

NAME OF SCHOOL: SOUTHVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Religion Policy

Date approved:		Date policy will take effect:	1-01-2015	Date of next review:	2016
Developed by:	Policy Development and Review Committee (PDRC) of the School Governing Body (SGB)				
Approved by:	School Governing Body				
Responsible Body:	School Governing Body				
Supporting documents, procedures and forms for this policy:	Legislation (see below) Annexure 1				
References and legislation:	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) The South African Schools Act (1996) as amended National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) Gauteng Schools Education Act No.6 of 1995 Government Gazette No. 25459 Government Notice No. 1307, 12 September 2003: National Policy on Religion and Education.				
Scope:	SGB, School Management Team (SMT), Educator Staff, Learners				
Expiry date of the policy:	NEVER				

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1. Purpose of the Religion Policy

The primary purpose of the policy is to ensure that no religious discrimination of any description is practised at the school. The policy covers the different aspects of Religion Education, Religious Instruction and Religious Observances. It will also ensure that the minority of religions in a school are accorded due respect and pride of place in the school.

This policy will ensure that the school makes the right religion choices to ensure that everyone involved with the school feels comfortable that their rights are respected.

Further, this policy:

- recognises our religious and cultural diversity, and therefore promotes respect for and tolerance of all religions;
- has to raise the dignity and status of all religions.

2. Principles of the Religion Policy

- 2.1 All public schools are secular and do not have any religious orientation. All learners/educators shall be accorded full respect, regardless of their religious beliefs.
- 2.2 The Governing Body of a public school shall determine the religion policy of the school. The policy must be consistent with the Constitution, the SASA, subject to the approval of the Head of Department.
- 2.3 No form of religious discrimination may be practised in implementing (applying) the religion policy determined in accordance with the legal requirements.
- 2.4 A learner in a public school shall have the right to Religion Education as provided for in the curriculum
- 2.5 A learner/educator in a public school shall have the right to be excused from religious observances should s/he wish to so.
- 2.6 No learner/educator at a public school or private school may be penalised (punished) in any way for abstaining (staying away) from the religious observances of the school.

3. Religion Policy of *SOUTHVIEW HIGH SCHOOL*

3.1 In recognition of the religions and denominations (religious groupings) that are found among our school community no particular religion will be given preference. This religious culture is adopted by the school community and is in agreement with the provincial regulations. In keeping with the democratic ethos of the school, religious observances of the following religions are also endorsed (approved), on an equitable basis:

- ***All Religions***

The school community has agreed that religious observances will be conducted in the following manner:

- Attendance at sermons/ services will be free and voluntary organised by staff or religious leaders of specific religion.
- Learners who choose not to attend will be involved in other activities approved by the school.
- The school facilities may be used by private groups as a religious observance facility, provided that this has been sanctioned (authorised) by the SGB in terms of Section 20(2) of the SASA and the relevant conditions are met.

3.2 Teaching of Religion Education

This is performed in conjunction with the Life Orientation and Social Sciences Learning Areas of in line with the current curriculum.

3.3 Observance of Religious Holidays

3.3.1 Observance by educators (CS) and administrative support staff (PS)

- Educators and administrative support staff members who wish to observe a religious holiday/festival must complete the standard leave form, and indicate that the leave applied for is special leave for religious observance.
- Planning for absenteeism of educators and administrative support staff due to a religious holiday/festival must be completed by the end of the previous academic year and submitted to the District Director.

3.3.2 Observance by learners

- Learners are allowed to participate in religious holidays/festivals.
- Arrangements should be made to make sure that the affected learners are able to catch-up with their academic work/schedule.
- Parents of learners should notify the principal in writing well in advance (preferably a month) of the learners' intentions to take certain school days off for the purpose of observing religious holidays/festival. Records of these requests will be kept for reference purposes.

3.4 Learner participation in religious activities/observances

Learner participation in these activities is voluntary. They cannot be forced to attend. Learners have the right of freedom of expression but they must not violate the rights of other learners and educators to attend these observances. Learners may not interfere with (obstruct) or disrupt school activities.

3.5 Educator approach and participation in religious activities/observances

- Educator participation in these activities is voluntary.
- Educators have to be objective about religion while carrying out their duties as educators. They must treat all different religious and cultural traditions with fairness and respect.
- Educators should not engage in or lead religious activities of learners during contact time.
- Educators may neither reward nor punish learners because they agree or disagree with their religious views.

3.6 Assembly

- The opening of the school assembly will consist of a silent personal, prayer songs of praise or a short prayer.
- It is expected that assemblies be used as forums for celebrating religious and cultural diversity, in keeping with the values of the Constitution.
- If religious materials are used at assembly, they should preferably be presented in the framework outlined for Religion Education, that is, as an educational experience rather than a religious ceremony.
- Leaders from all religions will be given the opportunity to address the staff and learners in tackling general issues. Should religious leaders wish to meet only those learners and educators of that specific religion, permission must be sought from the principal and a short written report must be submitted by the leader to the Principal.

4. Constitutional rights of Learners, Parents and Staff with Other Religious Views

- 4.1 The rights of learners, parents and staff members to have their own religious views are honoured in this policy.
- 4.2 Learners and staff who are not comfortable with the religious part of the assembly are free to decide whether they wish to attend that part of the assembly or not.
- 4.3 Learners will be excused from participation after a written request is received from parents.
- 4.4 Learners who are excused from religious practices will be accommodated as follows:
- 4.4.1 They can attend religious practices according to their own religion if their parents request it and if someone is provided to conduct or present them.
 - 4.4.2 If they cannot attend religious practices presented by someone from their religious group, then they are allowed to sit in an allocated classroom .

5 Promoting Tolerance

5.1 The use of religious symbols is acceptable, provided they are used as examples of religious or cultural heritage and/or used as teaching aids in the classroom.

5.2 Learners may wear religious attire or symbols, provided they apply to the school and provide evidence to the principal regarding the religious significance of the attire and/or symbols.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The school will at all times endeavour to ensure that the infrastructure caters for the requirements necessary to implement the policy.

6.2 The school will at all times endeavour to ensure that every individual respects and implements the policy in the “Ubuntu” spirit.

Signed by

Chairperson of the SGB: D.Cooper _____

Date: _____

The Principal: R.B.NAIDOO _____

Date: _____

IDSO: Mr. T Benjamin _____

Date: _____