



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Created: February 2020

To be reviewed: February 2024

Principal: Dr. M. Stevens

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Lanacre Avenue, NW9 5FN

## Context

- Saracens High School delivers Religious Education in the form of Philosophy, Religion, and Ethics (PRE) following the same concepts and questions raised in the Barnet Locally Agreed Syllabus
- Saracens High School recognises the education value of Religious Education in the school curriculum, we will be offering GCSE full course at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5
- Saracens High School also recognises the excellent contribution PRE makes to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development across the school
- We work within the legal requirements for secondary schools, which are detailed later in the policy.

## Aims and purpose of PRE

**Purpose:** At Saracens High School PRE enables pupils to engage critically with significant ethical, philosophical and social issues in order to understand the world we live in more fully. Pupils learn about a wide range of religious beliefs and practices, including non-religious worldviews. They do this for the development of their knowledge, for their capacity to flourish in our diverse society, and for their growing understanding of their own identity and outlook. At Saracens High School pupils are encouraged to develop their own considered opinion, to articulate their views, and engage in productive dialogue and debate with others.

**Aims:** In order to fulfil this purpose, PRE lessons at Saracens High School are aimed at developing, with increasing depth and discernment, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and non-religious worldviews. Pupils will learn how religious identity influences people's lives and will be encouraged to express their own considered opinions about the nature and value of religion on people and the planet. Pupils will develop the skills of listening, speaking and discussing, as well as those of enquiry, analysis and evaluation.

**SMSC:** Although all subjects in the curriculum and the school as a whole have an equal duty to promote pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, PRE is particularly well placed to do this. PRE develops pupils' capacity for cultural understanding and moral enquiry particularly strongly, both through curriculum content and the personal characteristics required to participate in PRE.

**Community cohesion:** PRE plays a strong part in promoting community cohesion. In the PRE classroom the values of tolerance, respect and openness are essential in all pupils in order to participate in PRE.

**Inclusion:** PRE, as all school subjects, adheres to a policy of inclusion. PRE teachers plan lessons and schemes of work to ensure that all pupils can access high quality PRE. To this end, teachers will monitor the success of their provision and differentiation, and employ specific strategies when necessary.

## PRE in the curriculum

**Content and approach:** At Saracens High School our vision for PRE is to recognise Philosophy, Religion and Ethics as three different subjects that have some overlapping themes. All three subjects require the ability to listen to different opinions in a calm, empathetic and logical manner. It is one of the core tasks of education to enable each pupil to understand, reflect on and develop their own personal worldview. Through understanding how philosophical, religious and ethical views are formed and expressed at both individual and communal levels, the ways in which views have changed over time, and their influence on the actions of humanity, young people come to a more refined understanding of their own worldview.

At Key Stage 3 pupils will have a full term to gain an in depth view of the six major religions: Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. For the GCSE we will study Islam and Christianity as the main religions due to the fact that these are the main religious groups our pupils come from. In Core PRE at Key Stage 4 we will focus on the Ethical and Philosophical issues that will allow pupils to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, reflecting local, national and global contexts. Building on their prior learning, they appreciate and appraise the nature of different religions and worldviews in systematic ways. This will cumulate in them producing a piece of work that addresses a key Philosophical or Theological issue. This piece of work will be marked within school and externally moderated. The awarding body is The New College of the Humanities, a University in London that specialises in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Religious Studies is available as a GCSE option and at A Level, both options will include Philosophy of Religion, and Ethics. Philosophy is available at A level, and all pupils will complete a research based course in Philosophy from NCH.

**Assessment:** The PRE department will be assessing and marking pupils in line with the wider Saracens High School Assessment and Marking Policy. To ensure that PRE pupils are getting the best assessment and marking strategies at all key Stages the department will ensure that staff are aware of all developments in this area. At Key Stage 3 the department will use the NATRE assessment guidance. This 'Eight Steps Up' approach will mean that pupils can be assessed on the requirements set out in the Department for Education (DfE) endorsed *Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England*. At Key Stage 4 the department will use the AQA material to ensure pupils understand the criteria against which they will be assessed and how to achieve the criteria, both on a short- and long-term basis. At Key Stage 5 the same will apply whilst using the OCR material for Religious Studies and AQA for Philosophy A level.

**Time allocation:** Core PRE at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 has 50 minutes per week allocated. At Key Stage 4 Religious Studies GCSE has the same amount of time as any other option for GCSE, which is three periods a week.

### **Religions and worldviews**

In Key Stage 3, the school follows the recommendations of the Local Agreed Syllabus for PRE and has selected the following religions and worldviews for focused study: In Year 7 Hinduism, Christianity and Sikhism will be the main focus, during

Year 8 the pupils will study Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. In Year 9 pupils will start their Key Stage 4 options.

In Key Stage 4 we use the AQA GCSE Religious Studies A (9-1) specification: Christianity and Islam. We study the beliefs, teachings and practices of both Islam and Christianity. The Themes we will be studying are; Theme C: The Existence of God and revelation, Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict, Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment, and Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice.

In Key Stage 5: Saracens High School we will use the AQA Philosophy syllabus which has four units; Epistemology, Moral philosophy, Metaphysics of God and Metaphysics of mind. We also follow the OCR Religious Studies (H573) which has three units; Philosophy of religion, Religion and ethics and Developments in religious thought. (These may change where examining bodies change courses).

## Legal requirements

The National Curriculum states that:

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life ...

All state schools... must teach religious education... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.

*DfE, The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, September 2013, p.4*

Free schools must teach RE within the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, in line with any funding agreements. The current Ofsted Framework also states that, 'academies must include English, mathematics, science and religious education in their curriculum.' Spiritual development for pupils must include their ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life, as well as knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values. Provision is needed for the cultural development of pupils, including their ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic, and socio-economic communities.

**Breadth of PRE: Saracens High School** recognises that PRE 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para 5). The breadth of PRE is referred to in more detail in the section on 'curriculum' below.

**Right of withdrawal:** Parents (or pupils who are over 18) have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from PRE. In addition, teachers have the right not to teach the subject. Our approach to PRE, however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal.

As stated in law, those parents who wish to withdraw their child from PRE lessons should inform the Principal in writing at their earliest convenience.

Due to the fact that any parent or guardian who withdraws from PRE is withdrawing their child from that part of the curriculum, they would usually be required to take their child out of school for the lesson they are withdrawing from; however, at Saracens we are happy to keep the child on site and supervise them completing the work provided for them. The work provided must cover the alternative PRE content the parent/guardian wishes them to cover.

**Collective worship:** This policy covers the provision of PRE in the curriculum – collective worship is not covered in this policy. Collective worship is distinct from Religious Education and will not be counted as curriculum time.

**Linked policies:**

Relationship and Sex Education policy

PSHE policy

Collective worship policy