



Archbishop Tenison's

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Academic excellence for each person in a Christian community

School Policy 16 – Religious Education

The Governors' Committee responsible for this is the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee.

The person in the school who prepares the text of this policy for the Headteacher and Governors is the Head of Religious Studies. It should be read in conjunction with other, related school policies, such as ***Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Discipline, Equality Opportunities in Education, Learning Support.***

This policy was reviewed in November 2025 and is reviewed annually.

Introduction

Archbishop Tenison's is a voluntary-aided secondary school founded on Christian principles, reflecting the Church of England's traditional and contemporary interest in the provision of high standards of education for the nation's pupils in the maintained sector.

Religious Studies "should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)." And "educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together" 2019 *Church of England Statement of Entitlement*

Responsibilities

- The Governors of the school, and the Foundation Governors, in particular, set the policy for Religious Education, both as a part of the school curriculum and as part of the experience of pupils and students within a church school. They review the effectiveness of this policy through the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is successfully implemented, through the appointment of well qualified staff and the allocation of proper curriculum time, as well as the other support, challenge and encouragement which any department needs.
- The Deputy Headteacher also plays an important role in this respect.
- The Senior Leader who line manages the Head of Religious Studies has the responsibility of linking with the Department and supporting the Head of Department with all the different aspects of that role in the context of this school.
- The Head of Religious Studies fulfils all the general responsibilities of a Head of Department, but also has an important role to play in establishing, developing and promoting the Christian ethos of the school as a church school, ensuring that the teaching of Religious Studies and Theology both deepens the pupils' understanding of the Christian religion and broadens their understanding of other different religious traditions and worldviews which they will encounter in their lives in modern Britain as well as in an increasingly accessible world.

- The Religious Studies Department has a responsibility to build upon the religious understanding pupils bring to the school, most from committed Christian family backgrounds. Whatever their personal faith is, pupils are helped to develop and extend their "religious literacy" by dealing with concepts and skills applied in religious contexts and also to encounter and discuss important moral and philosophical issues.

Principles

Religious Studies helps those who are Christians to understand their own faith both in relation to their own personal development and the claims of the worldwide faith to which they belong. Those of other faiths, both in the school and in the Sixth Form, should feel that they and their beliefs and traditions are treated with respect and real understanding; the opportunity to study Christianity will then be a worthwhile experience which shares insights about the nature of God and other deeply religious ideas. The aim is for all pupils, regardless of their commitment, to feel that Religious Studies can help them to understand their own faith and the faith of others, and to consider how faith may enable a person to live in a 21st Century world. This reflects the two attainment targets in Religious Studies of "Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion and Human Experience".

At Tenison's, the study of Religious Studies in Year 7 and 8 includes a detailed examination of six major world faiths, and in Year 9 a consideration of how faith applies to range of ethical and philosophical issues, and also a study of Humanism and the choice to not have faith. Theology in Years 8 and 9 begins from a Biblical perspective and seeks to answer key theological questions such as 'In whose image are we made' and 'Why did Jesus have to die'.

1. The study of religion involves the pupil in an enterprise which both provokes interest and is related to the varied roles, responsibilities, careers, crises, and communities that pupils will encounter in adult life. Religious Studies must seek, above all, to educate pupils in religious matters and should not seek or need to evangelise.
2. Christian parents who send their children to this school have a right to expect that the distinctive beliefs and practices of their traditions are taught and explained in their Religious Studies and Theology lessons. The study of Theology in the curriculum allows for a properly framed academic enquiry into our own Christian beliefs.
3. The RS Syllabus followed at Archbishop Tenison's does not follow the Croydon Agreed Syllabus, but does include elements of the Agreed Syllabus 2024 in the study of six major world faiths, plus Humanism, and key ethical and philosophical issues. It has been designed around yearly core units on the broad traditions and beliefs of Christianity as a world-wide religion, and aims to help pupils to become confident and Biblical literate learners.
4. At Key Stage 4 Religious Studies is taken by all pupils – almost all take a full GCSE course. As from 2016 the course covers Christian beliefs and practices (50%), the study of Mark's Gospel (25%) and beliefs and practices in Islam (25%) - Islam was chosen as a second major world religion as it is Croydon's second largest religion and is reflected in our school population.

5. Religious Studies can be studied at AS and A2 level in the Sixth Form by those who want to follow serious academic study. All Sixth Form students participate in a programme of Core Religious Education, coordinated by the school Lay Chaplain and a Deputy Head. This involves a programme of outside speakers and in school workshops that examine key religious themes. Such activities have recently included a day on 'God and The Big Bang'.
6. Religious Studies seeks not merely to present factual information about religion but also encourages pupils to understand all that a religion can mean to believers. In this way pupils are equipped to realise the full implications of their own religious views. This is a difficult aim to achieve and Religious Studies cannot achieve this by itself; rather it is part of an on-going process involving collective worship, the home, experience of the teaching and practice of faith communities and, for some pupils, extra-curricular Christian activities, which involve other staff in the school.
7. Religious Studies is one part of a wide educational experience that this school provides. As such it contributes to the cross-fertilisation of ideas which ensures a balanced education, both formally and informally in every day discussions with pupils and staff.
8. The school seeks to devise a syllabus which fulfils the aims that are outlined here. The content is carefully chosen to produce a programme of learning which is balanced, challenging, informative, interesting and fully supportive of the Christian and educational aims of the school. Resources and styles of learning are used which take into consideration the interests and abilities of all pupils. The intention is to ensure pupils remember their Religious Studies as a worthwhile and important part of their development and education.

Review, Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Governors receive reports on Religious Education alongside those from other departments. One Governor acts as a Departmental Link Governor.
- The Headteacher and other Senior Leaders monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of Religious Studies through Review Days, work scrutiny, visits to lessons, discussions of development plans and exam results, for example.
- The Head of Religious Studies works closely with the Quality of Teaching and Assessment Team in school to carry out all the different elements of departmental self-review, including lesson observations and review of pupils' work.
- Every 5 years the school is subject to a SIAMS Inspection as a Church School and this includes a particular focus on the teaching of Religious Education.

Key Links

Church of England Statement of Entitlement -

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf>

Croydon Agreed Syllabus 2024 –

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-06/Croydon-SACRE-Full-Document.pdf>

Reviewed November 2025

Next review November 2026