



# The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



## Religious Education & Collective Worship Policy

Scope:	Federation	
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# **The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools**



**'With God all things are possible'**

**'Where there is love, there is God'**

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will give every child the best possible education because each individual is uniquely created and precious to God. As a Catholic community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will follow the example of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life.

With the help of God's love, the Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will seek to develop the whole child. Each child is uniquely created and precious to God and it is the Federation's mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, to nurture each child's spiritual, moral and academic growth.

## **Inspired by the teachings of Christ we will...**

- Develop our children's faith, spirituality and joy in the love of God
- Educate our children to the highest standards thus realising their own potential
- Instil in our children the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed and take pride in their achievements recognising we each have special gifts and talents
- Encourage everyone to be more than they thought possible, in a secure and loving environment
- Promote a caring community where we will all behave well. We will be dignified in our actions, demonstrating good manners, tolerance, kindness and generosity to ourselves and others
- Prepare our children today to become tomorrow's responsible and independent individuals equipped to face life's challenges
- Ensure our Federation is a happy, safe and welcoming place where we all enjoy learning, work hard, support one another and do our best
- Create an active partnership of love, joy and high expectations between children, parents, carers, staff, governors, parishes and the wider community

### **Inclusion statement**

The school community will ensure that ALL children irrespective of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including those who identify as transgender), sexual orientation, ability, special educational need, disability, faith or religion, age, culture, socio-economic or home background will have equal access to the breadth of this policy.

The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and the school will endeavour to promote their individuality. Children with learning disabilities and gifted and talented children will be allowed to express themselves according to their ability. Work will be differentiated to meet their needs and achievements will be celebrated.

**This Policy will be implemented through on going consultation with all members of the school community and developments in law or statutory guidance.**

## Introduction

The Federation of St. Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools is in the parishes of Wallington and South Croydon. However, schools in the Federation also welcome pupils from parishes in Sutton, Waddon and further afield. Up to 25% of pupils may come from other Christian faith backgrounds or other faiths or from a background of no religious faith but whose parents are in sympathy with the mission of the school.

### PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

*“The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects – because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on.”*

*“If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.” (Pope Francis, May 2014)*

Religious Education including moral, social, spiritual and cultural education is the corner stone of our mission as teachers, Governors, pupils and parents in Catholic schools. By our teaching we should evangelise, proclaim the Good News and catechise, and help the children know and grow in their faith and developing their spirituality.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Religious Education at our schools is a journey through the understanding and development of the Catholic faith involving every member of the school community alongside the children’s families and respective parishes. In addition, other faiths are also studied.

Religious Education is an academic subject in its own right in the curriculum and is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other core subject, with additional emphasis on the specialness of the topics studied.

It is our aim to provide all children with the necessary skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding to assist them through their faith journey, enabling them to progress towards Catholic Christian maturity.

We aim to provide all children with the opportunities to develop a closer, more personal relationship with God, whilst developing an understanding of their own values and importance as individuals, and respect for others, other faiths and other cultures.

We aim to enable all children to become more familiar with the language, symbols, signs and gestures of religious belief, and to practise their faith and worship within the environment of a Catholic Christian community.

It is our aim, through the use of the “Come and See” programme and other resources, to provide all children with a framework for life based upon the truth and wisdom of the living Gospel and sound educational principles. In doing so, we will give the children a basic understanding of the doctrines of the Catholic faith which are appropriate to their age, level of development, experiences and background.

The Catholic **Religious Education Curriculum Directory** states the aims of Religious Education to be as follows:

1. To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
2. To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. To present an authentic vision of the Church’s moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
4. To raise pupils’ awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
5. To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
6. To stimulate pupils’ imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
8. To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.

*The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity - to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.*

## The Religious Education Curriculum

### The Religious Education Programme

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools follow the 'Come and See' programme for religious teaching. In the life of faith in our Catholic schools, religious education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. We express and explore this vision in religious education. Religious Education is not one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process at the Federation. The beliefs and values studied in religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.

Our religious education curriculum is delivered in line with our Teaching and Learning Policy which reflects our Catholic ethos and values. The outcome of Catholic religious education "is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity - to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life." (Religious education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools)

The whole school shares the thematic approach to the teaching of Religious Education, although "Come and See" is taught as individual lessons in each class. Where cross-curricular links arise, however, these are fully developed, initially at the planning stage of the process. Saints' days, Holy Days of Obligation, and other festivals are celebrated not only in Religious Education lessons, but through assemblies, Mass, liturgies and services.

The school places special emphasis upon Our Lady, with focus within the months of October and May. In addition to these, the school focuses upon the preparation times of Advent and Lent in traditional style. Religious Education is also celebrated through display work, especially in the Infant and Junior halls, and links are made across subjects too. Examples of this include the annual Nativity Plays, nativity liturgies and Carol Services.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools celebrate our community's cultural diversity and teach the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith and other faiths through our PSHE curriculum. In addition to this, other faiths are studied for one half term per year in each year group, in accordance with the "Come and See" scheme.

Pupils in Year Three prepare for the reception of first Sacraments during their time in Y3. Whilst recognising that sacramental preparation is the first responsibility of the home and parish, the Federation is happy to work with the feeder parishes to support this in class.

## FAITH Values

The work of our Federation is underpinned by our FAITH Values. We are committed to developing a community where our schools will be places of excellence. We will provide outstanding opportunities for all members of the community to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel values whilst serving as witnesses to Christ. We will develop our schools to ensure learning opportunities and outcomes are based on first class teaching and leadership. As a community, we seek to ensure that these values are lived-out in all aspects of our lives.

**Family** - we seek to act fairly and responsibly in our relationships to ensure all are welcomed, nurtured and successful.

**Aspiration** - to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning so all in the schools' communities excel.

**Inclusiveness** - we believe that all are created in the image of God and therefore we will respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person, promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

**Tolerance** - to develop schools where there is true understanding of culture, respect for difference and special care for those most in need.

**Harmony** - to develop the schools as faith communities where the Gospel values of truth, honesty, forgiveness and reconciliation are lived.

## Time Allocation

Religious Education takes up 10% of the curriculum time, as recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales.

Assemblies and liturgies last for twenty to thirty minutes, weekly Mass lasts for approximately 1 hour, with around 30 minute's preparation time for each. Each class will spend around 5 minutes per day in collective worship.

## Planning

The long, medium term and short term planning are informed by the use of the Curriculum Directory and the "Come and See" scheme of work.

Teachers' long, medium and short term planning is a collaborative process which assists continuity and progression. We take account of the liturgical calendar to assist us in planning assemblies, Masses, liturgies and other acts of worship.

The Federation has also adopted the Journey in Love scheme of work to support children's learning about Relationship and Sex Education. Further information about this aspect of the RE / PSHE curriculum is available in the Relationship and Sex Education Policy.

## Assessment

Age Related Expectations are used to assess pupils' work:

- assessment of pupils' work is a necessary part of the learning process;
- Its purposes include the affirmation of attainment and achievement, the necessary recording and reporting of pupil progress, and helping the pupil take the next steps in learning;
- The Key Performance Indicators in each year group's assessment framework enables teachers to assess work in relation to that of other children of the same age.

The assessment framework is based in two fundamental attainment areas: "learning about religion" (AT1) and "learning from religion" (AT2). To do this we assess how children:

- listen
- ask relevant questions
- respond
- interact with others
- be still
- understand
- remember

We do this by talking with and listening to the pupils, by observing and by professional dialogue with our colleagues. Each child's work is assessed at the end of a topic (half termly) against the Key Performance Indicators for that year group.

Children are able to work at the greater depth standard in RE if they can independently link their learning to other biblical stories, world news, daily life and other faiths.

Evidence of attainment in the strands of Attainment Target 2 is found throughout the process of "Come and See" in the child's work and in other aspects of life in the school.

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years assess using the Southwark Education Commission's Key Performance Indicators for ARE. The children learn about God our Father, Jesus and The Holy Spirit and participate in important festivals in the Liturgical Year. They are encouraged to describe experiences, identify their own feelings and those of others, demonstrate curiosity and encourage awe and wonder, and to be still and think quietly.

The Reception Year group assess in line with "Come and See" and the Southwark Education Commission's Key Performance Indicators for ARE, and also make observations on the children primarily in:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Understanding the World: People and Communities

## **Record Keeping**

We keep records of planning and evaluations of the outcomes, samples of children's annotated and levelled work in RE books and formative assessment in "day books" or planning folders. Summative assessment data is recorded after each assessed unit. A class record is kept by the class teacher and RE Coordinator, and the Coordinator keeps samples of assessed work for purposes of validation, evidence and moderation. Individual pupil attainment data is recorded and handed to a pupil's subsequent teacher along with other school assessment data. This enables the child's progress and attainment to be seen in the context of "next steps".

In the EYFS, nursery and reception classes compile a special class book which contains photographs of children's learning, their prayers and a commentary of the children's developing understanding of their faith and the Church.

Photographs of displays and significant events within school and the wider community are kept in the RE portfolio.

## **Reporting**

Reporting in Religious Education provides feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress. It is a means of sharing information with parents which further contributes to our partnership with them. It offers opportunities for discussion and collaboration, developing the part played by both in the child's education.

Reports on pupil's progress are given in writing to parents annually. Class teachers may also give verbal reports to parents during parent/pupil/teacher consultations.

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

The Federation Mission Statement provides the basis of our aims and objectives for the social and moral development of our pupils. This is supplemented by the Golden Rules, Inclusion Policies, PSHE Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy. Our aims and objectives for the social and moral development of our pupils is also implicit in our curriculum policies.

Children are involved with devising and implementing the codes of behaviour within their own class and within the school. They contribute to the planning of sanctions and rewards through the use of 'Golden Rules', and achievement is celebrated during the fortnightly celebration assembly, Star of the Week. This may be academic, social, or moral achievement. Pupils from each class will also be awarded a star for living out the FAITH value of that particular half term.

Teachers are expected to be role models and reflect the Gospel values in all their dealings with all members of our school community.

## **Spiritual Development**

It is all too easy in a climate where skills and knowledge, standards and targets prevail to neglect the essential of spiritual development. Most young children have a natural sense of wonder and awe - the gift of the Holy Spirit, but this must be nurtured particularly as they are growing up in a society where they are experience the best and worst of technology. We aim to encourage spiritual growth by:

1. Teaching children the value of silent reflection in circle time and in personal prayer.
2. Providing opportunity to experience God's gifts to us in our school environment - growing plants and vegetables, watching the tadpoles change to frogs and newts, nurturing the caterpillars as they change to butterflies.
3. Using music, art and dance to express our feelings and re-action.
4. Celebrating our joy and sharing our sorrow in everyday events.
5. Giving opportunity to observe, listen and reflect.

Each class has a prayer table which is the focus of class daily worship. Opportunity is given for individual children to contribute to and reflect there.

## **Cultural Development**

For pupils growing up in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society, it is important that they have experience of different cultural experiences - in Music and Art in particular - and in other areas of the curriculum, including Science, History and Geography. The children should be taught to celebrate our differences and similarities and to celebrate their own cultural heritage. Many of our pupils come from Ethnic Minority backgrounds and it is important for staff to understand this way of life. One of the best ways to introduce children to other faith cultures is through celebrating and learning the stories of major festivals especially those which are common to all, and through cooking and sampling food of different cultures. This learning is also underpinned by the Federations PSHE curriculum which teaches children about fundamental British Values.

## **Education for Personal Relationships**

Young children need the security of good and loving relationships with their parents, relations and school community. Sadly, even before they start school, some have poor experience of family life. It is important for staff to be sensitive to children's differing experiences while giving stability and security in school. Although good relationships in school cannot replace those of the family, at least the children will be able to develop self-esteem and care for others, enabling them to grow, knowing that each person and relationship is a unique gift from God. The Federation uses the scheme "Journey in Love" to provide the curriculum for Relationship and Sex Education. The scheme Journey in Love is endorsed by the Bishops' Conference. For additional information about the RSE curriculum, please see the SRE Policy.

## Home-School-Parish Links

Parents are the first educators of their children and it is our mission as a Federation community to help them as their children grow in knowledge and love. Parents and carers are provided with an overview of the curriculum their children will be learning each term; this includes the upcoming RE topics. Parents and carers are always warmly invited to join us and share with their children: Mass, liturgies, assemblies, rosary, liturgical celebrations at Christmas, Lent, Easter and Advent.

We aim to develop strong links with the local community. We provide work experience opportunities for many local schools.

Our local parish priests know our families and community well. Fr Hough celebrates Mass at St Elphege's each week and one of the four parish priests at Regina Coeli celebrate Mass there. We also welcome other members of our parishes who come to help us in school. We support families or individuals in need through our Federation Challenge Fund. We organise support for the Ace of Clubs for the homeless in Clapham and we regularly support larger charities including CAFOD, NSPCC, Missio, Link for Hope, MacMillan and Poppy Day. Each year we try to balance our support for the smaller charities with those who have a larger network. The Federation also provide continuous support to St. Francis Learning Angels, Ghana; a Cambodian Orphanage; John, a young man with autism and other disabilities in Uganda; a school in Nigeria; and a school in Sri-Lanka.

## Collective worship

Collective Worship is, by definition, the central part of this faith community. It is a regular feature of the school and takes the form of whole school worship, year groups, classes and groups within classes. It occurs both inside classrooms each day, and outside at assemblies, before mealtimes and at the end of the day. However, prayer and worship can happen at impromptu moments in the classroom and in our lovely surroundings. Assemblies are held weekly and led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, focussing on the theme of that week's learning in the Come and See scheme of work.

Each week a different class leads their key stage in a liturgy assembly created by the children in the class with a focus on the Sunday's gospel. On a Friday, our parish priests lead Mass for the whole school, the key stage or a year group depending on the liturgical time of year.

In the months of October and May, the school observes the Rosary and the infant school celebrate the May Procession Mass. The infant school meet each morning to pray the Rosary led by members of the Senior Leadership Team and the EYFS and KS1 class teachers. The junior classes pray the Rosary in the classroom led by the class teacher. Parents are invited to join their children for this act of worship. St Elphege's Schools and Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School also celebrate their respective feast days with Mass and activities for the community to join in together.

## Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship lies at the heart of the Federation. It specifically aims to:

- provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God;
- assist in the development of every child's spirituality;
- familiarise each child with traditional forms of prayer used in the Catholic Church;
- provide good liturgical experience;
- introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings and forms;
- enable each child to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, His personality and His teaching;
- assist each child in developing a social and individual moral consciousness;
- and enable each child to experience a sense of loyalty and belonging to a worshipping Christian faith community.

## Focal Areas

Focal areas provide a space for reflection and may include prayers, books, candles, plants, enticing artefacts and children's work. These are set up in each classroom, school hall and reception area as well as in corridors, the library and the Teaching School. They are changed regularly to reflect changing topics and seasons with appropriate liturgical colours. The children may be involved in designing the content of the class focal areas and are encouraged to make use of the area throughout the day. Sometimes children bring additional items for the table. Often the area is used as a focus during RE lessons.

## Mass

The whole school celebrates Mass on holy days of obligation and also for other festivals. In the junior schools, a year group prepares the Mass on a rota basis and parents are invited to attend. The infant school celebrates mass together at special points in the liturgical calendar.

The end of the year is celebrated in all schools at a Leaver's Mass for Y2 and Y6 pupils. The children gather at either St. Elphege's Church or St. Dominic's Church and celebrate Harvest Mass in October, the Carol Service in December and the end of year celebration Mass in July.