

RE Policy

Albany Academy

Origins of the Curriculum

The aim of the Religious Studies curriculum at the Raedwald Trust 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. This understanding is essential in today's diverse and interconnected world. The study of RE encourages students to ask big questions about life, morality and human purpose. It sharpens analytical skills by examining different perspectives, evaluating arguments, and forming reasoned opinions. Through discussion, debate and written reflection, students learn to express their views clearly and respectfully—skills that are vital in both academic and real-world settings. RE provides a safe space for students to reflect on their own beliefs and values, helping them develop a strong sense of identity and moral compass. The curriculum is derived from the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023. The curriculum is principally thematic with concentric threads.

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 qualifications, such as the GCSE, depending on the entry route chosen by the home school.

Students in our settings 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.

In addition to consolidating subject content from Key Stage 3, the statutory areas covered across our curriculum include:

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

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

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Content and Sequencing

Our fundamental areas of the RE curriculum are listed below:

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:

- 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

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Our Religious Education Short Course follows a two-year programme, intentionally designed to repeat and revisit core religious beliefs, teachings, and philosophical themes each year. This concentric structure reflects the unique profile of our cohort: learners who often join us at varying points throughout the academic year and whose previous educational experiences are fragmented or inconsistent. Many of our students arrive with significant gaps in their understanding of both religious knowledge and the wider cultural literacy that underpins it. For these students, repeated exposure to key religious ideas, such as beliefs about God, creation, human purpose, peace, and justice is essential to building confidence, comprehension, and critical thinking. Repetition and the opportunity to approach topics from different angles are fundamental to developing secure knowledge.

In alignment with the needs of our unique educational setting, we have chosen to focus our Key Stage 4 Religious Education curriculum on the study of Christianity and Islam. While the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus recommends the study of Christianity alongside at least two other principal religions, our decision reflects the short-term and often transitional nature of placements within our Trust. This focused approach enables us to provide a coherent and meaningful learning experience within limited timeframes, while also preparing students effectively for the AQA Short Course GCSE in Religious Studies, which requires the study of two religions. By concentrating on Christianity and Islam, we ensure depth of understanding, consistency in delivery, and the best possible outcomes for our learners. Themes such as 'Family' and 'War' are explored from a Christian perspective as a baseline, with Islamic viewpoints also interwoven to provide comparative insight and deepen understanding. This balanced approach not only meets statutory guidance but also reflects our commitment to inclusivity and cultural awareness.

It is important to note that this policy is written to reflect the curriculum offer of this pathway. Dependent on a student's prior educational experiences, refinements or adaptations may be made to the curriculum content using the programmes of study to ensure it remains appropriate and responsive to their individual needs and circumstances.

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Overview of units of study:

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Cycle A	Christianity Introduction to Christianity Christian Denominations Free Will / Consequences Grace	Islam Introduction into Islam Prophets / Predestination Families and Relationships Religious Views on Relationships Religious Views on Gender Roles and Divorce	Religion, Peace and Conflict Forgiveness and Reconciliation Peace and Justice Holy War Religion and Peace Making
Cycle B	Christianity Introduction to Christianity Sin and Free Will Religious Law Reconciliation	Islam Introduction into Islam Allah / Prophets Angels Families and Relationships The Nuclear Family	Religion, Peace and Conflict Nuclear Weapons Families and Relationships Stability and Protection Religion, Peace and Conflict War Theory Terrorism

Assessment and Outcomes

Formative assessment is embedded throughout all aspects of RE teaching. Teachers continuously monitor students' progress through a range of classroom activities, discussions, and observations. These ongoing assessments provide immediate feedback and inform responsive teaching. In addition, termly summative assessments can be implemented using bespoke tasks that are closely aligned with the term's learning objectives. These assessments not only inform future planning but also help identify areas for targeted intervention or extension. Progress is tracked systematically, and assessment data is used diagnostically to support reintegration, personalised support, and sustained progression.

Assessment data is used both to evaluate individual student progress and to inform broader curriculum development and instructional practice. Students develop religious literacy and are

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equipped with a secure understanding of the key beliefs, practices, and ethical teachings within Christianity and Islam. This foundational knowledge enables students to engage meaningfully with a range of religious and philosophical questions. In parallel, the curriculum fosters critical thinking and reflection, encouraging students to analyse and evaluate moral and spiritual issues. Through this process, they learn to form their own reasoned viewpoints while considering and respecting the perspectives of others.

RE 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

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arguments. Key vocabulary and command words are explicitly taught, and reading activities are integrated into lessons to support comprehension and critical analysis skills.

Overall, the Religious Studies curriculum at Raedwald Trust 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 have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents that wish to proceed with this right are asked to write to the headteacher who will then invite the parents 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 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 students or should there be other issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

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