The Orchard School

Religious Education Policy 2026

Policy Summary

1. This policy outlines the procedures followed and support given surrounding *the teaching of Religious Education* at The Orchard.

Document Detail		
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The Orchard Vision: *Inspiring Success*

Values: *Courage, Determination, Respect and Kindness*

The Orchard Religious Education (RE) Policy 2026

1. Statutory position and entitlement

Religious Education (RE) forms part of the basic curriculum in maintained schools. The Orchard provides RE to pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 in accordance with the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023–2028, as determined by Surrey SACRE. RE is distinct from collective worship and is not religious instruction or an opportunity to promote a particular belief. The school ensures that all pupils can access an inclusive, age-appropriate RE curriculum.

2. Aims

Our RE curriculum:

- develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions represented in Great Britain, and religious and non-religious worldviews.
- encourages curiosity, thoughtful questioning, respectful discussion and reflection on beliefs, values, identity and belonging.
- contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them to live respectfully in a diverse society.

3. Curriculum and teaching

The curriculum follows the Surrey Agreed Syllabus 2023–2028 and the school's published RE long-term plan. Learning is carefully sequenced to build knowledge and understanding through the three Golden Threads: God (theology), Identity (philosophy) and Community (sociology). Teachers use stories, artefacts, discussion, questions, creative responses and, where appropriate, visitors and visits. Children are encouraged to share views without pressure to disclose or adopt personal beliefs.

Reception (EYFS)

Reception children explore the syllabus's six key questions through developmentally appropriate teaching and continuous provision, linked particularly to Understanding the World and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Experiences include belonging, special people and places, celebrations, and religious and non-religious perspectives. EYFS learning also contributes to relevant Early Learning Goals.

Key Stage 1

Years 1 and 2 study Christianity, Judaism and Islam, alongside appropriate religious and non-religious perspectives. Each year includes the five compulsory units and one thematic unit specified by the Surrey syllabus. Teachers use the unit outcomes and prior learning to plan progression. Other beliefs may be encountered where relevant, without replacing required content.

4. Inclusion, equality and respectful discussion
At The Orchard School, we provide an inclusive RE curriculum that respects and celebrates diversity. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we promote understanding and respect for people with protected characteristics, including different religions and beliefs. Teaching is age-appropriate, challenges stereotypes and promotes Fundamental British Values, particularly mutual respect and tolerance. All pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to participate fully, share their views and respect the beliefs and opinions of others.

(Please note: The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are**:** Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation)

5. Assessment and monitoring
Teachers assess learning through classroom discussion, observation, pupils' responses and work, using the knowledge and expected outcomes in the Surrey syllabus. In Reception, relevant learning also informs EYFS assessment. In KS1, assessment informs future teaching and identifies misconceptions; no separate onerous evidence collection is required. The subject leader monitors curriculum implementation and progression through proportionate review of planning, pupil work and pupil voice.

6. Community and cross-curricular opportunities
Links with reading, PSHE, history, geography, art and other subjects support learning, while RE retains its distinct curriculum content. Where appropriate, visits to places of worship and contributions from community members and families enrich pupils' understanding. Visitors and visits are managed in accordance with school safeguarding, risk assessment and visitor procedures.

7. Right of withdrawal
Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child wholly or partly from RE. Requests should be made to the Headteacher, preferably in writing, so the scope and practical arrangements can be recorded. The school may offer a discussion to understand the request but will not require parents to justify their decision or make withdrawal conditional on a meeting. Appropriate supervision will be arranged for pupils withdrawn from RE. The right to withdraw from collective worship is separate.

8. Roles, safeguarding and review
The governing body oversees the policy and RE provision. The Headteacher ensures the curriculum is delivered and that withdrawal arrangements are implemented. The RE subject leader supports planning, resources and monitoring; teachers deliver inclusive, accurate and age-appropriate lessons. Sensitive questions, disclosures and concerns are managed under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory requirements change.

Related documents
Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023–2028; school RE curriculum overview; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Equality information and objectives; SEND policy; Educational Visits procedures.