RONDEBOSCH EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS POLICY

JUNE 2019

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1. Introduction

Rondebosch East Primary School acknowledges the importance that faith and religion plays in the lives of our community. The various traditions and religious observances are an important element of every learner, parent and staff member. To this end our democratic society demands that all religions and their followers have the right to exist and to be respected.

Rondebosch East Primary School is a multi-faith and multi-cultural school. As a result, we commit to the right of all faiths to be acknowledged and respected. No discrimination against anyone on the basis of their religion will be tolerated and no individual will be denied access to the school because of their individual faith. To assist us in this task, the following policy sets out the guidelines along which Rondebosch East Primary will observe our religious freedom.

2. Protocol

This policy will address two elements of religious observance, namely:

2.1 The teaching of religion education and

2.2 Whole school observances – eg. School assemblies, Parent meetings, Prize Giving, etc.

3. Teaching Religious Education

The formal curriculum addresses the teaching of religion education across all the grades. Through the learning area Life Skills/Life Orientation, Intermediate & Senior Phase learners are exposed to different aspects of religion education – From the various faiths and their symbols through to the founders, rituals, festivals, etc of individual faiths. The purpose of religious education in the formal curriculum is to encourage tolerance, respect and understanding for the different religions, their observances and practices.

Educators involved in teaching Life Orientation must seek to promote the outcomes as determined by the national curriculum statement. Personal religious views or opinions of educators may not interfere with the delivery of the curriculum. To this end learners will learn about other faiths, their traditions, beliefs and practices and this will help learners understand that despite our diversity we can live and work together with dignity and respect.

4. Whole School Observances

School assemblies will seek to build on morals and values that are common to all religions. Staff leading assemblies may use scriptures, viz., The Bible, The Quran, The Torah as a source for the lesson. The lesson should not be dogmatic nor propose a particular faith as being the only truth. Special assemblies celebrating religious festivals such as Easter, Eid, Christmas, etc., may be coordinated by assigned staff members (Special Day Committee). Visiting speakers must conform to the above policy and be briefed by the principal before addressing learners.

5. General Assemblies and formal Meetings/ Events

Where formal assemblies and meetings are held and prayers form part of the proceedings, representatives from at least two faiths will be included to lead the prayers. The Christian and Muslim faiths are the core religions represented at Rondebosch East Primary School. Scripture readings and prayers will be shared by both faiths.
A prayer room will be made available for all Muslim parents should the school have a programme that extends into the prayer times.

6. Special Religious Days

Learners and staff have the right to celebrate special religious days should these fall during the school term.
The school will not be closed on these religious days. As a result, learners who observe these days will be marked absent on the class register. Staff may apply for special leave for religious purposes on the religious day.
Departmental policy allows for the observance of a special religious day as guaranteed in the constitution.
2 Days is applied for by the school – Ascension Day & one Eid.

7. Religious Dress

Rondebosch East Primary School will respond sensitively to religious observances and practices that are core to the observance of the faith. *Refer to Learner Code of Conduct Policy.*

7.1 Muslim girls will be permitted to wear a head scarf on the following conditions:
  7.1.1 that the scarf is in the colour of the school – maroon
  7.1.2 that the scarf is worn at all times and not only when it is convenient.
7.2 Muslim boys will not be allowed to wear a fez during school hours, since this is not a requirement for faithful observance.
7.3 The decoration of henna on the hands and feet is not permitted. This is a cultural practice and not a requirement for faithful observance.

8. Attendance at Mosque

School will dismiss at 12h30 on a Friday afternoon to allow for all Muslim learners and staff to attend prayers.
Muslim staff will return to school after prayers and sign out at the end of the day.