



Akaal  
Primary School

# Religious Education Policy



**Approved by Staff: November 2020**

**Date for Review: November 2023**

## 1. Background

All state-funded schools in England are required to teach religious education (RE) to all its pupils. In the case of Akaal Primary School, as a Free School, this requirement is built into the school's Funding Agreement. Akaal Primary School is designated as having a Sikh religious character and the Funding Agreement also states that the school will teach RE according to the tenets of the Sikh faith.

Akaal Primary School is a Sikh faith school established to provide a holistic education based on the key principles of Sikhi. Sikhi is world faith based on the individual as part of a whole – the Sikh community, the wider community and the global community. Faith is not just a matter of belief and practice but also a way to live and actively engage with individuals in society.

All pupils will follow the scheme of work for RE developed for the relevant year group under this policy. As in other schools, parents are able to withdraw their child from religious education lessons under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In practice, we expect few if any to do so, as the policy sets out a broad and balanced framework for RE, developed from the tenets of the Sikh faith, which is applicable to pupils from all faiths and none.

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.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

It is essential that all members of the school community commit themselves to the implementation and practice of this policy.

**The Akaal Academy Trust Derby should:**

- promote and 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.

**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.

### **3. Aims**

The main aim of Akaal Primary School 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. As a Sikh faith school, each member of the school community will have a responsibility to live and work in a way that upholds Sikh values and beliefs so that faith permeates all aspects of our school life.

Religious education contributes creatively to children's education by provoking challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, people's religious beliefs, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and learn from religions in local, national and global contexts, so that they can explore, consider and discover a range of different answers to these questions.

Pupils learn to weigh up the value of other people's view, of ideas from different sources. They learn to develop and express their own insights in response, and then respectfully to agree or disagree. Teaching should therefore equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of

religions, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. This will promote critical learning and thinking skills in the pupils of Akaal Primary School.

RE should develop in pupils an appetite for dialogue about the issues that arise in RE so that they can participate positively in discussion about them. This will enable them to leave education as mature young people who will be able to find a place in modern British society with its diversity of religions, cultures and worldviews. Pupils should gain and use the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of authority and wisdom, and other evidence. As they mature, they will learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

#### **4. The importance of RE**

RE is an important school subject because it:

- develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of principal world religions and other religious traditions
- provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human
- gives pupils an awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression
- gives pupils insights into the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures
- provides opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development
- encourages pupils to learn about and learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questioning how faith affects their lives
- challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses
- encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging
- enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community
- has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning
- enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own
- promotes acceptance and enables pupils to combat prejudice and discrimination.

#### **5. Areas of learning**

The RE curriculum at Akaal Primary School will focus on three areas of learning. The curriculum for RE will ensure that all pupils:

##### **1: Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals, whilst also appreciating the similarities between different religions
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered, by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews

- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

**2: Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or worldviews.

**3: Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- explore and find out about key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

The term 'religions and world views' is used in this policy to refer to the Sikh faith, Christianity and other principal religions represented in Britain, together with smaller religious communities and non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. The term is used inclusively, and its precise meaning depends on the context in which it occurs, for example in terms of believing, belonging or behaving.

## **6. Approaches to learning**

The scheme of work for RE will be developed to include, in an age-appropriate way:

- enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression
- the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation in the context of religion and beliefs and the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion
- communication of knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary
- identification and understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues
- knowledge and understanding of how individual religions relate to each other
- exploring the nature and characteristics of religions and their impact on the lives of believers
- evaluating critically the claims made by religions and belief systems
- reflection on and responses to their own and others' personal experiences in the light of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion
- development and communication pupils' own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

## **7. Progression**

The RE curriculum will build in clear and visible progression. This will be done by creating a 'spiral curriculum', with each year group being given overarching questions with religion-specific questions following this. Children will also be reminded of previous learning, and will be expected to make links with and apply this to new learning. The main drivers of progression are related to the three areas of learning:

- extending and deepening knowledge (for example through increasing use of subject-specific vocabulary and concepts)
- asking questions and expressing views (for example with increasing depth of reasoning, and use of relevant material)
- deeper analysis of ideas and concepts and their impact on people's lives.

As pupils become older and more mature, the following features should become apparent:

- the study of specific religions, worldviews, concepts and ideas should become deeper and more comprehensive
- vocabulary should become wider, more abstract and used more competently
- enquiries, concepts, content and source materials should become more challenging and complex
- concepts should be more integrated into a coherent narrative in relation to the matters studied
- pupils should ask more challenging and perceptive questions
- pupils' responses should become more complex and more closely identified with the material and sources they are studying.

## **8. Assessment**

Assessment in RE will be termly and will be considered alongside Sikhi. Each year group will have key assessment criteria covering a range of statements and children will be assessed as 'ARE', 'Above' or 'Below' following an overall judgement.

## **9. Delivery and organisation**

The policy itself does not lay down precise methodology for teaching RE as that is the place of the scheme of work. Models of delivery will include:

- a timetabled weekly slot for discrete RE
- occasional 'off-timetable' focus days for festivals
- linking weekly assemblies to previous learning.

Sikhi will feature in the schemes of work in all year groups, with a 'Greater Depth' element being covered in Sikhi lessons. All year groups will also cover Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism.

All pupils should experience some or all of the following opportunities during their time at Akaal Primary School:

- engaging with others' faiths by listening and responding to visitors to the school
- encountering religion through visits to places of worship, taking into account symbols, feelings and their importance in the local and global context
- discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- considering a range of human experiences and feelings
- reflecting quietly on their own, and others', insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning
- expressing and communicating their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama, and ICT.

## 10. Monitoring and review

The Trust will review this policy and, with the support of senior leaders, the school's provision of religious education regularly. Training is encouraged and available for those who wish to take a lead role in religious education.

## 11. Linked policies

Faith  
 Collective worship  
 Teaching and learning  
 SMSC  
 Assessment

## 12. Useful Links

This policy has drawn upon ideas from a range of sources, specifically including those listed below:

*The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education Pan-Berkshire 2012-17*, with the permission of the Chair of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for RE) in Slough.

<http://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Berkshire-RE-Syllabus.pdf>

The National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCRFRE), produced by the RE Council in 2013 and *Religious education in the new curriculum*,

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/religious-education-in-the-new-curriculum/>

*A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England*, from The Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013,

[http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/RE\\_Review\\_Summary%20&%20Curriculum%20Framework.pdf](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/RE_Review_Summary%20&%20Curriculum%20Framework.pdf)

We are committed to equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, disability or religion. We will monitor the impact of this.

## Appendix One – Concepts

RE contains many different concepts within a range of belief systems. The schemes of work will build in, as appropriate, concepts and ideas. These will be drawn from general religious concepts that are shared among a range of religions, concepts related to shared human existence more generally, and specific concepts from each of the six major world religions. These are set out in the table below.

General religious concepts				
Asceticism	God	Miracle	Pilgrimage	Ritual
Afterlife	Holy	Monotheism	Prayer	Sacred
Belief	Initiation	Mysticism	Prophecy	Scripture
Ceremony	Interpretation	Myth	Redemption	Symbolism
Deity	Martyrdom	Orthodoxy	Revelation	Worship
Faith				

Shared human experience				
Authority	Devotion	Identity	Purpose	Symbol
Belief	Evil	Justice	Relationship	Thankfulness
Belonging	Fairness	Kindness	Repentance	Trust
Celebration	Family	Life	Respect	Truth
Change	Forgiveness	Love	Reward	Uniqueness
Commitment	Freedom	Loyalty	Sacrifice	Value
Community	Good	Peace	Service	Welcoming
Creation	Growth	Prejudice	Suffering	Wisdom
Death	Hope			

Concepts linked with specific religions					
Sikhi:	Christianity:	Islam:	Buddhism:	Hinduism:	Judaism:
Ardas	Church	Akhirah	Anatta	Ahimsa	Brit/Covenant
Gurmat	Eternal life	Allah	Anicca	Atman	Unity of God
Gurmukh	God as Father	Din	Buddhahood	Avatar	Halakhah
Guru	Grace	Ibadah	Dhamma	Bhakti	Israel/Zion
Haumai	Heaven	Imam	Dukkha	Brahman	Kashrut
Hukam	Holy Spirit	Iman	Kamma	Dharma	Mitzvah
Ik Onkar	Identity	Islam	Metta	Karma	Shabbat
Jivan Mukh	Incarnation	Jihad	Nirvana	Maya	Shalom
Khalsa	Jesus the Christ	Risalah	Sangha	Moksha	Teshuvah
Langar	Love	Shari'ah	Tanha	Murti	Torah
Panth	Mission	Shirk		Nirvana	Tzedakah
Rahit	Mother of God	Sunnah		Samsara	
Sadhsangat	Resurrection	Tawhid		Shakti	
Sat Nam	Salvation	Ummah		Smriti	
Sewa	Sin			Sruti	
Sikh	Trinity			Varana	
Vand Chhakna	Word of God			Yoga	
Mool Mantra	Unity				
Gur Mantra					
Shabad					