



# Religious Observance Policy

## Roseburn Primary School Session 2018-19

### Definitions

Religious observance is defined for schools in Scotland as:

“Community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community”.

Spiritual development *“includes being helped to recognise, reflect upon and develop a deeper understanding of the value and worth of each individual which comes from one’s dignity as a person.”*

*“This approach to RO recognises that schools are communities of learners often from different cultural and social backgrounds with a wide range of beliefs. It recognises that individual, personal development is founded on respect for oneself and for everyone else. In practice, this means that RO:*

- *provides opportunities for the school community to express and celebrate values which are considered common human values;*
- *gives the school community time to reflect upon a variety of traditions and viewpoints as well as other stimuli such as literature, art and music; and*
- *provides opportunities for the community to reflect upon values, beliefs, commitments and hopes which are implicit in being human."*

*CfE Briefing Paper 16*

There are many contexts across the curriculum, which encourage pupils to consider matters from a spiritual perspective; the potential for spiritual development is open to everyone and is not confined to the development of religious beliefs.

### **Worship**

It is important to acknowledge that religious observance is not concerned in the main with organised worship. The following extract from the Scottish Government's letter of February 2011 will inform the school programme:

*" Where, as in most non-denominational schools, there is a diversity of beliefs and practices, the review group believes that the appropriate context for an organised act of worship is within the informal curriculum as part of the range of activities offered for example by religions, groups, chaplains and other religious leaders."*

We distinguish between whole school assemblies which celebrate and recognise achievement and those we plan for religious observance. From August 2018 we will move to using the term 'Time for Reflection' rather than religious observance as this follows the advice from the Education, Children and Families Committee (March 2015).

### **Religious Observance (Time for Reflection)**

The Curriculum for Excellence briefing paper (November 2014) states that at the heart of religious observance in Curriculum for Excellence is the aspiration to develop every learner as an individual. This means helping them to grow and develop their own sense of themselves, to be confident in expressing their own beliefs and values, and to develop an understanding of and empathy towards others.

Schools are communities of learners often from different cultural and social backgrounds with a wide range of beliefs. We recognise that individual and personal development is founded on respect for oneself and for everyone else. In practice this means that religious observance:

- provides opportunities for the school community to express and celebrate values which are considered human values
- gives the school community time to reflect upon a variety of viewpoints as well as other stimuli such as literature, art and music; and
- provides opportunities for the community to reflect upon values, beliefs, commitments and hopes which are implicit in being human.

This is taken into account as we plan for religious observance, as is the contribution this makes to the ethos and life of our school because it can influence how children and young people develop values and behaviours.

We work with a range of partners to support and plan experiences for the school community and this includes links with Murrayfield Parish Church. We visit Murrayfield Parish Church as part of our celebrations and all the local churches as part of our learning in the wider curriculum.

### **Frequency**

Every school should provide opportunities for religious observance at least six times in a school year in addition to traditional celebrations central to the life of the school community. Each year, at Roseburn Primary, we plan this as part of our school calendar and share this with parents and carers via our school newsletter and our website.

### **Withdrawal**

Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, parents have the right to ask for their child to be withdrawn from religious observance. We deal with such requests with sensitivity and understanding. The head teacher will offer to meet with any parent wishing to withdraw their child to ensure that they are clear about the school policy. In particular, parents should be reassured that religious observance adopts an open and respectful approach and does not seek to compromise the beliefs of any pupils or their

families. Where a child is withdrawn from these activities, suitable arrangements will be made for the pupil to participate in a worthwhile alternative activity.

### **Diversity**

Central to our policy is the principle of respect for others. Religious, cultural and personal characteristics permeate and enrich the life and work of our school. This diversity of belief and tradition provides an ideal context in which pupils can learn about and so learn from what is important in the lives of others. This approach to religious observance recognises and welcomes diversity and promotes respectful understanding.

### **Quality Assurance**

This policy and our provision for religious observance will be reviewed by August 2019

Key documents:

Scottish Government Letter 21 February 2011

Curriculum for Excellence Briefing Paper 16 – Religious Observance (Time for Reflection) November 2014

Religious Observance in Schools 3 March 2015 (City of Edinburgh Council – Education, Children and Families Committee)