

Ursuline High School

Religious Formation Policy

The Religious Formation policy is rooted in the Mission Statement of the Ursuline High School where, inspired by the work and life of St. Angela Merici, we seek to build a Christian community which is characterised by a spirit of respect, trust and joy, and which seeks to promote the spiritual and moral development of each individual.

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught to all students across the school from Years 7 to 11, and Religious Studies is offered to students in Years 12 & 13 as an A Level. All Sixth Form students participate in the Sixth Form Faith Development Programme which takes place over five separate days in Years 12 & 13.

In Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8), students follow a curriculum in line with the National Catholic Curriculum Directory which is designed to meet the needs of all students, and in particular providing challenge for the high prior attaining students.

The following topics are covered in Years 7 and 8

YEAR SEVEN		YEAR EIGHT
1	<i>The Ursuline Family</i>	<i>God's Covenant with Israel</i>
2	<i>The Authority of the Catholic Church / Trinity</i>	<i>Jesus—The New Covenant</i>
3	<i>Sacraments of Initiation</i>	<i>Good Vs. Evil</i>
4	<i>Hinduism</i>	<i>The Philanthropy Project/Catholic Social Teaching</i>
5	<i>Church History</i>	<i>Islam</i>

Year 7 & 8 students are assessed according to the Ursuline High School RE standards which have been designed using the national Catholic Bishops' Levels of Attainment as a scaffold to ensure that every student makes outstanding progress from their starting points, with 'outstanding' being defined as the equivalent of what was formerly referred to as two full levels of progress.

Each standard gets progressively more difficult each term, both in terms of the complexity of the topics and in the challenge associated with each 'trigger verb'.

Thus each standard can be described as follows:

Bronze standard: *Aimed at students who attained below Level 4 in KS2 English, enabling them to be working at the equivalent of 3a by the end of Year 7, and 4a by the end of Year 8.*

Silver standard: Aimed at students who attained Level 4 in KS2 English, enabling them to be working at the equivalent of 4a by the end of Year 7, and 5a by the end of Year 8.

Gold standard: Aimed at students who attained 5c or 5b in KS2 English, enabling them to be working at the equivalent of 5a by the end of Year 7, and 6a by the end of Year 8.

Platinum standard: Aimed at students who attained 5a or Level 6 in KS2 English, enabling them to be working at the equivalent of 6a by the end of Year 7, and at least a 7a by the end of Year 8.

In Key Stage 4 (Years 9 – 11) students study the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Syllabus B: Paper One on Catholic Christianity and Paper Two on Judaism. The following topics are covered in Years 9 – 11:

Component 1 – Catholic Christianity		Component 2 – Perspectives on Faith	
Catholic beliefs, teachings, practices, sources of authority and forms of expression in relation to six topics:		Jewish beliefs, teaching and practices; the application of religion, philosophy and ethics to relationships, families, peace and conflict:	
Creation	<p>Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</p> <p>96 marks (plus 5 marks for SPG)</p> <p>50% of GCSE</p> <p>Your exam will cover any four of the topics to the left and you must answer all questions (24 marks per topic)</p> <p>There will be one five-part question per topic of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks with the 12 mark question requiring extended writing and testing analysis and evaluation</p>	Jewish belief and teachings	<p>Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</p> <p>96 marks (plus 5 marks for SPG)</p> <p>50% of GCSE</p> <p>Your exam will cover all of the topics on the left and you must answer all questions (24 marks per topic)</p> <p>There will be one five-part question per topic of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks with the 12 mark question requiring extended writing and testing analysis and evaluation</p>
Incarnation		Jewish practices	
Trinity		Religion, relationships and families	
Redemption		Religion, peace and conflict	
Church			
Eschatology			

In Years 12 and 13 students study the OCR Religious Studies: comprised of Development of Christian Thought, Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at A Level where students sit three 2 hour papers at the end of Year 13.

The aims of the Religious Education Programme:

To deepen student's awareness of the person and work of Jesus Christ and so help them enjoy 'freedom and glory as children of God' and to have 'life through his name' (Romans 8:21 & John 20:31), and to reflect upon the goodness of God's creation in all things.

To provide a comprehensive and assessed course of study in religious belief and practice with particular reference to the Roman Catholic tradition.

To encourage students to do their best following the spirit of St. Angela Merici of excellence and service to others and to prepare students, as members of the community of faith, to take their place in a pluralistic society equipped with a knowledge of and respect for the beliefs of others.

To equip students with the skills necessary to recognise and evaluate moral issues and the confidence to make and carry out decisions congruent with their Christian/religious commitment.

To support students through the period of adolescence by helping them to recognise their unique dignity as persons created in the image of God.

Within the Religious Education Programme there are opportunities for students to deepen the knowledge and understanding of their faith and reflect upon ways of making a positive contribution to the building of God's kingdom in the wider community and in the world.

The Religious Education Programme has regular reviews of its schemes of work which are in line with the National Catholic Curriculum Directory and Diocesan policy.

Whole School Curriculum

The Governors affirm the Ursuline High School's commitment to the charism and spirit of St. Angela Merici which asks that we develop young women of faith who are committed to excellence and justice for all and to 'serviam' – serving others. *The school curriculum also seeks to promote a respect for people of other faiths, and the school achieves this not only through the Religious Education programme, but also through the celebration of other faiths in the whole school calendar and through assemblies.*

All those who are involved in aspects of the school's life should take time to reflect on the opportunities which exist for the spiritual and moral formation of our students.

The Chaplaincy

The Governors undertake to provide and fund a full-time lay Chaplain for Ursuline High School. The Chaplain is responsible to the Headteacher and works with the Lead Practitioner in charge of Ethos to provide a faith development programme across the school. The Chaplain works in close co-operation and collaboration with the Heads of Year, the Director of Music and Performance as well as the Religious Education Faculty. The Chaplain ensures that there are a good number of opportunities for students to reflect on their faith and spiritual development.

School services, prayers and liturgies – These are organised by the Chaplain and student Chaplaincy teams with the collaboration of staff members.

The Chaplain draws up a theme and thought for each week and relevant prayer sheets are made available to staff and students in the staff room and registers. These take into account the Sunday Liturgical readings / theme, any significant religious feasts (including those of

other religions) and any special anniversaries including current events in the news. These are a resource for the daily act of collective worship.

Classes in the lower school take it in turn to lead Morning Prayers in the chapel for another class or two according to the key stage. Guidelines for the prayer services are made available by the Chaplain and classes are encouraged to be creative in choice of theme and presentation. The chaplaincy reps and other students prepare and deliver the Morning Prayers, with guidance from their form tutor and the chaplain, as necessary.

Masses are celebrated for all year groups at key moments of the academic year: in September – Masses of the Holy Spirit, in October – the Feast of St Ursula, in January – the Feast of St Angela and in May – Yr 13 Celebration Mass, in July – Thanksgiving Masses. Voluntary lunchtime Masses are held on Holy Days of Obligation. A staff Mass takes place on the first day of the academic year and on special occasions such as an Inset day of reflection, the retirement or demise of a staff member, a prayer service or Mass takes place. Staff pray together three times a week.

Special assemblies for the whole school take place for Christmas, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week / Easter. Appropriate prayer services take place during Advent for all KS3 classes. Reconciliation Services take place for as many students as possible in Years 7 to 10. Voluntary prayer services are sometimes held during lunch break in the chapel to celebrate different occasions: Languages week, All Souls' Day, The Way of the Cross during Lent, etc. At the start of Advent a Christmas Tree Service is held in the foyer. In May/June a creative prayer space is set up for students taking external exams – mainly Year 11s.

Our students are predominantly Catholic. Before admittance, parents of non-Catholic girls agree to their attendance at Mass and the various services. At the same time, every attempt is made to be sensitive and respectful of their needs.

Chapel – The refurbished chapel is located in the centre of the school and the Blessed Sacrament is kept there. It is used for the student led Morning Prayers, Advent services for each KS3 class, other smaller services and Masses, some RE lessons, meditation / mindfulness, as a place of prayer and a quiet place to reflect and talk. It is at times used for performances by visiting choirs. The chapel is made available to students at break and lunchtimes if they wish to pray quietly.

School Retreats – Students in Years 7 to 11 have the opportunity of experiencing one Retreat Day every year. These are based around various themes designed to encourage students to reflect on their own faith and spiritual journey. The Religious Education Faculty are responsible for the retreats, working in collaboration with the Chaplain and Heads of Year, for leading, co-ordinating and evaluating these retreat days. Students are asked for a contribution towards the costs of these retreats which are often held off site at Sacred Heart Parish.

Sixth Form Faith Development Programme – Sixth formers attend 5 Faith Developments, one per term. A variety of approaches are used and there are different themes: "Turning Faith into Action", an Interfaith Day, a Social Action Day, "Values Count" and "Journeying." They include trips to different places of worship, talks and workshops led by external speakers, discussions in form groups, presentations and always time of reflections. These Faith Days offer sixthformers the opportunity to reflect on wider issues and their own life.

Sixth formers are also offered the possibility of following a preparation course and becoming Eucharistic Ministers within the school. The area bishop normally visits the school for the Commissioning Mass of these students which usually takes place in January for the whole of Sixth Form.

Living out SERVIAM – The school ethos of *SERVIAM – I will service* permeates the school. Students know that they are expected to go out of their way to help others, to use their talents for the good of all, to think of the wider school community and beyond. Students live out “SERVIAM” in their relationships with each other and by contributing to the life of the school and in the community. They are encouraged to keep a record of what they do on the SERVIAM Passport which is on-line as part of Frog, our Virtual Learning Environment.

The school has produced a booklet “Serviam Explained” for staff and parents to help them understand the Ursuline ethos and get to know St Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursulines.

Philanthropy & Charity Initiatives – Students are continually reminded to think and pray for people on the margins of our society, and for the poor in countries both far and near. The chaplaincy and charity prefects take the lead on this and invite students across the school to get involved. With the help of staff, various fund raising events are held eg. KS3 Showcase, Christmas Carol Service, Multi-cultural Evening, sponsored events. Christmas shoeboxes are sent off through Operation Christmas Child and collections have taken place for the Wimbledon Foodbank and refugees in Calais. Various appeals and cake sales to support charities are held throughout the year.

All students in KS3 and Yr 12 help organize a Christmas Fair with the proceeds going to charities. Yr 8 classes adopt a charity and work on presentations in a bid to win £1,000 (1st prize) or £250 (2nd and 3rd prize) for it through the First Give project. Yr 9 students participate in an Enterprise with Serviam project with all funds raised going towards one of the charities they learnt about through the Philanthropy project.

Community Service & Youth Involvement – Students, especially in Sixth Form, are encouraged to do some community service and volunteering. Some opportunities are offered to sixthformers by the school as Enrichment: ie. helping out at the Perseid School (formerly St Ann’s Special School) and at the Faith in Action Homeless Drop In Centre. Sixth formers also help older people with their mobiles and IT skills through the Silver Surfers sessions, and there are Generations Together Forums and Generations Question Together discussions in conjunction with Wimbledon College and Sacred Heart Parish. A few sixthformers each year participate in the HCPT Easter pilgrimage caring for vulnerable children with very special needs.

Students in KS4 can opt to work towards a Duke of Edinburgh award and one of the tasks involves volunteering for a good number of hours (depending on the level - Bronze, Silver and Gold). Some Year 11 students participate in The Challenge (National Citizen Service) in the summer and one week is devoted to working with a charity or community organisation.

Sixth formers are invited to take on leadership roles in the school by becoming prefects or helping out with various activities. They also have the opportunity of organising events through their Societies. At times they also help out with one off events in school or in the community eg: Foodbank collections at supermarkets, chugging, etc.

Students in the lower school are able to become Student Council reps, Chaplaincy reps or Student Leaders in various areas of the school. They contribute in various ways, helping out with events and taking the lead as necessary.

Ursuline Links – Our school is part of a network of Ursuline Schools here in Britain and across the world. The headteacher has linked up with Ursuline sisters from across the world to help produce a much needed booklet on “Ursuline Education in the Spirit of St Angela Merici” in English and French for Ursuline schools across all the continents.

An Ursuline Education Conference is held each year in March for senior leaders and governors from all Ursuline schools in England. An Ursuline Student Conference is

organised every two years. Throughout the year links between the schools are strengthened by sharing good practise and through visits of staff as well as students.

Sixthformers have the opportunity of participating in Ursuline Links projects during the summer. These projects bring together sixthformers and young adults from all the Ursuline schools in the UK and take place in London – summer camp and social justice project, as well as New Orleans.

The Religious Formation Policy is reviewed every two years.

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