



**Castle Tower School**

**Religious Education Policy**

<b>Date Ratified by Board of Governors</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2027

Castle Tower welcomes pupils aged 3-19 who face a wide range of barriers to learning. Educational opportunities are provided within our Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 departments.

## **Our Vision**

### **Vision:**

To be a leading light in special education through educating, nurturing and inspiring all our school community.

### **Mission:**

Castle Tower School is committed to creating a community which:

- Ensures everyone is safe and included
- Always learns
- Promotes independence and resilience
- Celebrates achievements
- Looks forward with hope to the future

Everything we do is driven by our core values:

- Child-centred
- Nurturing
- Fun
- Team work
- Inclusive
- Independence

## **Our Ethos**

Castle Tower strives to create a caring community in which every member feels valued, supported and happy. All staff work to maintain an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeate all relationships within the school community. High standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and sensitivity are sought and everyone is encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, academic and social goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community is of paramount importance to all staff and Governors.

At Castle Tower, there is continued development of the quality of the teaching and learning environment. Resources are used efficiently. Opportunities are created for learning in co-operative and interactive settings. Pupils are presented with challenging as well as stimulating teaching and learning opportunities. Staff at Castle Tower seek close working relationships with other providers and services throughout each stage of our pupil's education and through the transition stage to further education and life after school.

## **Introduction**

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching of Religious Education at Castle Tower School.

Religious Education plays a vital part in the study of the beliefs and practices of the religions within our multicultural society. It offers the opportunity to explore both the beliefs of others and also to reflect upon our own beliefs and ideas.

Religious Education is a compulsory part of the Northern Ireland curriculum, although parents have the right to withdraw their child from part or all of RE or collective worship. Schools have to provide RE in accordance with the core syllabus drawn up by the four main churches and specified by the Department.

The RE core syllabus includes Christianity, morality and World Religions and a requirement at Key Stage 4 for pupils to study The Christian Church from both a Protestant and a Roman Catholic perspective. It provides a common core for the teaching of RE that schools are free to build upon in a way that suits the needs of their pupils and the ethos of the school. This is in keeping with the greater flexibility being provided by the curriculum and gives schools scope to include, for example, additional material on World religions or any other RE related subject matter.

The core syllabus is supported by teaching materials developed with the support of a representative advisory group co-chaired by the Churches and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

## **Aims**

It is recognised that every pupil has a spiritual dimension and is therefore on a journey of discovery. The school's Religious Education course aims to achieve the following according to the maturity of the child:

1. To promote an enquiring, critical and sympathetic approach to the study of religion.
2. To introduce pupils to the varied nature of religion and to the ways in which this is reflected in experience, belief and practice.
3. To help pupils to identify and explore questions about the meaning of life, and to examine how the major religions respond to these questions.
4. To encourage pupils to reflect on religious responses to moral issues, and to consider their own views, whether these are religious or not.
5. To develop skills of enquiry and response in analysis, expression, reflection, evaluation and application through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy.
6. To enhance and help delivery of the school's aims.
7. To facilitate opportunities for pupils to develop their sense of identity and self-worth.
8. To encourage an atmosphere of co-operation and tolerance through the study of a variety of beliefs and to promote consideration of the views of others.

## **Religious Education and Spiritual Development**

Religious Education makes a central contribution to a pupil's spiritual development.

The following aspects of spiritual development are included in the syllabus:

1. The development of beliefs – informed by the study of the teachings of Christianity and other religions and philosophies.
2. A sense of awe, wonder and mystery - encouraged through experiences to which pupils have access and developed through discussion.
3. The search for meaning and purpose – encouraged by pupils having opportunities to ask questions and informed through the study of religions.
4. Self –knowledge – the development of self –knowledge and self –respect is not specific to Religious Education, however pupils are encouraged to be aware of these in the school and wider world.
5. Feelings and emotions – pupils are encouraged to regard feelings and emotions as valid human responses.

## **Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Together with Spiritual development these three dimensions are present in the Religious Education programme. The pupils are given opportunities to learn, consider, respond and reflect on the issues in various ways.

Morality refers to attitudes and motives in relation to others and to moral ideals or absolutes including God, consideration of a variety of approaches to morality and the ability to reflect rationally on ethical issues.

Religious education contributes to issues of multi culturalism, minorities, human rights and responsibilities, conflict and reconciliation. It also includes much about politics, society and family life.

## **Collective Worship**

Secondary assembly takes place weekly. Assembly is led by class groups. Class teachers chose the theme, based on a moral or spiritual issue. This assembly includes a celebration of achievements.

Pupils celebrate special occasions throughout the school year i.e. Harvest time, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, Easter etc via a whole school or department special assembly.

## **Teaching Strategies**

- All pupils in KS3 and KS4 will have one 50min period per week as a discrete subject.
- Work is set based on the pupils 'individual needs and a range of teaching strategies is employed.

## **Assessment**

- Pupils' work is informally assessed throughout the year with both written and verbal comments.

## **Recording and reporting**

Pupils receive formal written reports at the end of the school year. Pupils' progress is discussed as necessary with their form teacher.