

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ST EDMUND'S AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

To realise – in mind, body and spirit – the full potential of every member of the St Edmund's Family, through Catholic values, learning, service and leadership.

Avita Pro Fide.

St Edmund's is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of children in its care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every person employed by St Edmund's.

“True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share”. (Vatican 11, “Gravissimum Educationis” 1)

“The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behaviour. This is what makes the difference between a school whose education is permeated with a Christian spirit and one in which religion is only regarded as an academic subject like any other”. (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, ‘The Catholic School’ 43)

“[The Catholic School] would no longer deserve the title if, no matter how much it shone for its high level of teaching in non-religious matters, there were justification for reproaching it for negligence or deviation in strictly religious education”. (Pope John Paul 11, “Catechesi Tradendae” 69)

“The Catholic School must provide an experience of a living and worshipping community, and in this way contribute to the entry of its members into the full life of the Church”. ... “Prominent among those things which can be expected of a Catholic school are a knowledge and understanding of the content of the faith, the experience of a Christian caring community and the experience of liturgical celebration. (“The Easter People” 134, 136)

- St Edmund's Policy on its provision of Catholic Religious Education and collective worship is explained to all parents and its acceptance is a condition of their children being admitted to St Edmund's.
- This same Policy is explained and must be accepted by all staff, who will be expected to be in complete sympathy with the overall aims of St Edmund's in this regard.
- All worship, prayer and classroom Religious Education organised by St Edmund's for its students is in accordance with the liturgical practice and defined teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Not all the students in St Edmund's are Catholics or Christians. St Edmund's cannot relinquish its right and duty to proclaim the truths of the Catholic Faith and offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Catholic education as described in Church documents. However, to proclaim or offer is not to impose, and the religious freedom and personal conscience of all students must always be respected.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Spiritual Life within St Edmund's – Prayer and Worship

- The community worship, religious life and atmosphere of St Edmund's are the essential complement of the work being done in classroom Religious Education. All students will have the opportunity to experience the liturgical life of the Church's worship and have specific provision for spiritual development. They are also given the opportunity to practise service for others.
- It is natural that the RE staff will take a keen interest in this area in an advisory or administrative role. However, the promotion of the general religious and spiritual life of St Edmund's is the concern not only of the Chaplain, Deputy Head (Religious Life) and members of the RE faculty, but also of the whole Staff.
- No one can be compelled to pray. However, worship involving compulsory attendance represents a provision of opportunities for corporate prayer and worship. Whilst attendance is required and respect for the norms of communal and liturgical worship is to be expected, such provision involves only an invitation to actual participation in prayer.
- Opportunities for students to understand and respect other faiths are provided in the revised PSHE programme and within the RE syllabus as endorsed by the Diocese.

Spiritual Development

St Edmund's aims to do all it can to promote spiritual awareness as part of its development programme so that its members:

- may learn to worship God the Father in spirit and in truth, especially in the Church's liturgy;
- may learn to conduct their lives according to Christ, our model;
- may thus develop into better adults and strive for the growth of the Church;
- will learn to bear witness to the hope that is within them;
- will promote a Christian transformation of the world by which natural values, viewed in the full perspective of mankind redeemed by Christ, may contribute to the good of society as a whole.

St Edmund's organises regular worship through:-

- Chapel Prayers
- Assemblies at which prayers are said;
- Morning Prayers and Night prayers, for boarders, in Chapel and Class Masses;
- Prayer at House Roll Calls;
- Prayer at the beginning of all classes.
- Optional Rosary / Stations of the Cross/ reconciliation/ BC....
- Opportunities for students to assist as Altar Services and extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

St Edmund's also promotes the centrality of spiritual life through:-

- The appointment of the Deputy Head (Religious Life) who has a special responsibility for the Religious and Spiritual life of St Edmund's.
- The observation of the major Feasts of the Church;
- ensuring the central role of the Chaplain in the life of St Edmund's;
- ensuring that students are trained and encouraged towards a full participation in the liturgical and prayer life;
- providing all students, with opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament of Penance;
- providing voluntary Penitential Services throughout the year;
- providing the possibility for students to attend voluntary Masses;
- ensuring night prayers for boarders;
- observing the seasons and customs of the Church;

- ensuring preparation for Morning Prayers within House and Year groups;
- providing a structured organisation of communal prayer with provision for the whole of St Edmund's, of themes consistent with the liturgy;
- giving opportunities and encouragement for students to lead the communal worship;
- requesting all tutors to be present with their tutor groups in Chapel;
- requiring all tutors to assist their tutees in the preparation of the liturgy/prayer services;
- reminding those who are unable to receive the Blessed Sacrament that they are encouraged to receive a blessing at the Communion Rite;
- providing a Chaplaincy Committee which co-ordinates appropriate activities;
- ensuring that symbols of our Religion are prominent in St Edmund's, especially a Crucifix, the College Mission Statement and a prayer book in every classroom;
- providing a Community Service Group;
- maintaining links with the Parishes and Diocese;
- providing opportunities for staff spiritual development; staff accompany and supervise students on Community Service.
- referring to the Catholic nature of St Edmund's in teacher's contracts;

Overall, St Edmund's expects all staff to be committed to its aims and to support its Christian ethos. They must be prepared to support the students in the belief and practice of the Catholic Church. Every lesson should start with a prayer. It is expected that staff will lead the prayer or involve the students by getting them to lead the prayer.

Staff are also expected to prepare their tutor groups for morning prayers and for Mass. Advice and support is available.

All staff, and particularly those organising activities/sports fixtures/trips, should be aware of the law of the church regarding Mass obligation on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation. They should ensure that when possible activities/sports fixtures and trips are not organised in such a way as to prevent students fulfilling their Mass obligation normally with the rest of St Edmund's community or with their families. Where this is not possible then staff are to arrange for alternatives such that Mass can be attended at another appropriate time or elsewhere. This may be by requesting an extra Mass in St Edmund's or by organising the means for students to attend Mass in a local parish.

Evaluation

There is a varied and systematic process of evaluation in place. After all major liturgical events key stakeholders discuss areas that require developments and/ or refinement to ensure that all experiences of prayer are meaningful, authentic and true to the traditions of the Church. In addition, each year selected students complete a worship diary in the Lent term which is used to evaluate the provision and impact of prayer in the College. HSM/HOY and SLT also have a rolling programme to monitor and give feedback to tutors with regards to tutor led worship. Parents, staff and student's complete surveys at set points in the year which are used to evaluate current practice and inform future experiences. Good practice and areas for development are shared amongst staff in order to ensure we provide a formative and meaningful experience for all members of the St Edmund's Community.

The Deputy Head (Religious Life) reports to the Board of Governors each term.

Health and Safety

Candles are only lit when a member of staff is present. The Chapel has fire extinguishers and a fire blanket. All students are aware of the procedures for a fire whether it be during the normal school day, or out of hours for boarders.

Religious Education

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously 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 recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (Article 3 RED 2023)

1. Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
 2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
 3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
 4. In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.
 5. In each year of sixth form schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 5% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.
- (Article 4 RED 2023)

- The Religious Education Syllabus is the central feature of St Edmund's curriculum, and a compulsory subject for all students.

It is recognised, however, that "Religious Education" is a much wider concept than simply that which is covered in the formal RE Syllabus. It is concerned with the total formation of each student, and is the "core of the core curriculum" (Pope John Paul II) inasmuch as the truths of faith should inform all knowledge and understanding in every subject and aspect of St Edmund's curriculum.

St Edmund's Policy on Religious Education aims:

- to promote, as the central and dominant feature of the classroom RE, an engagingly comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the doctrine, scripture and liturgy of the Catholic Church in fidelity to its Magisterium (Teaching Authority);
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- to promote the spiritual and moral development of our students, in imitation of Jesus Christ;
- to encourage among our students committed participation in the life of the Church;
- 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;
- to encourage and support the gift of Faith when it is present and to facilitate its emergence where it is not;

- to promote an intelligent understanding of religious questions in general, together with an ability to evaluate, critically, differing opinions and practices.
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.

St Edmund's undertakes to:

- have an RE Scheme of Work based on the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" and related documents, such as the Bishops' Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales (2023);
- ensure that classroom RE is offered to all students in St Edmund's so it is fully inclusive and accessible to all.
- ensure that sufficient time on the curriculum is available for this provision;
- have RE taught by RE specialists who are committed and practising Catholics who will lead by example.
- help all members of St Edmund's Community to feel valued and welcomed. We propose not impose a Catholic education and way of living.
- ensure that all students understand that any RE Examination or assessment is not a test of personal beliefs, but a test of their knowledge and understanding of the contents of the Faith;
- ensure that all Key Stage 4 students follow the GCSE Syllabus as being most consistent with the overall St Edmund's Policy on RE;
- ensure that all students in Rhetoric follow a suitable Core RE course endorsed by the Diocese of Westminster.

Owner of policy:	Deputy Head (Religious Life)		
Reviewed by:		Deputy Head (Religious Life)	
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