

Crossley Heath
Grammar School

RELIGIOUS STUDIES POLICY



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Crossley Heath Grammar School Religious Studies Policy

CONTENTS

1. The Purpose of RS
 - 1.1 Aims and objectives
 - 1.2 Curriculum
 - 1.3 Withdrawal
 - 1.4 Assessment
 - 1.5 Inclusion and respect
 - 1.6 Parental engagement
 - 1.7 Review

1.0 The Purpose of Religious Studies (RS)

At CHS, we are committed to creating an environment where students are tolerant, respectful, and understanding of a variety of faiths, cultures, and backgrounds. As a school with no religious affiliation, we recognise and celebrate all world faiths and provide our students with a range of experiences as part of the importance of exposure to religious diversity, and provide our students with a range of experiences to support their exposure to religious diversity, non-religious world views and social, spiritual, moral, and cultural development. We aim for a culture of kindness and respect and encourage our students to confidently articulate their knowledge and demonstrate their understanding of world faiths and Fundamental British Values through their outward behaviour and attitudes.”, their understanding of world faiths and Fundamental British Values. This is all done within the context of our school values, our RS curriculum and its alignment to the **Calderdale Agreed Syllabus** and our wider Personal Development curriculum.

Our curriculum is broad and balanced ensuring that all six major world faiths are studied at Key Stage Three. Through their studies, students will learn core beliefs of believers and how these impact on attitudes, lifestyles, and worship. Students will explore philosophical and ethical issues and a range of responses from not just a faith perspective, but from their own. Through reflection on their own beliefs and values in the light of their learning, it is our aim that students will develop their own sense of morality and self and grow in respect for themselves and others.

Key Stage Four students study a core element of religious studies and engage in a thematic approach, where they skilfully apply the knowledge they've gained from the six major world religions studied in Key Stage 3 to explore deeper and more complex religious themes and concepts. In Key Stage Four, students also have further enhanced opportunities to study wider areas on tolerance and respect as part of drop-down days, where they look at both world religions and Fundamental British Values. This is often a responsive wrap around curriculum, which is personalised to emerging contextual needs of the year group, as well as the 'core knowledge' already identified.

Key Stage Five students study core RS on a rotation in tutor time, engaging in lessons on tolerance, respect and use their prior learning on world religions to develop viewpoints and discuss how different faiths consider wider world issues as part of their 'Living in the Wider World' theme.

GCSE students are enrolled in the Edexcel Religious Studies course, which involves a comprehensive exploration of Christian and Islam beliefs and teachings and practices, ethics, and philosophical questions, equipping them with a well-rounded understanding of the role of religion in today's world.

A-Level students are enrolled in the OCR Philosophy and Ethics course, which offers students the opportunity to explore some of the deepest questions about human existence, morality, and belief. It encourages critical thinking, logical reasoning, and ethical reflection. The course is divided into key components:

1. Philosophy of Religion – Students examine big questions such as the existence of God, the nature of religious experience, the problem of evil, and the challenges posed by science and atheism.
2. Religion and Ethics – This unit explores ethical theories (like Natural Law, Kantian Ethics, Utilitarianism), applied ethics (e.g., euthanasia, business ethics, sexual ethics), and debates about free will, conscience, and moral decision-making.
3. Developments in Religious Thought – Focused on a particular religion (typically Christianity), this part looks at how religious ideas evolve, including issues like gender, pluralism, and secularism.

Religious Studies at Crossley Heath Grammar School also plays a key role in delivering Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural education to our students. Lessons create space for individual reflection, with a focus on wondering, who and why? Lessons identify the reality of injustice and suffering and explore how life for different groups can be affected positively by religious and humanistic values.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

- To enable students to develop an understanding of the beliefs, practices, and values of different religious and non-religious worldviews, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Humanism, in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus.
- To encourage students to explore and reflect upon their own beliefs, values, and experiences and how these relate to the wider worldviews studied.
- To promote respect for diversity and an appreciation of the role of religion and belief systems in society and culture.
- To equip students with critical thinking skills, enabling them to evaluate and analyse religious and ethical issues.
- To enable students to articulate their knowledge of the different world faiths and non-religious world views, demonstrating their understanding and tolerance for people with different faiths, beliefs, and cultural traditions.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for the society and community in which they live, so they can make a positive contribution to the local community and society as a whole.
- To enable students to develop their knowledge on the Fundamental British Values and have a broad knowledge and respect for public institutions and services in modern Britain.

- To prepare students for life in modern Britain and actively promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- To ensure that extremist or discriminatory opinions and behaviours have no place in any aspect of our school life.
- To ensure respect for others, paying specific attention to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act (2010)
- To ensure all students understand that they have the freedom to hold particular faiths and beliefs and that this is protected by law- including the acceptance that some people have no faith which should also be tolerated.

1.2 Curriculum

Our RS curriculum is designed in accordance with the **Calderdale Agreed Syllabus** for Religious Studies. It includes a balanced representation of religious and non-religious worldviews, including but not limited to:

- The beliefs, practices, and rituals of major world religions.
- Ethical and moral issues related to religion, including social justice, environmental responsibility, and human rights.
- The impact of religion and belief systems on society, culture, and history.
- Comparative studies to encourage critical thinking and respect for different viewpoints.

1.3 Withdrawal from Religious Studies

Whilst RS lessons at CHS are fully inclusive, parents can withdraw their children from RS for all or part of their lessons; pupils can only withdraw themselves once they are 18 years old. Schools have to teach RS as part of the curriculum.

Parents/carers wishing to exercise the right of withdrawal should note the following procedures which are designed to respect the rights of parents/carers whilst also ensuring the process is robust and fulfils all safeguarding responsibilities.

Parents/carers should write to the Headteacher to communicate formally that they wish to exercise the right to withdraw their child/children. Whilst there is no obligation to give a reason for requesting the withdrawal, it would help Crossley Heath Grammar School to understand the reasons and be assured that the school has communicated effectively about the teaching of RS.

In responding to requests for withdrawal from RS lessons, Crossley Heath Grammar School will:

- Contact the parents/carers and invite them to a meeting with a member of the Leadership Team and, where possible, the Department leader of RS. This meeting will allow parents/carers to discuss their concerns and clarify whether the child/children should be withdrawn from RS lessons in their entirety or specific aspects of RS provision. It will also discuss the practical implications of withdrawal and the arrangements to be put in place to accommodate the request.
- Offer parents/carers an opportunity to look at RS Schemes of Learning and resources to develop their knowledge of what happens in RS lessons. Should parents/carers continue to request withdrawal, then Crossley Heath Grammar School will accommodate this request and will fulfil its duty to supervise the student during this time. Parents/carers should note that there is no obligation or resources to provide additional teaching as the school is not resourced to provide alternative provision beyond supervision. Students who are withdrawn from RS will remain on site and will be supervised either in the library or at the back of another humanities lesson. They will be expected to complete appropriate work which has been set by parents/carers.

1.4 Assessment

Assessment in RS is designed to gauge students' understanding, critical thinking skills, and their ability to engage with the subject matter.

- Assessment is also used to help students to embed knowledge and use it fluently.
- It enables teachers to responsively and provide appropriate feedback to students.
- Assessment also helps leaders to understand how well the curriculum is being taught and how securely it is being learned by students.

1.5 Inclusion and Respect

We recognise the diverse nature of our student body and will take all necessary steps to ensure that RS lessons are inclusive and respectful of different beliefs and backgrounds. We encourage open and respectful dialogue and we have a zero-tolerance approach to any discrimination or bullying related to religious or non-religious beliefs.

1.6 Parental Engagement

We welcome parents' input and engagement in their child's Religious Education. We will provide opportunities for parents to discuss the RS curriculum and share their perspectives.

Parents can play an active role in supporting their child's religious studies education at home at home by accessing the resources on our website and using the QR codes provided at the beginning of each unit.

1.7 Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school's leadership team and the RS department to ensure it remains in alignment with the Calderdale Agreed Syllabus and the evolving needs of our school community. Amendments may be made as necessary.