

# RAEDWALD ACADEMY TRUST

## KS4 Haven Religious Studies Policy

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### Origins of the Curriculum

The aim of the Religious Studies curriculum at Parkside Academy is to ensure that all learners develop a deep understanding of the diverse religious, ethical, and philosophical traditions that shape societies today. Our curriculum is designed to equip students with the skills needed to critically engage with a range of belief systems, fostering an environment of respect, empathy, and thoughtful dialogue.

As an alternative provision, we believe that all students should have the same opportunities to access a broad and balanced curriculum as they would in mainstream education. Therefore, we cater for students working at various levels, ensuring that all students can access and engage with the content, regardless of their starting points. The skills developed within the curriculum also meet the needs of students studying for GCSE or Functional Skills qualifications.

Students joining Parkside often have experienced a varied and sometimes disrupted education. A significant portion of our time is dedicated to identifying and addressing gaps in knowledge, ensuring that every student is provided with the support they need to progress.

### Content and Sequencing

In addition to consolidating subject content from Key Stage 3, the statutory areas covered across our Key Stage 4 curriculum include: Section A: The study of religions – beliefs and teachings; Section B: Thematic studies – religions, ethical and philosophical studies.

#### Key Stage 4 Religious Studies Programme

Our curriculum is divided into two main sections:

#### Section A: The study of religions – beliefs and teachings

##### 1. Christianity:

- The nature of God and the Trinity
- Christian beliefs about creation
- The life and teachings of Jesus
- Christian beliefs about sin, salvation, and the afterlife
- Key concepts such as atonement, grace, and the role of the Holy Spirit

##### 2. Islam:

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- The oneness of God (Tawhid)
- The nature of God and the role of angels
- Key beliefs of Sunni and Shi'a Islam
- Islamic teachings on human freedom, predestination, and the Day of Judgement
- The Five Pillars of Islam and their significance in Muslim life

Section B: Thematic Studies – religions, ethical and philosophical studies

### 1. Theme A: Families and Relationships

- Christian and Islamic perspectives on contraception and sexual relationships
- Views on same-sex relationships and marriage
- The nature of families, gender equality, and the roles of men and women

### 2. Theme B: Religion, Peace, and Conflict

- Christian and Islamic beliefs about peace, justice, and reconciliation
- Attitudes towards violence, war, and pacifism
- The Just War Theory and the concept of holy war
- Modern ethical issues such as terrorism, nuclear weapons, and peace-making

## Assessment and Outcomes

We assess pupils for three main reasons:

1. To identify their current understanding and areas for development.
2. To track their progress and understanding over time.
3. To make informed judgments about their progress towards key educational milestones.

### Baseline Assessment

Many of our students have experienced significant gaps in their education and join us at various points throughout the academic year. To understand each student's knowledge and confidence with key themes in Religious Studies, all students complete a baseline assessment upon joining. This helps us capture their current understanding and any areas of development. This information is used to tailor future planning and ensure students make progress in their understanding of different religions, ethical principles, and philosophical arguments. This baseline also informs the targets set on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), with lessons adapted to support each student's progress.

Regular micro-assessments are conducted to gauge understanding. Macro assessments are used to evaluate knowledge at the end of selected topics, mirroring the level of challenge

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students will face in their final examinations. These are delivered in the form of exam style questions during the main lesson.

Teachers use daily assessment strategies, such as RAG rating, to track progress. This information is used to adapt lessons and provide targeted support where needed. Students are also encouraged to self-assess their understanding to develop ownership of their learning journey.

### **Religious Studies and the Wider Curriculum**

#### Cultural Capital and SMSC Development

We believe that it is essential for all students to develop an understanding of the cultural, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions of life. Through the study of different religions and philosophies, students gain insights into how beliefs shape actions and attitudes. This helps them to develop empathy and a broader understanding of the world around them. Lessons often include real-life applications and discussions that relate religious teachings to contemporary issues, helping students to see the relevance of their learning.

#### British Values and Respect for Diversity

Our curriculum promotes the British values of tolerance and respect by encouraging students to explore and understand a wide range of beliefs and practices. This is achieved through the study of different religions and ethical perspectives, fostering an environment where students can appreciate the importance of diversity and inclusivity.

#### Preparation for Future Study and Careers

Religious Studies provides students with the critical thinking skills and ethical awareness necessary for further study and various career paths. Whether students pursue careers in education, social work, law, or the humanities, the skills developed through our curriculum will support them in becoming thoughtful and reflective members of society.

#### Reading and Literacy in Religious Studies

We place a strong emphasis on developing students' literacy skills. Students are encouraged to engage with a variety of texts, including sacred writings, contemporary articles, and philosophical arguments. Key vocabulary and command words are explicitly taught, and

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reading activities are integrated into lessons to support comprehension and critical analysis skills.

Overall, the Religious Studies curriculum at Parkside Academy aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of major world religions and ethical issues, enabling them to become informed, reflective, and empathetic individuals.

### Right to Withdraw

We strive to be an inclusive community but understand that parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents /carers that wish to proceed with this right are asked to write to the head teacher who will then invite them into school to discuss their concerns and clarify the nature of the RE content. We will clearly set out the options open to the parents/carers as set out in education law.

However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or should there be other issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school has a duty of care to look after the pupil, but not to provide alternative education/ lessons. Any arrangement that is made must not incur extra cost to the school or the local authority.