



NET Academies Trust

Religious Education Policy

October 2022

1.0 - Introduction

1.1 - Section 80 of the Education Act 2002 and Schedule 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, entitles all pupils to receive a religion and world views education (RWV) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum at school which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

1.2 - This policy sets out the framework in which NET Academies Trust Harlow will ensure that this duty is met.

1.3 - While meeting this duty, our academy will also ensure that RWV is:

- Of a high standard, where expectations are clear to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, employers and the public;
- Coherent and shows progression, particularly across the transition of the key stages and post 16;
- Contributing to the academy's responsibility to promote community cohesion and high standards of achievement;
- Well understood by the school community, who have confidence in the academy's provision and achievement.

2.0 - Legal Framework

2.1 - This policy will have consideration for and be in compliance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 2002
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Religious Education in Schools – February 2010
- National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4

3.0 - Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 - Governors and the Head of School will fulfil their duty to:

- Ensure that RWV is provided as part of the academy's basic curriculum;
- Provide an annual report to parents or carers, giving brief particulars of progress and achievements in all subjects including RWV.

3.2 - The Governors and Head of School must also ensure that:

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- All pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the academy's RWV curriculum- based on Essex SACRE (New Essex SACRE agreed syllabus adopted from September 2023);
- The teaching of RWV is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RWV and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- Those teaching RWV are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD);
- Teachers are aware of RWV's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact in promoting community cohesion;
- Where appropriate, pupils have opportunities to take courses which lead to an accredited qualification in the subject;
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RWV learning objectives and promote community cohesion;
- Clear information is provided for parents on the RWV curriculum and the right to withdraw;
- Teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RWV unless specifically appointed to do so;
- RWV is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the academy can fulfil its legal obligations regarding RWV and pupils can make good progress;
- Where there are insufficient teachers in the academy who are prepared to teach RWV, the Head of School will ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to RWV, seeking advice from the Local Authority (LA) and/or the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), if necessary.

4.0 - Teaching

4.1 - Christianity will be the majority study in RWV at NET Academies Harlow. This will draw upon the richness and diversity of Christian experience in the breadth of its Anglican and other denominational forms, and in the variety of worldwide forms. From September 2023, Christianity will continue to be the majority study, but the local majority religion will also be planned for as a second main religion to Christianity.

4.2 - RWV at NET Academies Harlow will also:

- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. As well as Christianity, it will also develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development;

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- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives;
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society;
- Teach pupils to develop religious literacy and respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, thereby helping to challenge prejudice.
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

5.0 - Community Cohesion

5.1 - RWV makes an important contribution to an academy's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

5.2 - NET Academies Harlow will use RWV to promote community cohesion:

- Within the academy, through the exploration, promotion and celebration of diversity, beliefs and values;
- At the local level, investigating patterns of diversity of religion and belief, and forging links with different groups;
- At the national level, through the study of the diversity of religion and belief across the UK and how this influences national life;
- At the global level, through the study of matters of international significance, recognising the impact of the diversity of religion and belief on world issues.

5.3 - RWV subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting an inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

6.0 - Staffing and Training

6.1 - A well trained and confident workforce is crucial in ensuring good quality RWV. We will therefore ensure that:

- At least one member of staff has specialist RWV qualifications;

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- Other teachers can contribute to the teaching of RWV, regardless of their personal beliefs;
- All teachers teaching RWV are up-to-date with the latest regulations, guidance and best practice regarding RWV;
- Our school action plans identify the CPD needs of staff in relation to RWV.

7.0 - Right of Withdrawal

7.1 - NET Academies Harlow recognises the right of withdrawal of pupils from RWV at the request of their parents. No reason needs to be given.

7.2 - Where alternative arrangements cannot be met through the provision at NET Academies Harlow, the pupil may receive their RWV externally and may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend these classes.

7.3 - This policy was recommended to the Board of NET Academies Trust by the CEO and approved by the Board in October 2022.

8.0 - Approval and Review

8.1 - This policy was approved by the Pupil Achievement and Wellbeing Committee in October 2022

8.2 - This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its continued effectiveness and compliance with the law and regulations.

8.3 - Next review date: September 2025