

Dounby Community School

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION POLICY

Religious and Moral Education is part of the core curriculum and is based on National Guidelines for Religious and Moral Education 5-14.

In Dounby all teachers are therefore involved in the teaching of Religious and Moral Education.

The following school policy statement is based on the above guidelines.

Aims

Religious and Moral Education should encourage pupils over their school life to

- recognise religion as an important expression of human experience.
- reflect on and respond to the values, beliefs and practices of religious traditions within our community and beyond.
- be aware of the practical consequences of religious commitment.
- evaluate and in turn, confirm, deepen or come to their own understanding of the meaning, value and purpose of life.

Rationale

Religious and Moral Education

- is concerned with the spiritual growth of the pupil, with those feelings and beliefs which arise out of experience and which influence the search for meaning, value and purpose in life.
- encourage pupils to become aware of a wide range of religious interpretations of personal experience and of their importance to believers.

- fosters attitudes of open enquiry and awareness of prejudice.
- helps pupils to appreciate that religion offers a distinctive interpretation of life. It also encourages them to think honestly for themselves about religious beliefs and practices, and the implications of moral issues within religions.
- makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum in helping pupils towards a consistent set of beliefs, values, attitudes and practices. Other aspects of the school ethos and curriculum also aim to help pupils in their search for answers to some of life's deepest questions.

The right to withdraw

Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, parents/guardians may withdraw their children from Religious and Moral Education. Although this right remains, Religious and Moral Education with its aims of helping pupils to understand the nature of religion and encouraging them to seek their own understanding of the religious dimensions of life, should make it less necessary for parents/guardians to exercise their right of withdrawal.

Time allocation

The time allocation for Religious and Moral Education, Personal and Social Education and Health is 15%.

This time allocation is in line with National Guidelines and includes time for school and class assemblies.

Attitudes and Values

Through Religious and Moral Education, pupils will be assisted to develop positive attitudes and to consider, generally accepted values. This will be done by encouraging:

- integrity through a readiness to represent religions accurately.
- honesty about feelings, attitudes, values and beliefs.
- curiosity through a willingness to explore enthusiastically their own and other people's beliefs and traditions, and to ask questions about life and about religion.
- respect for other people's ideas, values, customs and beliefs.
- a positive self image through pupils valuing themselves as unique human beings and recognising their contribution to others.
- compassion through expressing and valuing love, concern and forgiveness.

Religious and Moral Education and Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities means ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of belief, race, culture, class, gender and disability, are provided with an education, which allows them to develop their own potential.

Such an education recognises the uniqueness of the individual through ensuring that all pupils are

- equally valued, respected and cared for.
- have access to the full range of appropriate activities and experiences

Religious and Moral Education plays a vital role in supporting and promoting these principles through:

- encouraging pupils to explore aspects of belief, practice and life experiences.

- discussing issues of basic human rights, relevant to equality and inequality.
- fostering positive values such as respect, love, tolerance, understanding, empathy, fairness, freedom, duty, justice and forgiveness.
- promoting a positive self image.
- identifying and combating stereotyping, racism and all forms of discrimination wherever they occur.
- contributing to the formation of a harmonious society based upon mutual respect and concern.

School Chaplain and Religious Observance.

Religious Observance

- contributes to the whole school ethos and provides opportunities for the whole school to come together.
- should be a valid educational experience often involving the whole school and the wider community.
- should not simply be seen as the activity of a believing community but should be extended to include collective expressions of, for example, joy, sadness, reflection on shared values and concerns.
- should reflect the different beliefs of pupils, teachers and parents.

Provision for Religious Observance

The School Chaplain leads assemblies for Religious Observance within the school every alternate week. One for Classes 1 - 3 and the other for Classes 4 - 7.

A whole school assembly takes place at the beginning of each school session and at the beginning of each new year.

End of term Services - Harvest, Christmas, Easter and End of Session are open to parents and the wider community. Pupils play a key role at these Services through the choir, orchestra and participating in the theme of the Service.