



Religious Education Policy

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At the heart of Harbour Vale School is a commitment to supporting every pupil to feel safe, valued to re-engage with learning. We recognise that our students arrive with diverse experiences, and we aim to provide an environment where they can rebuild trust, develop self-awareness, and prepare for positive futures.

Religious Education at Harbour Vale School

Religious Education at Harbour Vale School is a key part of our provision, supporting students' social, emotional, and personal development. As a pupil referral unit, many of our students present with a range of behavioural needs and may have experienced trauma, disrupted education, or negative prior experiences of school. RE provides a structured, predictable, and supportive space in which students can explore identity, beliefs, values, and moral decision-making. Lessons are carefully planned using trauma-informed approaches, ensuring that students feel psychologically safe and able to engage without fear of judgement.

Through RE, students are encouraged to:

- Develop respect for themselves and others
- Understand different perspectives and beliefs
- Reflect on their own experiences in a safe and supported way
- Build skills in communication, empathy, and critical thinking

All students follow a curriculum leading to the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course exam, with a focus on Christianity and Islam, ensuring both academic rigour and cultural relevance.

In line with the Education Reform Act 1988, Religious Education remains compulsory for all registered students. This may look like discrete RE lessons or integrated thematic teaching through flexible and personalised approaches.

Religious Education – Aims and Intentions

At Harbour Vale School, Religious Education aims to:

- Provide a safe, consistent learning environment that supports students with SEMH and behavioural needs
- Develop understanding of Christianity and Islam as living religions with diverse beliefs and practices
- Encourage exploration of moral, ethical, and philosophical issues relevant to students' lives

- Promote respect, tolerance, and understanding in a diverse society
- Support students in developing their own values, identity, and sense of belonging
- Build confidence in expressing opinions and engaging in respectful discussion
- Develop the skills required for success in the AQA GCSE RE Short Course

At Harbour Vale School we aim to:

In Key Stage 3:

- Re-engage students with education through accessible, relevant, and structured RE lessons
- Establish clear routines and expectations to support behaviour and emotional regulation
- Introduce key beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam in an age-appropriate way
- Provide opportunities to explore themes such as Religion, Peace and Conflict and Religion, Relationships and Families
- Use discussion and reflection to build communication skills and confidence
- Create a safe space where students can express views without fear of criticism
- Support literacy development through guided writing and structured talk

In Key Stage 4:

- Prepare students for the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course
- Develop deeper knowledge of beliefs, teachings, and practices within Christianity and Islam
- Explore thematic issues such as Religion, Peace and Conflict and Religion, Relationships and Families
- Support students in making links between religious teachings and real-life situations
- Develop skills of explanation, analysis, and evaluation in a scaffolded and supportive way
- Build resilience and confidence in exam preparation and assessment situations

This will be implemented by:

In Key Stage 3:

- Delivering a highly structured and predictable curriculum to support students with behavioural needs
- Using trauma-informed strategies such as clear routines, low-stakes questioning, and regulated classroom environments
- Adapting content and pacing to meet individual needs and starting points
- Using visual, discussion-based, and experiential learning approaches
- Providing regular opportunities for success to build confidence and engagement
- Responding flexibly to students' emotional needs while maintaining clear boundaries

In Key Stage 4:

- Delivering the AQA GCSE RE Short Course through small steps and scaffolded learning
- Using repetition, retrieval practice, and modelling to support retention and understanding
- Providing support for literacy and exam technique
- Using exam-style questions in a supportive, low-pressure way
- Maintaining high expectations alongside strong relational support

Assessment and Recording of RE

Assessment at Harbour Vale School is adapted to meet the needs of our learners:

- A combination of formative and summative assessment is used
- GCSE students complete scaffolded exam-style questions aligned with AQA requirements
- Progress is measured from individual starting points as well as against national standards
- Feedback is clear, supportive, and focused on improvement and confidence-building
- Achievement is recognised regularly to promote motivation and engagement

Responsibilities for RE within the School (Headteacher and Governors)

The Headteacher and Governing Body will ensure that:

- All students, regardless of background or need, have access to RE
- The curriculum is inclusive, relevant, and appropriately challenging
- RE supports students' SEMH development and reintegration into education
- Staff are trained in both subject knowledge and trauma-informed practice
- Appropriate qualifications, including the AQA Short Course, are accessible
- RE is adequately resourced and supported

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

Harbour Vale School wishes to be an inclusive community but recognises the legal right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from Religious Education. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by students or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. We would urge any parents/carers considering this to contact the head teacher in the first instance to discuss any concerns.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

If a student is withdrawn from RE:

- The school will provide appropriate supervision in a safe environment
- Students will remain on site unless alternative arrangements are agreed
- No additional teaching will be provided during this time