

POLICY: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

POLICY REF. NO. R1/08/2008 (Rev No. 0)

DATE: 6 AUGUST 2008

FACTORS GOVERNING POLICY

1. The RBPS policy is based on the Department of Education's "*Policy on Religion and Education*" of September 2003 (hereinafter referred to as "*the Government Policy*"). As such, the RBPS policy reflects the definitions and terminology utilised therein and firmly adheres to the principles, spirit and values enshrined therein.
2. It is recognised that the Government Policy is not prescriptive but is intended to provide a framework for schools to determine policies in accordance with the Constitutional values, acknowledging the religious diversity of South Africa whilst also having regard to the ethos of the school.
3. In accordance with the Government Policy the RBPS Governing Body is required to formulate the nature and content of the implementation of Religious Instruction and Religious Observances at RBPS. The RBPS Governing Body resolution is set out hereunder and is also embodied in the document entitled Practical Implementation of Religious Instruction and Religious Observances annexed hereto.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

1. Religious Instruction refers to a programme of instruction which is aimed at providing information regarding a particular set of religious beliefs with a view to promoting adherence thereto.
2. Religion Education is the curricular programme taught at RBPS in terms of the Government Policy for learning about religion, forming part of the Life Orientation learning area.
3. The Governing Body of RBPS recognises that Religious Instruction is an integral part of the learner's overall education at RBPS. It is acknowledged that the Government Policy encourages schools to allow the use of their facilities for Religious Instruction.
4. The Governing Body will consider representations in writing from members of various faiths from time to time relating to Religious Instruction at RBPS and approval may be granted where appropriate.

5. Approval for a Religious Instruction programme to be granted will take into account the multi-faith nature of the school, the representation of the different religions in the school, the ethos of the school and the need to ensure the minimum interruption from the core educational purposes of the school.
6. Attendance at a programme of Religious Instruction shall be voluntary and suitable arrangements are to be made for learners who are not attending.
7. Religious Instruction programmes should be conducted in a manner that does not interrupt or detract from the core educational purposes of the school.
8. Persons offering Religious Instruction would do so under the authority of the religious body, and would not be required to be registered with the South African Council of Educators. The Government Policy provides that Religious Instruction would in most cases be provided by clergy, or other persons accredited by faith communities to do so.
9. Voluntary gatherings and meetings of religious associations during break times are also permitted.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1. The types of Religious Observance contemplated by the Government Policy are:
 - 1.1 Voluntary public occasions, which make use of school facilities, for a religious service on a day of worship or rest
 - 1.2 Voluntary occasions when the school community of teachers and pupils gather for a Religious Observance
 - 1.3 Observances held in a voluntary gathering of pupils and/or teachers during a school break ; and
 - 1.4 An observance which may be ongoing, and entail other dimensions such as dress, prayer times and diet.
2. The Governing Body will annually review Religious Observances to be conducted at RBPS. Additional requests made in writing may be considered from time to time and approval granted where appropriate.
3. Approval for a Religious Observance to be granted will take into account the multi-faith nature of the school, the representation of the different religions in the school, the ethos of the school and the need to ensure the minimum interruption from the core educational purposes of the school.

4. A Religious Observance may be part of a school assembly. Where a Religious Observance is included in a school assembly, staff and learners may be excused on grounds of conscience from attending a Religious Observance component, and suitable arrangements must be made for these learners.
5. Where the segregation of learners according to religion is contemplated, the school must consider and mitigate the impact of peer pressure on children.

Adopted by School Governing Body on 8 March 2004

Revised by School Governing Body on 14 May 2008

SIGNED:

Chairman RBPS Governing Body