

Fairview Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Date Ratified: September 2016

Last Review Date: April 2026

Review: August 2027

Introduction

Fairview Primary School is proud to welcome and teach children who originate from different nationalities, cultures and faith groups. As a school we aim to celebrate this diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils, including new arrivals and pupils with English as an alternative language.

We believe Religious Education (RE), provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster awareness of these differences within our school and the wider world. We will aim to deliver a balanced and unbiased approach to our pupils. RE is a subject that celebrates diversity and we, as a school with a strong Christian ethos, believe that it plays a crucial role in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual growth of each and every one of our pupils.

Given our current climate in the twenty first century, there is a great need to:

- Promote the spiritual aspect of a pupil's holistic development: helping them to consider questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human;
- Understand the role of religious belief and practice in the twenty first century;
- Help our pupils understand, respect and relate to others, particularly those whose denomination, faith and beliefs are different from their own, thus addressing sectarianism, racism and prejudice;
- Understand the importance of the Christian values system that have shaped our society for centuries;
- Give pupils a grounding in the Christian faith;
- Give pupils the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and values;
- Counter unhelpful influences such as materialism, secularism, hedonism and instant access to temptation in this high-tech, media-driven age;

The United Nations Convention of the rights of the child, states that all children everywhere are born with the following rights:

Article 2 - All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 14 - You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs.

Article 30 - You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.

When developing our policy for delivering the RE Curriculum we have kept these rights at the centre of our teaching ensuring that children are aware of the need to respect everyone. We ensure children have the opportunity to learn about their own beliefs, as well as developing an understanding and respect for what other people believe.

Core Values

We believe our school will nurture all individuals in their journey to achieve their full and unique potential. We are committed to developing a welcoming, safe and stimulating learning environment that will enable our pupils to become responsible citizens and lifelong learners. We are aware that our pupils bring different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way they learn.

As a school community, we have developed five Core Values which reflect who we are as a school:

INCLUSIVE- Everyone is a valued and welcomed member of our whole school community

NURTURE- Our Fairview family cares for, supports and encourages one another

KINDNESS- We treat others as we would like to be treated

RESPECT- We show respect to ourselves, others and our environment

EMPOWER- We enable each other to achieve our full potential

Vision Statement

Our vision is to inspire creativity, support growth and achieve excellence through a wealth of opportunities in every student's journey.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to be a nurturing, kind and respectful community where each person is valued and empowered to be the best they can be.

Why Teach Religious Education?

"Religious Education is defined by the Department of Education and the four main Christian Churches in Northern Ireland. It also has a role to play within the context of the revised curriculum through presenting young people with chances to develop their personal understanding and enhance their spiritual and ethical awareness."

NI Curriculum—Religious Education

In Fairview Primary School, we seek to create an atmosphere of creativity and consensus in which pupils of Christian families will find support for their faith, while those who have no personal commitment to Christianity will benefit from their study without feeling pressurized into conformity. Religious faith will be presented in a challenging manner and according to the statutory requirement, in a non-denominational approach, allowing the children to consider the evidence both freely and critically.

To ensure the relevance of RE, teaching will draw frequently on the pupils' own experiences and where possible, will be illustrated by incidents from the lives of famous Christians. Using a variety of teaching methods, our aim is to instil into pupils a sense of curiosity and interest in the world around us.

Participation in Religious Education and Collective Worship

Article 21 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 requires all publicly funded schools in Northern Ireland, except nursery schools, to provide Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. The law provides an unqualified right for parents to withdraw their children wholly or partially from RE and/or collective worship without the need to explain or justify their reasons.

- If parents wish to withdraw their children from RE and/or collective worship, in full or in part, they should complete the withdrawal form (proforma attached in Appendix C) and mark for the attention of the School Principal (either by email or hard copy to school office). This request will be granted immediately and confirmed within five school days. Following this, parents will not be asked to explain their views on their decision. However, if parents require a meeting with the Principal this can be arranged via the school office.
- A confidential record of children who are withdrawn (fully or partially) will be kept in the Principal's Office. Parents do not need to renew the withdrawal annually. Arrangements will remain in place until the parent withdraws the request in writing.
- Children who will not be participating in RE and/or collective worship will be provided with a variety of holistic activities ranging from mindfulness, reading and emotional well-being tasks. These tasks will be meaningful and age-appropriate but will not be an individual bespoke solution for each child.
- Pupils who have been withdrawn from collective worship will be accompanied by a classroom assistant to the nearest empty classroom to complete set tasks as noted previously. Pupils withdrawn from RE lessons will complete tasks in a nearby breakout space supervised by a member of staff as available.
- Parents should be assured that these arrangements noted above are established so that withdrawal can be facilitated simply and confidentially.
- Information on the right of withdrawal will be shared with parents annually through the school newsletter with a link to this policy, including topics to be covered across each year group in RE and a collective worship overview detailing guest speakers.

Children

At Fairview, we aim to:

- Encourage children to reflect on their own experiences and to formulate their own ideas, beliefs and values.
- Help children to develop moral and spiritual values, respect and tolerance, which enables them to appreciate and understand religions, cultures and ways of life different from their own.
- Have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society.
- Appreciate that symbols and artefacts from different religions can express human feeling and ideas.
- Foster understanding about the importance of tolerance in everyday life.
- Foster positive attitudes towards celebration of differences.
- Develop an enjoyment of learning through practical activities, discussion, exploration and discovery.
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary.
- Use children's experiences of religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Chinese New Year etc. to develop their religious thinking.

School Staff

At Fairview, we aim to:

- Promote a confident, positive attitude towards the learning of RE by making it an enjoyable experience.
- Promote a desire to understand the 'world' of other people and an active interest in how they express this 'world'.
- Extend children's sense of values and promote their spiritual growth and development.
- Acknowledge that beliefs and ideas are constantly changing.
- Promote interaction, allowing pupils to relate themselves to others, reflect and respond.
- Ensure that RE teaching throughout the school shows progression and is based on the present RE core syllabus for Primary Education (EA).
- Develop links with the wider community through visits from a variety of religious speakers and organisations. Lessons will be delivered through Assemblies and set class visits throughout the entirety of the school.
- Ensure that parents and carers are informed that they have the right to withdraw their pupils from religious education, according to the Education Act. Parent/carers who choose to withdraw their children from Religious Education lessons are required to state this in writing to the principal (Appendix C). In the event that a parent may wish for a pupil to be excluded from RE, provision will be made for that pupil to be offered alternative work to carry out.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should aim to:

- Be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching of RE.
- Praise their children for their understanding of other beliefs and cultures.
- Communicate and work with the school whenever further support is needed to develop their children's RE skills and understanding.
- Make contact with the school principal should any queries arise about an area of the RE curriculum or circumstances around withdrawal of your child.
- All parents will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school.

RE Coordinator

The RE Coordinator will:

- Be responsible for coordinating RE throughout the school in accordance with the Programme of Study and have available resources to facilitate learning. The statutory requirements for the timetabling of RE will be met both through formal teaching and through a cross-curricular approach.
- Provide professional leadership and management for a subject in order to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and high standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.
- They will achieve this by affecting the following key areas:
 - a) Strategic direction and development.
 - b) Leading and managing staff.
 - c) Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources.
- Compile a list of topics covered in each year group within RE (see Appendix A – to be under review following publication of new RE curriculum in September 2026) and a list of class and assembly visitors that are accessible to parents (see Appendix B).

Governors

At Fairview, we aim to:

- Be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching RE and review the RE Policy every three years or upon major curriculum review.

Special Needs

At Fairview:

- We recognise that our children have differing abilities, so we use a differentiated approach, combined with a range of teaching methods and resources to ensure that effective learning takes place over the entire range of ability. Differentiation will be both by task and by outcomes.

RE in the Wider Community

- We aim to invite representatives from the local churches and charities to come into school and talk to the children in a sensitive manner. This can involve assembly talks and class lessons.
- Assemblies will take place twice a week for each year group. This will include praise songs, prayer, short Bible stories and input from staff, pupils and visitors.
- Once a month, the principal will lead assembly to share school news, focus on the Core Values and celebrate achievements such as Pupil of the Month. This will be a non-religious collective school gathering.
- At Fairview Primary School we endeavour to develop our understanding of Children's Rights and their needs from both a local and global perspective. Charities play an important role in this development. We have long standing partnerships with Hope 365 and Stand by Me, but other charities change annually.

Cross Curricular Links

- Opportunities are used to draw RE experiences out of a range of activities in other subjects to enable children to apply and use RE in real life and academic contexts.
 - a) **English:** RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English by promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
 - b) **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** We use ICT where appropriate to find, select and analyse information, through using a range of ICT resources and the internet. ICT can also be used to evaluate and improve presentation of their work.

- c) **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU):** Through RE we teach children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. RE promotes the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. It also encourages children to value their own beliefs and feelings while developing an understanding and respect for people who present different viewpoints.

Resources

- Resources are bought and distributed as required. The storing of the school's RE resources is organised by the coordinator.
- Each class will have access to a variety of pictures, artwork, internet access (via iPads and laptops) and music to enable children to relate, reflect and respond.
- Resources within individual classes should be accessible to all pupils who should be encouraged to be responsible for their use.

Assessment of Religious Education

- We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through marking diagnostically. Assessment is based upon the child's ability in understanding various ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour, as well as the ability of a child to reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of others and respond to them in a thoughtful and constructive way.
- There are opportunities for Assessment for Learning (AFL) practices within class and group sessions, including the sharing of and reference being made to Learning Objective and Success Criteria and self and peer assessments of understanding, outcomes and progress.
- Marking of children's work against the shared Learning Objectives, where informative and positive comments are made.

Accountability

The Board of Governors have the overall responsibility for the delivery of the RE Programme of Study. The staff will review their year group scheme of work for RE as and when is required.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal, Senior Leadership Team and RE Coordinator, will monitor the effectiveness of this policy every three years or as curriculum development requires. When requested, the Principal and RE Coordinator will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy.

Appendix A: RE Content

Outlined below are the topics for each year group. As a staff, we will endeavour to focus our teaching on as many aspects of these areas as is possible throughout the academic year.

Foundation Stage

<u>Primary 1</u>	<u>Primary 2</u>
Term 1 • What makes us special and unique? • Traditional stories and parables • Happy Birthday Jesus! Term 2 • Spring and individual growth • Miracles • Easter Term 3 • Creation – God’s world • How we look after the environment	Term 1 • God Made Mankind • The First Christmas Term 2 • Jesus heals the sick • Jesus is rejected Term 3 • Jesus Talks About Forgiveness

Key Stage 1

<u>Primary 3</u>	<u>Primary 4</u>
Term 1 • God’s Creation Spoiled • Caring For Creation • The Birth of Jesus Term 2 • Jesus heals the sick • Easter Term 3 • Comparing life now to that in Bible times	Term 1 • Creation • Noah • Christmas Term 2 • Daniel • Miracles • Easter Term 3 • Parables

Key Stage 2

<u>Primary 5</u> Term 1 • Creation • Joseph • Noah • Paul and Silas • Christmas Term 2 • Parables • St. Patrick • Easter Term 3 • Amy Carmichael • Hinduism • Diwali	<u>Primary 6</u> Term 1 • Taking care of yourself • Moses • Christmas then and now Term 2 • True Humility • A Humble life, a lowly death Term 3 • Parables • Miracles • Books of the Bible
<u>Primary 7</u> Term 1 • The Bible • Joseph • Jesus and his parables • Festivals Term 2 • The Church • Easter • Moral Values Term 3 • Transitions • The Natural World • Value – Christian Missions	

Appendix B – List of Class and Collective Worship Visitors (see attached timetable)

Below is a list of speakers and organisations that will be visiting the school throughout the year. Some speakers will be within classes and others will be within collective worship. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that this information is up to date, it is subject to change.

Classroom Visitors

Primary 1:

- Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ireland (CEF)
- Kilbride Presbyterian Church

Primary 2:

- CEF
- Kilbride Presbyterian Church

Primary 3:

- CEF
- Ballyclare Presbyterian Church

Primary 4:

- CEF
- Ballyclare Presbyterian Church

Primary 5:

- CEF
- Kilbride Presbyterian Church

Primary 6:

- Scripture Union Northern Ireland (SUNI)
- Stand By Me

Primary 7:

- Greater Ballyclare Youth for Christ

Assembly Visitors

- Ballyclare Church of Ireland
- Stand By Me
- Hope 365
- Stephen Blair (Shining Lights)
- CEF
- Crown Jesus Ministries
- Ballyclare Presbyterian Church
- Kilbride Presbyterian Church
- Ballylinney Presbyterian Church
- River of Life Church
- Greater Ballyclare Youth for Christ
- Ballyclare Free Presbyterian Church
- The Way Church, NI

Appendix C

FAO Fairview Primary School Principal

Standard Withdrawal from R.E. and/or Assembly Proforma

Section 1: Pupil Details

Name of pupil: _____ Year group/class: _____

Section 2: Parent/Carer Details

Name of parent/carers submitting this request: _____

Relationship to pupil: _____

Section 3: Request for Withdrawal (*Please tick all that apply*)

I request that my child be withdrawn from:

Religious Education

- ☐ All RE
- ☐ Specific RE topics/units (please specify):

Collective Worship

- ☐ All collective worship
- ☐ Specific elements of collective worship (please specify e.g. prayers, hymns, assembly, particular speakers):

Section 4: Start Date

I request that withdrawal arrangements begin:

☐ Immediately

or

From (date): ____ / ____ / ____

Section 5: Confirmation

By signing below, I confirm that I am exercising my statutory right to withdraw my child from Religious Education and/or collective worship (delete as appropriate) understand that:

- I do not need to give reasons for this request;
- The school must implement this request promptly and without negotiation;
- This request will remain in place until I submit a written request to end or amend it.

Signature of parent/carers: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Section 6: School Use Only (to be completed by the school)

Date received: ____ / ____ / ____

Acknowledgement issued: ☐ Yes – date: ____ / ____ / ____

Arrangements begin: ____ / ____ / ____

Alternative arrangements provided:

Recorded in confidential register:

☐ Yes – date: ____ / ____ / ____

Name of staff member processing request: