



## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION POLICY

### PURPOSE:

1. To comply with the Education Act 1964, New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and Human Rights Act 1993.
2. Maintain an environment that does not discriminate against individuals on the grounds of religious belief or the lack of it. This means ensuring that individual beliefs are treated with respect and all views are valued.
3. Preserve the dignity of all students in an environment where they feel accepted and safe.
4. To help students develop their social and moral development by encouraging a positive attitude and valuing the beliefs of others, however different from their own.

### DEFINITION: (Human Rights Commission)

**Religious Observation** – reciting prayers, singing hymns or participating in other aspects of religious practice

**Religious Instruction** – Teaching aspects of faith in its own right. Religious Instruction carries an implicit or explicit endorsement of a particular faith and encourages children to make decisions about accepting it on a personal level.

**Religious Education** – Also referred to as Religious Studies is the teaching about religion(s) as part of a broader context that does not engage with the religions being studied at a personal level and make choices about accepting those beliefs.

### GUIDELINES:

#### General

In accordance with Education Act 1964 (section 77) teaching is secular during the hours the school is open for instruction.

In accordance with the Education Act 1989, the Board of Trustees has authority to reflect the dominant culture of its community by celebrating cultural and religious events.

In accordance with the NZ Bill of Rights 1990, tikanga Maori is practised in context.

Every two years the Board of Trustees will consult the community regarding Religious Instruction to ascertain if the programme reflects the dominant culture of the community.

If the numbers are such that the programme is providing for a minority group (less than 50%) the Board will review the viability of the programme being offered at Winton School.

At the beginning of each year, all parents of Year 3 students (and new Year 3,4 and 5 students to the school) will be provided with information regarding the Religious Instruction programme. From this, they will make an informed decision about whether or not their child will participate in the programme and accordingly inform the school.

Classroom teachers will be provided with information relating to parent/guardian choice relating to religion in schools.

Teachers will be present for all Religious Instruction sessions.

### **Religious Observance**

Reciting simple prayers is permitted at Winton School. Singing hymns, practicing other aspects of religious practice or displaying religious symbols is not permitted at Winton School.

Tikanga Maori may include karakia and waiata with religious themes. Teachers will try to identify karakia or waiata that do not have an overt religious content.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring parents are made aware of religious content that may be included in the learning programme.

Parents/guardians may choose to withdraw their children from these learning opportunities. In this case, the school will provide alternative learning opportunities.

### **Religious Instruction**

Religious Instruction at Winton School is restricted to a maximum of 20 hours per year for Year 3,4 and 5 students.

All Religious Instruction teachers follow the Christian Religious Education programme approved by the Churches Education Commission.

All Religious Instruction teachers are endorsed or are in the process of being endorsed by the Churches Education Commission. The Principal confirms this endorsement each year.

The school ensures that all religious education instructors have been safety checked, which includes police vetting, in accordance with the schools Health and Safety policy and Child Protection policy.

No teacher employee may teach the Christian Religious Education programme at Winton School.

All Religious Education Instructors avoid encouraging children to make personal decisions about their faith beliefs.

The home classrooms are closed when Religious Instruction is taught. All students not included in the Religious Instruction programme, will be involved in an alternative programme of instruction.

### **Religious Education**

Learning opportunities may include information about different religions in a broader context and their role in society or history. The New Zealand Curriculum encourages students to value inquiry and curiosity, diversity, community and respect. Knowing about, and understanding, the beliefs of others are an important part of this. Learning opportunities may include religious themes such as Christmas, Easter, or Matariki for example.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring parents are made aware of religious content that maybe included in the learning programme.

Reviewed: November 2017

Next Review: October 2019