

# DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## GOVERNORS' STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### 1. Terms of Reference

Under the Education Act 1944 as amended by the Education Reform Act 1988, Religious Education must be provided for all pupils at County School. This has to be in accordance with an agreed syllabus. In West Sussex an Agreed Syllabus was drawn up in 1998. The Governors are satisfied that the teaching of Religious Education at Downlands is in accordance with that document.

### 2. Aims

The Aims of Religious Education as set out in the Agreed Syllabus are "To teach Religious Education so that children may:

- acquire a knowledge and understanding of the origins, content and development of the Christian Religion and other religions, their traditions and beliefs;
- understand the importance of religious experience and recognise the ways by which these experiences have been interpreted and expressed through a variety of religious traditions;
- appreciate the contribution that religious and spiritual ideas and concepts can make to their personal search for meaning and purpose in life;
- look beyond self and recognise the contribution of religion in the establishment of relationships and responsibilities in the family, among friends, in school, the community and the world at large;
- explore the consequences of religious belief and experience in the development of personal attitudes.

### 3. Objectives

The objectives of Religious Education at Downlands are:

To enable pupils:

- To learn tolerance and respect for people of different cultures and beliefs.
- To learn about how Britain developed through Christianity and its influences today.
- To think about our own ideas and beliefs. (We all have them. Not believing in anything is a belief)

### 4. Governors' Response

As Governors we recognise the importance of religious studies in aiding the personal development of pupils. We believe that they should be made aware of the Christian heritage of this country and have a sound knowledge of the other major world religions. In this way pupils should achieve a richer and deeper understanding of the world in which they live and how it is shaped by belief systems.

## 5. Mode of teaching Religious Studies

In Years 7, 8 and 9 RS is taught as a discrete subject for one period a week. Pupils study topics which study QCA guidelines for the subject, which establishes a national standard and benchmark for the teaching of RS. Pupils are introduced to five major world religions in an issue based way studying, for example, rites of passage, the concept of justice, religious responses to suffering in the world and the environment. The founders of the main world religions are all studied in addition to this. In years 10 and 11, all pupils investigate perspectives on such issues as conflict, prejudice, the family and the environment in Humanities, PDC and Citizenship. Religious Studies is now fully integrated as a GCSE option.

## 6. Future Developments

The Religious Studies syllabus at Downlands has been revised to make it more relevant to pupils and ensure that it holds their interest. In attempting to address the requirement for a daily collective act of worship, there is an opportunity for the school to complement the academic Religious Studies Course.

## Conclusion

The Governors are satisfied that Downlands pupils follow a balanced Religious Studies course with predominately Christian bias to learn tolerance and respect and develop their own ideas about beliefs and spirituality. We view the subject as being of great importance to pupils. We are concerned to ensure that it retains its position in the school despite the increasing demands on pupil's time by continuing curriculum developments and current teacher recruitment problems.

Parents are reminded that they have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Studies classes.