethnicity.

Sikhi is neither an exclusive religion nor an evangelical religion. It is based on the principles of inclusion and equality for all. Just as Sikhs attending Christian schools have respected the guiding principles and boundaries set within those schools, so those in Akaal Primary School who are not from a Sikh background are requested to show mutual respect.

We believe that faith is not simply the subject matter of particular lessons, but forms the foundation of all that we do and all that takes place in a school environment. Each member of the school community has a responsibility to live in a way that upholds Sikh values and beliefs so that the faith permeates all aspects of our school life.

The primary aim of a value-based education grounded in the Sikh faith is to educate pupils as responsible and compassionate global citizens with the skills and knowledge to question and understand the world around them and to respect the beliefs, cultures and opinions of others.

## **2 Scope of the policy**

This policy will have an impact on all pupils, staff, parents and the local Gurdwaras as we strive to create a community in which Sikh values ensure a culture of good relationships, sensitive to the needs of each person and to the common good.

## **3 Aims of the policy**

The policy will serve as a guideline to ensure that our school is one in which pupils are nurtured to become good citizens in a diverse and multicultural Britain. Pupils will work together to show dedication to both their academic excellence as well as personal well-being through a holistic education based around the Sikh way of life.

Guided by Sikh principles, our pupils will develop the attributes, skills and habits necessary to make the most of their lives. To achieve this, they will:

- take responsibility for themselves by striving to achieve personal excellence, have the utmost regard for truth, honesty and personal integrity and be accountable for their actions
- care for others by respecting their needs, rights and views, and understanding that we are all equal members of society and each have responsibilities towards it
- reach for more by appreciating the wonder of our existence and the opportunities it has given us, aspiring to use all their talents for the betterment of themselves and others
- care for the environment, both for the general good of humanity and also out of respect to the immanence of God in all things natural.

## **4 Values and vision**

In creating a school based on the values of the Sikh faith, we will:

- promote an awareness that the values of the Sikh faith apply to and belong to the whole school community
- support and encourage parents in exercising their responsibility for their child's spiritual growth and Sikh faith formation, in partnership with the school and the local Gurdwaras
- develop a sense of the presence of God in the lives of all our pupils and in the environment
- provide a framework for pupils to become catalysts for social transformation in line with Sikh beliefs, values and ethics
- build a strong community based on the Sikh values of equality, honour, social responsibility and excellence through integrity
- strengthen bonds between home, community and school
- instil the concept and meaning of *Sewa* (selfless service).

## **5 Relationship to the admissions policy**

In line with its admissions policy and the Sikh values of the school, this school is open and accessible to all without discrimination. Children of all faiths (or of no faith) are welcome to apply for a place at

Akaal Primary School. If the school is oversubscribed, up to 50% of places are reserved for Sikhs, with the remaining places (at least 50%) reserved for applicants of other faiths or no faith.

The lives of our pupils will be enriched by the experience of education at a Sikh faith school, as will the experience of Sikh children by having peers from other faiths or none. We also expect each child to attend, and benefit from the Akaal Primary School's religious education (RE) programme, although we will respect and allow parental requests to withdraw their children from RE and collective worship, as the law entitles them to do.

## **6 Roles and responsibilities**

It is essential that all members of the school community commit to the implementation and practice of this Sikh Faith Policy.

### **The Akaal Academy Trust Derby (the Trust) should:**

- promote and to support the Sikh values and the ethos of the school
- approve the policy, ensure its implementation, encourage and monitor its progress.

### **The Singh Sabha Gurdwara should:**

- be the religious body that provides a spiritual link with the Akaal Primary School Trust
- help in the implementation of the faith policy in Akaal Primary School by providing expert advice and interpretations of religious scriptures
- help in the inspections of schools under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

### **The school's senior leaders should:**

- put procedures in place to ensure the effective implementation of this policy
- monitor and report progress to the Trust and its committees.

### **All school staff should:**

- ensure they understand the values underpinning Sikh education
- engage fully in the implementation and cultivation of the values of the Sikh faith in the life of the school.

### **Parents and carers should:**

- accept responsibility as the primary religious educators of their children
- fully support this policy and its implementation.

### **Pupils should:**

- participate in the school's full curriculum
- undertake to live by the values of the Sikh faith to the best of their ability and endeavour to be involved in Sikh celebrations
- take part in events that stem from the values of the Sikh faith (or *Sikhi*) and the Sikh way of life.

## **7 Religious education**

There is a separate religious education policy, with associated schemes of work, which sets out what the school wishes to achieve within the subject and its relationship to the Sikh faith. In

particular, it sets out the fundamental place of the Sikh faith within the religious education programme in each year group, with the study of other faiths being introduced by Year 2, and further covered by Year 4 and again by Year 6.

Further information on the RE programme is contained in the ***Religious Education policy***.

## **8 Collective worship**

Every day, pupils will participate in an assembly, which will include an act of collective worship. The act of worship will have a Sikh character and will encourage children to learn the basic creed of the Sikh faith – the Mool Mantar, which reads as follows:

*Ik Onkar, Satnam, Karta Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair,  
Akaal Murat, Ajuni, Saibhang, Gurbursad.*

*There is one and only one God, The Name is Truth, The Creator, Without Fear, Without Hate,  
Immortal, Beyond birth and deaths, The Enlightener, Known by the Guru's Grace.*

Children will also sing Sikh hymns, such as 'Tu Thakar', which will enable them to understand Sikh concepts about the Divine.

Further information on collective worship is contained in the ***Collective Worship policy***.

## **9 Sikh beliefs and practices**

### **Not the only way – respect for all religions**

Sikhi does not claim to be the only way to God. It accepts all religions to be divine in origin, and therefore routes to God. It is up to the individual to decide which path to follow.

This belief was shown in practice when the 5<sup>th</sup> Master compiled the first-ever inter-faith Holy Scripture – *Guru Granth Sahib*, with hymns from saints of other faiths coming from very diverse backgrounds. It was also demonstrated by the 9<sup>th</sup> Guru, who gave his life to protect the Hindu religion from persecution. He is the only prophet in the world to die for the beliefs of another group whose practices he had rejected. He died for the basic right of people to practice or believe whatever they want, so long as it does not hurt anyone else.

Sikhs are enjoined to recognise, accept and promote religious, cultural and racial diversity. It is a factor which enhances the quality of life and helps in obtaining a better understanding of God and its creation.

### **A brief introduction to the Sikh Faith (Sikhi)**

A person following the Sikh way of life calls himself/herself a Sikh. While there is clear guidance for the Sikh way of life, generally, a Sikh practices self-discipline within those guidelines. A Sikh who follows the Sikh discipline and has taken the Sikh Initiation is called an *Amritdhari Sikh* or a *Khalsa*. Sikh literally means a disciple or learner or student.

At just over 500 years old, the Sikh faith is the youngest of the six major world religions. Its current following places it as the fifth largest faith. Guru Nanak, born 1469, was the founder of Sikh faith and way of life, known as Sikh *Panth* (Order). He founded the *Panth* outside the caste system, to combat the religious, social and administrative malpractices of the time; indeed there was hardly anything in contemporary politics, society or religion that he found acceptable. Through selection of worthy successors (nine after Guru Nanak) the Sikh Institutions were developed and consolidated over more than 200 years. The line of human Sikh Gurus is as follows:

1. Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539 CE)
2. Guru Angad (1504 – 1552 CE)
3. Guru Amar Das (1479 – 1574 CE)
4. Guru Ram Das (1534 – 1581 CE)
5. Guru Arjan (1563 – 1606 CE)
6. Guru Hargobind (1595 – 1644 CE)
7. Guru Har Rai (1630 – 1661 CE)
8. Guru Har Kishan (1656 – 1664 CE)
9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621 – 1675 CE)
10. Guru Gobind Singh (1666 – 1708 CE)

The **Sikh *Panth*** was formalised in the 1699 *Vaisakhi* (Spring Festival) by the 10<sup>th</sup> Master, Guru Gobind Singh, as the ***Khalsa Panth***. Having completed Guru Nanak's mission, Guru Gobind Singh, returned the Guruship from human succession back to the Guru's word, ***Gurbani***, embodied in ***Guru Granth Sahib*** (the Sikh Holy Scriptures), compiled by the 5<sup>th</sup> Master. The collective body of the ***Khalsa*** (Guru's *Panth*) as the Sikh Holy Congregation (***Sangat***) in the presence of ***Guru Granth Sahib*** was to represent the physical form of the Guru; the twin track ideology of ***Guru Granth*** and ***Guru Panth***.

The term 'Guru' is an important one within the Sikh faith and is derived from two Sanskrit terms: 'Gu' meaning dark, and 'Ru' meaning light. The Guru is one who dispels darkness (ignorance) and takes one into the light (enlightenment) and is thus one who takes on the role of a teacher. The Sikh way of life known as Sikhi has evolved through history as a distinct religion, identity, way of life and culture.

Two symbols in particular are commonly used by Sikhs.

- 1 The *Khanda* is very often used as the emblem or insignia of the Sikh faith:



- 2 The *Ik-Onkar* is the sacred word of the Sikhs, and is translated as 'God is One', thus indicating the monotheistic nature of Sikhi. The *Ik-Onkar* symbol appears as below:





## Beliefs of Sikhi

- There is one God, Waheguru, the Wondrous Enlightener or Giver of Knowledge who is the only Creator, Giver and Sustainer. Guru Nanak's unique description of God is contained in the *Mool Mantar*. God in Sikh thought is strictly beyond gender; there are no images of God in Sikhi. God, in the Guru Granth Sahib, is personal, yet also metaphysical. Therefore, the concepts of God as both *Nirguna/Nirankar* (totally transcendent) and *Sarguna* (manifest through creation as immanent) are very important. Loving devotion (*bhakti*) is offered to Almighty God by Sikhs. There is no concept of *avatars* (incarnations) in Sikh thought.
- Sikhs believe in equality of all humankind, including equality between men and women.
- There is respect for the belief of others and their right to practice their faith or to have none. Creation in all its Diversity should be respected and we should learn to live in harmony – “*Unity in Diversity*”.
- Sikhs are instructed to meditate on the One Creator, earn by their own effort and share their earnings with others.
- A Sikh is family orientated. Sikhs are expected to live a married life: that is, to live as a responsible family person. A man or woman is incomplete individually, but together they make a unit. Working together towards personal spiritual progress is the ideal way to live.
- Sikhs place an emphasis on a healthy life style through mental, spiritual and physical development.
- Sikhs respect God's creation and serve fellow human beings and God's creation with humility. That is true service to God.
- Sikhs strive to harness and control what are called the five human failings that lead him/her astray: lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego.
- Sikhs cultivate the Godly qualities of being without fear and without animosity: that is, to fear none and to frighten none.

## Respect to Guru Granth Sahib

The Guru Granth Sahib is the Eternal Guru in the form of the revealed Word or *Shabad* and hence is most revered Holy Scriptures of Sikhs. The Guru Granth Sahib is central to all Gurdwaras (place of Sikh worship) and is placed on a throne and shown the highest respect. The Word or *Gurbani* contained in the Guru Granth Sahib is taken as the order of the Guru and God, and is sung in a blissful manner.

## The Sikh ceremonies

All the Sikh ceremonies (for example, those relating to birth, baptism, marriage and death) are simple, inexpensive and have a religious tone. They are held in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib and include *Kirtan*, the singing of hymns appropriate for the occasion, saying of *Ardas* (formal prayer) and the distribution of *Karah Parshad* (sacred food) to the congregation.

## The naming ceremony

The Sikh naming or christening ceremony is well established and takes place in a Gurdwara in the presence of relatives and friends. Prayers are offered asking for a special blessing of good health, long life and the Sikh way of life, *Gursikhi*, for the child. The name of the child is chosen by selecting the first letter of a random hymn, used at the occasion, from *Guru Granth Sahib*. A male child is traditionally given the name Singh (meaning *lion*), and a female child Kaur (*princess*), as a second or surname. In recent times, Singh and Kaur are also used as middle names by Sikhs with their parents' last name as a surname or family name.

## Amrit initiation and the 5Ks

Initiation to the Khalsa is one of the rites of passage for Sikhs. All Sikhs are supposed to partake *Amrit* at some stage of life and follow a code of discipline, *Rehat Maryada*. The *Rehat Maryada* defines a Sikh as any person who:

- believes in the existence of One eternal God
- accepts as his or her spiritual guide the Guru Granth Sahib and the ten human Gurus, and follows their teachings
- is preparing for baptism (*Amrit Sanchar*)
- does not owe allegiance to any other religion.

In addition to observing the internal religious practice of remembering God, a practicing Sikh who has been through the Sikh initiation or baptism (an *Amritdhari Sikh*) observes a physical code of conduct and possesses five articles of faith that begin with the letter K and are also called the five Ks or five *Kakaar*.

These are:

- *Kesh* – unshorn hair, symbolising a saintly disposition, completeness of human form, and harmony between the body and soul; a turban (an inseparable and integral part of *Kesh*) for the men and a turban and/or scarf for the women covers the hair on the head
- *Kangha* – a wooden comb to keep hair tidy, symbolising cleanliness
- *Kara* – the steel bracelet which is usually worn on the right wrist, and is a constant reminder that a Sikh's attachment and allegiance is to the Infinite Creator; symbolizing the eternal nature of God; it also represents the Sikh's unity with God and with the *khalsa*.
- *Kacchehra* – these are shorts which distinguished Sikhs from other Indians at the time who wore long, loose garments known as *dhotis*, allowing agile mobility of the body and symbolising chastity.
- *Kirpan* – a small sword – its length is not prescribed (generally approximately 15 cm) – representing the Sikh martial disposition and reminding a Sikh of his/her duty to defend

the weak, human honour and dignity. It is licenced by the Guru for self-defence as the last resort and Sikhs cannot use it indiscriminately.

The Rehat Maryada defines a 'true' Sikh as one who has taken initiation. Importantly, however, not all Sikhs are initiated and therefore, not all Sikhs will wear the 5Ks.

An *Amritdhari* Sikh follows a certain personal code of discipline and spends time in prayer in the early morning and in the evening, along with remembering God at all times.

### **Transgressions (serious breaches of Sikh Discipline) for a Sikh**

1. Cutting of hair
2. Adultery
3. Use of tobacco
4. Eating *Kutha* (the meat of an animal killed according to religious rituals – for example Islamic halal meat). The majority of Sikhs interpret *Kutha* as any type of killing for eating and hence do not consume meat, eggs or fish, which is in line with the vegetarianism practiced in community kitchen (*langar*) – see below.

### **Status of Sikh women**

Guru Nanak challenged the idea of inferiority and evil associated with women and freed all women from slavery and taboos of the society. Hymns emancipating women are contained in Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak and his successors gave a woman a status equal to that of a man. They regarded woman as man's companion in every walk of life. The Gurus thought this equality worked to their mutual benefits. Women, in Sikhi, are allowed to perform all types of religious duties that men do.

### **Langar**

The Sikh langar, or free kitchen, was started by the 1<sup>st</sup> Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak. At the langar, only vegetarian food is served, and this means that all people, regardless of their dietary restrictions, can eat as equals. In addition to the ideals of equality, the tradition of langar embodies the Sikh ethics of sharing, service, community, inclusiveness and Oneness of all humankind.

### **The marriage ceremony (*Anand Karaj*)**

*Anand Karaj* is a religious ceremony for the union of two Sikh partners to start a family life. It is performed before Guru Granth Sahib by reading specific hymns while the couple takes four rounds around the Holy Scripture. This is followed by more wedding hymns and a formal prayer (*Ardas*) at the end.

### **Dress**

Although Sikh men and women are not restricted to any formal dress code, a modest dressing style is encouraged. Undue exposure of the body, or dresses that are revealing, are discouraged. Covering the head is considered respectful. However, the *purdah* and *burka* system among women is forbidden.

## **Traditional demonstration of respect**

Covering the head and removing the shoes in certain circumstances, for example in holy places or when saying prayer, are considered respectful. As a demonstration of humility, both open hands are held together (palms touching) in front of the body, in prayer or sometime when meeting another Sikh.

## **Greetings**

Sikhs, upon meeting, greet with folded hands or a handshake and utter, 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh', which means '*Khalsa belongs to Almighty and victory is upon Almighty*'. Some Sikhs also say 'Sat Shri Akaal', which means '*True is the Timeless Being*'.

## **Parent/children relationships**

Sikh children are expected to show respect for their parents and grandparents, and grandparents provide their children and grandchildren with care, support, experience and wisdom. In a balanced family and with proper understanding, three or more generations may be bridged in this manner. The elderly not only receive respect, but can also play a useful role in the development of the family, right up to a ripe old age. Very often grandparents and grandchildren will develop very close and mutually beneficial bonds.

## **Care for the elderly**

The elders are given due respect. A married couple, along with their broad-based family and civic responsibilities, are expected to care for their own children and traditionally the husband's parents, as their primary responsibility. If the wife's parents do not have their own support then they, too, expect and are often provided with the required care and support.

## **Sikh culture based on Sikh beliefs and traditions**

The Sikh culture contains the following important elements:

- an emphasis on family values and cohesion
- equality between genders, but complementary roles in mutual cooperation are accepted – the role decision is an individual family choice
- acceptance of a loose family hierarchy
- a recognition of the value of relationships and an awareness of the mutual support they provide
- acceptance of one's own family responsibilities within the relationships
- respect and care for the elders
- religious discipline and spiritual development.

## **The Sikh Flag - *Nishan Sahib***

The Sikh flag is an integral part of a Gurdwara and is seen near the entrance, standing firmly on the platform. Sikhs show great respect to their flag as it is, indeed, the symbol of the freedom of the *Khalsa*. The Sikh flag is a yellow or blue-coloured triangular-shaped cloth, usually reinforced in the middle with Sikh insignia. It is usually mounted on a long steel pole (which is also covered with yellow cloth).



### **Karma philosophy, emancipation and salvation and no belief in Heaven or Hell**

According to Sikhi, human birth is the golden chance to realise God. The soul has passed through many cycles of births and deaths in different forms through the evolutionary process and now is the time to get rid of the cycle of reincarnation or transmigration by returning to the Almighty God through good deeds (*karma*) and by following the path shown by the Guru. Although Ultimate Release from transmigration is in accordance with the Hukam, the Will of God, each individual must exercise individual effort (also referred to as *free will*), in order to experience Waheguru.

What we shall sow we shall reap is a guiding principle in Sikhi. Only the individual can seek emancipation through God's grace and by reciting the Word or Gurbani, seeing God in every creation and doing good deeds with humility and by shunning the ego or self-centeredness. Self-centredness or *Haumai* is a veil between individual and God which obstructs the individual's path towards salvation.

The ultimate salvation in Sikhi is to merge into the Almighty God as rivers merge in the sea and remove separateness which causes rebirth and suffering. There is no other concept of heaven in Sikhi. One is in heaven when in tune with Almighty God and in hell when absorbed in the worldly affairs without remembering God. Sikhs are expected to do worldly chores but to remain tuned with God from within to unite with God.

Sikhi preaches that all happens according the Will of God and one should accept His Will and pray and submit to the His Order.

### **The concept of *Sahaj* – mystical/religious experience**

*Sahaj* is central and pivotal in Guru Nanak's mystical thought. The mystical and religious experience of Guru Nanak is paramount when considering the uniqueness of his philosophy. It is a state of mind that is in tune with the realisation of the immanence of Divine Reality. The state of *Sahaj* or mystical poise can be attained while living in this world, and this is the real salvation and

living in heaven. This is the experience that is indescribable. Sahaj is the highest spiritual state attainable in Sikhi.

### **Priesthood**

Sikhi has no priesthood and no so-called orthodoxy or laity. Thus, any practicing Sikh, male or female, who can read the Guru Granth Sahib and knows other rites, can lead a Sikh service. However, to run a Gurdwara and to perform daily readings of the scriptures, to lead mass prayers, perform rites for marriages, deaths and other ceremonies, a full-time job as a priest or *Granthi* became a necessity. Granthies have been trained at approved training centres and have practising experience from religious centres. Performing *Kirtan* (singing hymns in musical measures) is integral to duties of a priest.

# APPENDIX ONE

## Glossary of Sikh terms

Akal Takhat	" <i>Throne of the Timeless</i> ": historically came into being as seat of the temporal authority of Guru Hargobind, and later developed into the central place from where communal decisions are announced. It is located on the premises of the Darbar Sahib.
Akhand path	" <i>Unbroken reading</i> ": an uninterrupted recitation of the entire text of the Guru Granth by a group of readers.
Amritdhari	" <i>The bearer of the nectar</i> ": Sikhs who have undergone the ceremony of <i>Amrit Sanchar</i> , also known as <i>khande di pahul</i> , and follow the Rehat Maryada in its entirety
Amrit Sanchar	" <i>Baptism ceremony</i> " is the term used to refer to the Sikh baptism ceremony. It was established in 1699 by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.
Ardas	" <i>Petition</i> ": the prayer at the closing of congregational worship.
Darbar Sahib	" <i>Honourable court</i> ": originally built in the 1580s in Amritsar, the site now serves as the centre of Sikh sacred geography.
Giani	" <i>A learned man</i> ": a scholar well versed in Sikh scriptures
Granthi	" <i>Attendant of the Guru Granth</i> ": the official in charge of the Gurdwara. He leads congregational worship, and performs ceremonies such as weddings and the naming of new-born children.
Gurdwara	" <i>Guru's door</i> ": Sikh place of worship and a gateway to the Guru. The key area of a Gurdwara is a spacious prayer hall housing the Guru Granth, where people sit and listen to scriptural recitation and singing. In addition, the Gurdwara always has a <i>langar</i> and a Nishan Sahib.
Gurmukhi	" <i>The script used by the Gurus</i> ": the Punjabi script of the Guru Granth Sahib.
Gurpurb	" <i>The festival of the Guru</i> ": celebration of the birth or death anniversary of the Gurus.
Hukamnama	" <i>Decree</i> ": letter of the Gurus or the orderly hymn of Guru Granth Sahib; a decree announced at the Akal Takhat, considered to be binding on the entire community.
Japji	" <i>Hymn</i> ": a composition of Guru Nanak, which is recited by Sikhs every morning. This is the most commonly known Sikh prayer.
Kaur	" <i>Princess</i> ": the title used by female Sikhs following Amrit.

Khalsa	" <i>Pure, Waheguru's own</i> ": synonymous with Sikh, Gursikh, the term implies a pure status for the Sikh community and reiterates its belief in the authority of the Waheguru, the revelatory content of the Guru Granth, and the creation of the Khalsa Raj.
Khande di pahul	" <i>The nectar made with the double edged sword</i> ": the ceremony instituted by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of the declaration of the Khalsa. Those who undergo this ceremony constitute an elect group called the Amritdharis. They are expected to dedicate themselves to Waheguru and work toward the establishment of the Khalsa Raj.
Langar	" <i>Community kitchen</i> ": attached to every gurdwara, food is served to all, regardless of age, creed, gender, or social distinction.
Nishan Sahib	" <i>The symbol of the master</i> ": a Sikh triangular flag made of cotton or silk cloth, with a tassel at its end. The flag is hoisted on a tall flagpole, outside most Gurdwaras.
Panj Pyare	" <i>The beloved five</i> ": representation of the Sikh community. This designation recalls the five men who offered their lives for the sake of the community at Guru Gobind Singh's call.
Sangat	" <i>Congregation</i> ": congregational worship constitutes the heart of Sikh devotion.
Seva	" <i>Service</i> ": selfless service is a key value in Sikh beliefs.
Singh	" <i>Lion</i> ": the title used by male Sikhs following Amrit.
Waheguru	" <i>Wonderful Sovereign</i> ": the most commonly used epithet for God in the Sikh tradition.



## APPENDIX TWO

### Calendar of Sikh Events

At Akaal Primary School, we respect all faiths around the world. Sikhs celebrate and remember many festivals and we will celebrate some of them at school. We will remember and mention in assemblies the birthdays of each of the Sikh Gurus along with other significant Sikh events and occasions. The main festivals are as follows.

<b><u>January</u></b> (date subject to change)	<b><u>Guru Gobind Singh Ji Prakash Utsav</u></b>	This is the birth of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind
<b><u>14<sup>th</sup> April</u></b>	<b><u>Vaisakhi/Baisakhi</u></b>	This is the Spring Festival celebrating the formation of the Khalsa in 1699. The 10th Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh laid down the foundation of the Khalsa that is the order of the pure ones.
<b><u>16<sup>th</sup> June</u></b>	<b><u>Guru Arjan Dev Ji Shaheedi</u></b>	On this day the school remembers the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji and the sacrifice Guru Ji made to Sikhi. This day is significant as Guru Arjan Dev Ji attained martyrdom due to the fact he did not want to give up his faith and convert religion.
<b><u>October / November</u></b> (date subject to change, but coincides with Diwali)	<b><u>Bandi Chor Divas</u></b>	Bandi Chor Divas is translated into ' <i>Day of Liberation</i> '. This occasion marks the release of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji along with 52 other princes from prison.
<b><u>November</u></b> (date subject to change)	<b><u>Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Prakash Utsav</u></b>	This day is the birth of the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji.