



WEST LINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE (TIME FOR REFLECTION) POLICY





Rationale

[The Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#) ("The 1980s Act") continues to provide the statutory basis for local authorities to provide Religious Observance (RO) in Scottish Schools. As a result, all Scottish schools must provide an element of religious observance throughout the school year. Religious Observance (also called Time for Reflection in the [Curriculum for Excellence 2017](#) guidance) is defined as follows:

"Community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school's community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community".

Religious Observance is a 'whole-school activity', by which we mean members of the school community, including staff, pupils, parents and representatives of faith and non-faith groups and communities, may take part.

Curriculum for Excellence: Religious Observance 2017

Religious observance is different from and should not be confused with the Curriculum area [Religious and Moral Education \(RME\)](#). During RME, pupils learn about Christianity and other World Religions through festivals, artefacts and beliefs.

At West Linton Primary School, in recognition of the diverse community we serve, we set out to provide a range of Religious Observance (Time for Reflection) opportunities across the school year that promote "spiritual development". These opportunities give young people a chance to recognise, reflect upon and develop a deeper understanding of beliefs and values present in our community and Scotland today.

Aims

At West Linton Primary School, our Vision is *Learning together to achieve our best* through the values of *Honesty, Respect and Kindness*.

Our aims are:

- To ensure all pupils receive a high quality inclusive education in order to become confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners.
- To work in collaboration with our community and stakeholders to promote quality opportunities for our young people.
- To build and develop resilient pupils equipped to tackle problems in their life and learning with a growth mind set.
- To ensure all pupils are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible and Respected.

The aims of our Religious Observance (Time for Reflection) Policy align with our Vision, Values and Aims in both our commitment to working with community partners and to support our young people to be reflective in their thinking and to contribute to resilience through spiritual development. The approach also supports understanding in world religions and non-religious beliefs to grow and develop young people's own beliefs, values, understanding and empathy towards others.



Partnership

Parents/carers have a significant role in fostering and supporting positive attitudes towards the views of others. Parents should be reassured that the Religious Observance planned by West Linton Primary School adopts an open and respectful approach and does not seek to compromise the beliefs of any pupils or their families. Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, parents have the right to ask for their child to be withdrawn from Religious Observance. Any parent/carer who wishes their child to be withdrawn from religious observance should make this known to the Head Teacher. Where children are withdrawn from religious observance, the dates of the intended assemblies where this is planned will be shared with them and an offer to meet to discuss the alternative arrangements for their child(ren). It is up to the school to plan and deliver alternative arrangements for those children who are withdrawn from religious observance. These alternatives are planned to align with in-class learning, or will be standalone opportunities related to an aspect of school improvement. Pupils withdrawn from Religious Observance are not at an educational disadvantage.

Planning & Delivery

At West Linton Primary School, we hold weekly Assemblies and Citizenship Gatherings. Our assembly calendar has a variety of learning opportunities, including Building Resilience, Pupil Voice, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Global Goal, RME, National Celebration Days and Religious Observance.

Scotland is a society with a longstanding Christian tradition. However, Scotland is home to other faith and belief traditions. Scotland remains a country where people continue to be welcomed and we can expect Scotland to become increasingly diverse in the range of faith and belief traditions represented. The Religious Observance at West Linton Primary School is developed in a way which reflects and understands this diversity.¹

To ensure a balanced and diverse approach the Religious Observance opportunities planned at West Linton through our 'in-school' offer are Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Humanist and Non-Religious in content. It is felt that this currently takes account of the school community, however our Religious Observance offer can change and diversify as different cultures and beliefs become more prominent.

As well as this, the school community will visit St Andrew's Church in the Village twice per year, at Christmas and Easter. During these visits to St Andrew's Church, particular classes share their learning about Christmas and Easter in the format of a sharing assembly. This approach supports all young people to contextualise their learning in these Christian Festivals. During these Services, the Minister at St Andrew's also gives a short address to the school pupils and parents in attendance.

Similarly, during our 'in-school' religious observance opportunities, visitors may attend to discuss an element of their faith or values. These sessions will include Time for Reflection around a particular festival or celebration, or a key element of the faith. In all situations where members of a faith community attend,

¹ Advice and Guidance - Curriculum for Excellence: Religious Observance, **Scottish Government**, 2017
Updated Sept 2023 – Review 2030 (or as the community beliefs change)



they share their values and religious stories/ celebrations as a viewpoint; this is to foster an understanding of this point of view/ belief to support youngsters to become more aware of and to develop their own beliefs and values. Children are not asked to pray or complete worship in any religion, however our visitors may give a blessing to the whole assembly group, which is in keeping with their faith.

Figure 1. Shows an example of the types of RO opportunities planned for pupils at West Linton Primary School. Time spent on these would be around 20 minutes each with the exception of the Christmas and Easter Assemblies, which are pupil led and therefore longer.

Month	Theme	Faith/ Viewpoint	Location
August	Hope	Christianity	School
September	What is Humanism?	Humanism	School
September	Who is Muhammed?	Islam	School
November	Diwali	Hindu	School
December	Hanukah	Judaism	School
December	Christmas	Christian	Church
December	Spiritual, but not religious	Atheist/ Agnostic	School
March	Ramadan	Islam	School
March	Easter	Christian	Church
May	New Life	Christian	School

Religious Observance and Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence aims to enable all young people to develop the four key capacities: Successful Learners, Responsible Citizens, Effective Contributors, Confident Individuals.



The Religious Observance planned by West Linton Primary School aspires to support the aims of Curriculum for Excellence by helping young people to:

- learn, grow and develop their own sense of self,
- be confident in expressing their own views and values,
- become global citizens who understand the views and beliefs of others and
- to contribute to respectful reflection and discussion about the different viewpoints of those from different faith backgrounds.