The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust Religious Education Policy

Agreed by the DCET Trust Board on: 22nd October 2025

Review Date: October 2027

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments and Changes	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
2	04/06/25	Updated to reflect new guidance	07/07/25	Clifton Diocese	E&S
3	25/09/25	Additional guidance added for right to withdraw	22/10/25	Clifton Diocese	Trust Board

Our Vision:

We are a community of Catholic schools together aspiring to give children an all-round education rooted in Christian values in a nurturing environment where they flourish, become lifelong learners and fulfil their potential.

Our Mission:

TOGETHER WE LOVE, WE LEARN, WE LIVE

Our Values:

- Curiosity
- Stewardship
- Resilience
- Forgiveness
- Respect
- Love

Aims

- Knowledge and understanding of Catholic Faith and Life.
- Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose.
- The skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice, including having knowledge and awareness of other faiths.
- To promote the Gospel Values and how they are applied in everyday life whilst providing opportunities for children to develop a personal relationship with God.

Objectives

- To create a school community where Christian values inform every aspect of social life and promote respect and understanding of other faiths.
- To develop awareness, appreciation and the understanding of Catholic beliefs and provide children with experiences of scripture, liturgy and real life context.
- RE is for all. It is a collaborative activity that respects and promotes the child's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence and imagination.
- Every child is supported to express and foster appropriate attitudes; respect for truth; respect for views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral, responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday lie and especially the challenge of living in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society.

Guidelines

- 10% of teaching time is to be given to RE (in line with the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales).

- Clifton Diocese scheme of work supported by God Matters will be taught according to the guidance given in the syllabus, which is relevant to the age group of the classes. RE will be taught through direct teaching, integrated lessons, visits, visitors, and prayers. The topics for the year are fixed and represent a whole school approach. However, the Diocese may request that changes be made to the order of the units in order to accommodate special events or celebrations.
- The School will follow the Liturgical year, alongside God Matters, with emphasis on Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, as well as specific feast days linked to the schools in the Trust.
- The children will be encouraged to see themselves as part of a wider community of God's World. They will be encouraged to consider others through outreach activities, which will range from those set on a yearly bases, those which arise out of the children's own ideas, world events and school and Diocesan initiatives.

Delivery of the RE Curriculum:

Religious Education Religious Education is a core subject which is central to the Catholic life of the school, based on the expectations and aims outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (To know You more Clearly: The Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools, colleges, and academies in England and Wales 2025).

"Our task is to make that place the Catholic school, with religious education at its heart." Catholic Bishops 'Conference of England and Wales (2023)

'To Know you more clearly' Religious Education Directory (RED)

Curriculum branches are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six terms of a school year.

The model curriculum is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and leads pupils on a journey in each year of schooling that gives a sequence to the learning. As they revisit each branch in each year of school, they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows them to make links between the four knowledge lenses which are: hear, believe, celebrate and live. The six curriculum branches studied in each year group are: Creation and Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the Ends of the Earth, and Dialogue and Encounter.

The Structure of Religious Education Teaching

The programme of study for Religious Education in Catholic schools has four structural elements:

- Knowledge lenses – setting out what pupils are studying
- Ways of knowing – setting out the skills pupils are developing (depicted as head, heart and hands)

- Expected outcomes – setting out what pupils will be able to do at the end of each phase
- Curriculum branches – the programme of study.

Staff Development

- All members of the Trust are encouraged to develop their own confidence and expertise through training with Clifton Diocese and in-service training that maybe led by individual schools or by the Trust.
- Provision will be made through release time for each RE Leader to monitor assessment throughout the relevant school and liaise across schools

Prayer and Liturgies

See separate policy

The Role of the RE Leader in each school

- Formulate and maintain the RE and Prayer and Liturgy policy
- As part of the Trust and School Development Plans, there will be an area that is focussed on Prayer and Liturgy as well as RE.
- Ensure that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils.
- Organise themes for Worship, Assembly Rotas and to ensure that staff have the resources they require.
- Inform newly appointed colleagues of the policy and support them in its implementation.
- Assist the governors, Head Teacher and CEO in carrying out their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship and RE.
- Maintain and develop effective procedures and documentation.
- Observe RE lessons and Acts of Prayer and Liturgy.
- Lead and organise staff training.
- Attend in-service courses and report back to staff.
- Keep up to date with Diocesan developments/initiatives.
- Monitor standards in RE through work scrutinies.
- Engage pupils in discussion through pupil conferencing.
- Evaluate existing resources.
- Budget efficiently.
- Facilitate liaison, moderation and sharing of expertise across the Trust.

Assessment and Monitoring:

Religious Education will be monitored once a term through pupil conferencing, book looks and lesson drop ins. Feedback will be given to staff and staff will be supported by the Religious Education Lead to ensure actions are being completed and moved forward.

There is a document that has been put together by the Trust to support RE leads with monitoring.

Recording of Learning:

Learning will be recorded in a variety of ways: every pupil should have an RE book to record their learning in (usually from year 1). Classes may have floor books which will hold whole class discussions. Photos may be taken and annotated by the pupils to record their understanding of the learning that has taken place.

Assessment data is recorded in terms 2, 4 and 6. Teachers use pupil work, floor books, verbal contributions, branch quizzes and RED outcomes to inform them of pupil's attainment and an overall RE judgement is given – either well below the expected standard, working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard or working at greater depth. Assessment moderation is conducted between teachers and across phases and schools at least once per year.

Monitoring is conducted by the senior leadership team and RE leader in a number of ways including:

✓ Learning walks (with book looks)

✓ Student voice

✓ Assessment data analysis

✓ Pupil progress meetings

Findings are reviewed and next steps identified. These are shared with the senior leadership team, through LGC reports to school governors, Trust CEO and directors through Ethos and Standards committee reports to the board.

Right of withdrawal from Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is a core component of the curriculum in all Catholic schools and is central to the distinctive mission and identity of our Trust. As religion and belief continue to play an increasingly visible role in public life, it is important that all pupils are given the opportunity to explore religious and non-religious worldviews, develop respect for others, and engage meaningfully with questions of faith, ethics, and identity. Under the Education Act 1996, parents (or pupils aged 18 or over) have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of Religious Education. No reason is required to exercise this right. While schools must comply with such requests, we encourage parents to understand the aims and scope of the RE curriculum before deciding to withdraw. The Headteacher may invite

parents to discuss the request in more detail, including whether it applies to the entire curriculum or only specific content.

A Catholic Context

All schools in our Trust are Catholic by foundation. As such, the Catholic life and mission of the school are woven through every aspect of school life—from the relationships we foster, to how we teach and celebrate together. This means that:

• While it is possible to withdraw from RE lessons, it is not possible to withdraw from the broader Catholic life and mission of the school, as it is embedded across the curriculum, daily routines, displays, celebrations, and community activities.

• Our schools seek to be inclusive communities. Choosing to withdraw a child from RE can risk creating an exclusive experience for that child, which we would respectfully discourage.
Important – Limitations to Withdrawal

• If a pupil is withdrawn from RE, the school has a duty to supervise the pupil, but not to provide alternative teaching. Pupils may be asked to work independently in another supervised space (e.g., a library or breakout area).

• Parents are encouraged to provide appropriate learning materials that reflect their own faith or worldview for their child to use during this time.

• Religious content may still be encountered in other areas of the curriculum (e.g., History, PSHE, Citizenship, English), and there is no right to withdraw from these subjects. Spontaneous discussion of religious matters may also occur as part of normal classroom interaction.

• Schools are not expected to incur additional costs or resources in accommodating a withdrawal from RE.

Managing the Process

• Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing and will be acknowledged by the school.
• While not a legal requirement, schools may offer a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the implications of the request.

• The withdrawal will remain in place until rescinded in writing by the parent or pupil (if over 18).

• It is considered good practice for withdrawal requests to be reviewed annually, to ensure they remain appropriate and understood