

SCHOOL POLICY ON RELIGION

Revised 2012

PREAMBLE

The Wendywood fraternity comprises a multiplicity of religious beliefs and practices. The rights of each group or individual are sacred and people are free to observe their practices without prejudice.

Wendywood is a state school and as such subscribes to the policies laid down by the National Department of Education. The religious policy was prescribed in the Government Gazette of September 2003. In this document the state advocates a co-operative model affirming both legal separation and creative interaction. The state neither advances nor inhibits religion. The policy is one of positive impartiality where tolerance and respect are fundamental.

AIMS OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- In terms of the Revised National Curriculum, education about religions is for the purpose of achieving “religious literacy”.
- Religious Education should enable learners to engage with a variety of religious traditions in a way that encourages spiritual and moral growth.
- This engagement must affirm their own identity while leading them to an informed understanding and acceptance of the religious identities of others.
- Religious Education should increase their understanding of themselves and others and deepen their capacity for empathy and tolerance.
- It should be accepted as an important, but not exclusive, source of moral values.
- Religious Education should not be the mere technical dissemination of facts, but should be used to facilitate learning.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT WENDYWOOD

- The school's approach must be academic and not devotional as stipulated in the outcomes of the Life Orientation learning area.
- Religious traditions should be presented objectively and neutrally as part of a secular programme.
- Any attempt at indoctrination of learners is to be condemned.
- No learner or educator will interfere with or criticize the religious beliefs of another.
- Tolerance and respect will be instilled in educators and learners.
- Any bible stories used should be aimed at teaching values and morals rather than religious doctrine.
- Readings and/or prayers at assemblies must be non-discriminatory with the emphasis based on morals and values.
- Only hymns that worship the universal God may be sung.
- Learners are encouraged to inform their peers of the significance of various religious practices and holy days at appropriate times.
- Learners are encouraged to provide the Principal with suitable readings or other material for incorporation in school assemblies.
- Learners or educators wishing to form special groups for observance (eg. Students' Christian Association) will be encouraged to do so provided they do not pressurise others to join these groups against their free will.

THE LIFE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

should include information regarding:

- the principles and practices of the main religions of South Africa
- the customs, values and beliefs of the diverse South African cultures
- the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- the importance of showing an appreciation of, an respect for, people of different values, beliefs, practices and cultures.

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS AND FESTIVALS

- Special leave for religious observance will be granted to educators and administrative and support staff in accordance with the leave regulations stipulated by the Gauteng Department of Education.
- This must be done on standard leave forms, well in advance of the festival.
- Leave will be granted to learners for religious observance at the request of parents. Learners must take responsibility for catching up any work missed.
- Muslim boys are granted leave on Fridays to attend mosque. They are required to "sign out" at the office when leaving the premises.
- The school will make every effort to refrain from organising tests, examinations or special events during periods of religious observance. If this

cannot be avoided no learner will be penalised. Special arrangements will be made for these students

THE WEARING OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS OR ATTIRE

- Learners may wear religious or cultural symbols or attire provided that official application is made by parents and that evidence is provided to the school principal, of the religious or cultural significance of these symbols.

Wendywood High School is committed to the teaching of strong values and aims to prepare all learners with the knowledge, skills, ethics and tolerance required for responsible citizenship.

RELIGION POLICY	
Compiled by the school stake holders and ratified by the School Governing Body at a General Governing Body meeting held on: _____	
Signatories:	Principal
.....	Chairman
.....	IDSO
.....	District Director