

# Wilson's School Policy

## Concerning the Ethos and Religious Character of the School, Religious Education and Collective Worship in the School.

### **Ethos and Religious Character**

1. The school's ethos is defined in the school's ethos statement, agreed between Governors and the Diocesan Board of Education (see appendix 1)
2. The school's religious character is defined in a memorandum agreed between the Governors of Wilson's and the Diocesan Board of Education (see appendix 2)
3. Notwithstanding its status as an Academy school designated as having a religious character, the school does not consider itself to be a church school. It does not consider as part of its mission the promotion or nurturing of any religious belief, nor of religious belief in general.

### **Religious Education**

4. Religious Education is a formal and discrete part of the curriculum at KS3 and KS4. Religious Education at KS5 continues via a taught programme of philosophy and ethics taught in Year 11 (following the completion of the KS4 programme in Year 10) and is supplemented through assemblies and the tutorial programme in Year 12 and 13.
6. RE recognises explicitly the Christian heritage of this country as well as the contribution made by other religions and cultures.
7. It is part of the task of all departments and all structured activities in the school to promote the values and virtues of respect and tolerance for all; the pursuit of truth and justice; the challenge of service and duty; the experience of mutual trust and reconciliation and the pursuit of excellence.
8. All pupils are encouraged to attend religious education classes; however, parents have the right to withdraw their son from RE lessons. Such requests should be submitted in writing to the Head.

### **Collective Worship**

9. Collective worship provides an opportunity to uphold and promote the character of the school.
10. The school acknowledges its obligation to provide for all pupils the opportunity for a daily act of worship in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
11. Acts of Worship include assemblies and Form Tutor sessions. Although the regular schedule for these will change from year to year, the school is committed (venues permitting) to providing one formal assembly per week for Years 7-11, one per fortnight in the Sixth Form and one Year meeting per week in Years 7-11.
12. The school operates current DfE policy in relation this area and in particular, given the diversity of our community, emphasises that collective worship is an opportunity for students to reflect on their own beliefs; to develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values; to consider spiritual and moral issues to respond to worship. It is not the schools policy that each and every element listed here be included in every Act of Worship.
13. The school notes and agrees with the statement included in DfE Circular 1/94 (page 57) that, "*although worship is to be regarded as veneration paid to a supreme being or power, worship in schools must necessarily be of a different character*". An

important aim of Collective Worship is that it should seek to unite the school, rather than divide it.

14. Accordingly acts of worship in Wilson's are defined as opportunities for reflection that are broadly spiritual in their nature and implications. Given the religious diversity of the school they will not be started or finished with a prayer.

15. Worship, as defined above, occurs daily in many circumstances within the school, both within and beyond the curriculum, within formal gatherings brought together for worship and in gatherings, such as classes, which have a wider purpose. These opportunities for worship occur on a daily basis within the school, for instance, in form time in celebrating or sharing a joyful event or in acknowledging an achievement or a service rendered; or in an English or music or art lesson in the appreciation of a beautiful work of art or literature; or in science or geography lessons in taking note of, and appreciating a wonderful feature of nature; or in RE lessons in sharing some belief with others, or in the quiet reading of a sacred text.

16. These daily acts of worship, formal or informal, are supplemented by the multitude of opportunities provided by the extensive co-curricular programme, by acts of charity and of service to the community and to the school.

17. The school will provide opportunities for groups of pupils, parents and members of the wider community to meet for corporate worship. In acknowledgement of the school's historical links with the Church of England, meetings of religious groups, considered by the church to be explicitly opposed to or antipathetic to its mission, will not be permitted at the school.