

Essex Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Responding appropriately to pupils' religious obligations



Essex County Council

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Part I

Introduction

The need for this guidance

In 2011, according to the national census, the religious make-up of the population of Essex was:

Buddhist	4,693	0.3%
Christian	860,906	62%
Hindu	8,295	0.6%
Jewish	6,662	0.5%
Muslim	13,526	1%
Sikh	2,197	0.2%
Other religion	5,165	0.4%
No religion	392,047	28%
Religion not stated	100,096	7%

According to these figures, 3% of the population of Essex belong to non-Christian religions. 3% might seem rather insignificant; but due to the large size of Essex this amounts to over 40,000 people.

Data on pupil ethnicity for 2012 shows that over 12% of Essex pupils are from minority ethnic groups, representing nearly 24,000 children and young people. This percentage is rising year-on-year. Growing numbers of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh children are coming to Essex schools from families originating in countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam and Nepal. These children bring with them many different beliefs, values and customs.

This diversity is to be welcomed as it greatly enriches our communities and our schools. At the same time, an increasingly diverse school population requires schools to exercise a high degree of sensitivity and understanding in respect of the religious obligations of pupils and their parents. Robust legislation on human rights and race equality, accompanied by the need for schools to be genuinely inclusive, means that schools need to respond flexibly to the religious requirements of all members of the school community.

It should also be noted that 28% of the population of Essex have no religious affiliation. The great majority of schools in Essex have significant numbers of pupils who are atheists or agnostics and there is a need to accommodate and respect their views and feelings.

The purpose and scope of this guidance

This material, produced by SACRE and written in consultation with representatives of the different faiths covered, is intended to help schools in understanding, respecting and where possible accommodating the religious obligations associated with different faith groups. In so doing, it seeks to assist schools in developing their inclusive practices and in complying with equalities legislation. The guidance cannot hope to be exhaustive, and it necessarily focuses on those religions and faith groups found in Essex whose beliefs teachings and practices are most likely to have

implications for the way in which schools operate.

In addition to the major world religions, the following Christian denominations and faith groups are covered: the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Churches, Christian Science, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Exclusive Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Rastafarian movement and the Salvation Army. These have been included because schools need to be aware of some of the distinctive beliefs and practices associated with these groups.

This material does not attempt to provide an overview of the beliefs and practices of major world religions: that job is done very effectively through the internet and a range of other materials. However, it does provide some background information on some Christian groups where material is not so readily available. It is important to remember that there is tremendous variety in belief and practice within different religions and faith groups. Some members of the faiths covered may not recognise themselves in the descriptions that are provided. These materials have been checked for accuracy by members of the relevant religions and faith groups; but the guidance that is offered is necessarily of a very general nature. In order to cater for their particular religious standpoints and to be genuinely inclusive, schools should consult with the parents of pupils from different faith backgrounds. In this way they will gain a clearer understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable to people of different faiths.

The Church of England and associated Churches

The overwhelming majority of families in Essex either belong to the Church of England or have 'no religion'. In contrast to some other Christian Churches and denominations, the Church of England does not have clearly defined expectations in matters such as dress, diet, worship, fasting and medical treatment. This is also true of the Non Conformist or Free Churches that have, at various times, become independent of the Church of England, including the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, the Religious Society of Friends (commonly known as Quakers) and the Salvation Army. Such expectations as there are within these Churches are highly unlikely to present difficulties for schools. Sundays, for example, fall at week-ends, and major Christian festivals during school holidays or long week-ends (as is sometimes the case with Easter). For these reasons it was decided not to include the Church of England or the Free Churches in this guidance.

The context in terms of human rights, equalities legislation and guidance from the DfS and OFSTED

Children's rights

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (agreed in 1989 and ratified by the UK government in 1991) contains a number of Articles enshrining certain rights for everyone under 18 years of age. Below are summarised some of the rights concerned with religion and education.

- Article 14 states that children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.
- Article 15 states that children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.
- Article 16 states that children have the right to privacy.
- Article 24 states that children have the right to health education and family planning education.
- Article 28 states that children have the right to education, and that it should be/provided on the basis of equal opportunity. Discipline in schools should respect children's human rights.
- Article 29 states that education should develop each child's personality and talents and mental and physical abilities to their 'fullest potential'. It also states that education shall prepare each child for an active and responsible life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and for their own and others' cultures.
- Article 30 states that children have the right to learn and use the language, religion and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.
- Article 42 states that children have the right to know their rights.

Human rights legislation

The *Human Rights Act* 1998 strengthens the entitlement to certain rights for both children and adults. These rights include:

- the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 9);
- the right to freedom of expression (Article 10);
- the right of freedom of assembly and association (Article 11); and
- the right to be protected from discrimination "on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status" (Article 14).

Protocol No 1 Article 2 of the *Human Rights Act* 1998 states: "No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions".

Equality Act 2010

The *Equality Act 2010* requires all maintained schools to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work: in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees. The Act identifies religion or belief as one of a number of 'protected characteristics' (others being age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender and sexual orientation). Significantly, religion or belief includes lack of belief.

The Act requires schools to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

OFSTED

OFSTED's guidance to schools on *Promoting and Evaluating Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development* (HMI 2125, March 2004) states that schools that are encouraging pupils' spiritual development are likely to be:

- "where pupils already have religious beliefs, supporting and developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them".

Schools that are encouraging pupils' social development are likely to be:

- "promoting measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of religion"; and
- "recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community".

Statutory requirements regarding the curriculum

Protocol No 1 Article 2 of the *Human Rights Act* 1998 states: "No person shall be denied the right to education", and maintained schools in England and Wales are legally bound to ensure that all pupils have full access to and coverage of the National Curriculum. The statutory orders for the subjects of the National Curriculum provide a legal entitlement for all pupils, and parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from any part of the National Curriculum.

Protocol No 1 Article 2 of the *Human Rights Act* 1998 also states: "The State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions". This should not be taken as meaning that the National Curriculum can be modified or disapplied for pupils on religious grounds; rather that schools should take reasonable steps to ensure that teaching is sensitive to pupils' religious and cultural backgrounds, both in terms of the 'what' (content) and the 'how' (methodology). Later in this document suggestions are made as to how this might be achieved.

Parental right of withdrawal from RE, collective worship and aspects of sex education

Two subjects that are not included in the National Curriculum are Religious Education (RE) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), into which is likely to be incorporated part of the school's Sex Education programme.

Parents have an absolute right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE, and this right can be exercised for any reason. It is the same for collective worship.

Parents also have the right to withdraw their children from any part of the Sex Education programme *not* included in the statutory orders for Science. However, Article 24 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that children have the right to health education and family planning education. Since contraception, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and high-risk behaviours including early sexual activity are included in the non-statutory guidance for PSHE at Key Stage 3 rather than the statutory orders for Science, which focus on reproduction as a biological process, it is an interesting point as to whether a child withdrawn by her or his parents could challenge them under human rights legislation in order to attend sessions on sexual health and family planning.

Dress

School uniform guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2012 states:

“A school must have regard to its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. We strongly recommend that in setting its uniform/appearance policy the governing body:

- consider how the proposed uniform policy might affect each group represented in the school;
- consider the concerns of any particular groups of parents/pupils about the proposed policy, and whether the proposed policy amounts to an interference with the right to manifest a religion or belief, and whether that is discriminatory.”

Absence

There are two types of absence in schools: authorised and unauthorised. According to Section 444. of the Education Act 1996, absence "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his [the pupil's] parent belongs" is not to be considered unauthorised. This includes days on which religious festivals take place. DfES guidance adds that parents wishing to take their children out of school for religious observance should be encouraged to give advanced notice.

Sometimes parents take their children out of school for extended periods for religious reasons. For example, some Jehovah's Witness parents, not wishing their children to participate in any activities focused on Christmas, regularly withdraw their children for the last two weeks of the Autumn term. Although all schools recognise the need to keep pupil absence to an absolute minimum, some schools, following guidance from the DfES, allow parents to take up to 10 days of authorised absence every year provided there are valid reasons for the leave to be granted.

Part II

Major world religions



Buddhism

Buddhists in the United Kingdom

- Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, which means that Buddhists do not believe in any 'God' as such.
- The Western academic study of Buddhism began in earnest in the latter part of the 19th century. Since then, increasing numbers of people in the UK have developed an interest in Buddhist ideas and philosophy.
- In 1943, Christmas Humphreys founded The Buddhist Society, which did much to spread interest in Buddhism. However, engagement with Buddhism remained largely at an academic and individual level until the 1960s, when for the first time significant numbers of Westerners began to engage in Buddhist practices, such as meditation, and to adopt a Buddhist lifestyle. During the latter part of the 20th century, a wide variety of Buddhist groups sprang up all over the UK representing many different forms of Buddhism.
- The growth of Buddhism in the UK during the 1960s can be explained by two interrelated factors. At a time when young people (the 'hippy' generation) were beginning to explore alternative religions, philosophies and lifestyles, including those originating in the Indian sub-continent, settlers from countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka and Burma brought with them their Buddhist religion. The number of Buddhist in the UK has been further expanded by refugees, including Tibetans (following the Dalai Lama's flight from the invading Chinese army in 1959), Vietnamese and Sri Lankans.
- There is tremendous variety within Buddhism, arguably more than within any other of the world's major religions. As Buddhism spread, it absorbed many different ideas and customs derived from local cultural and religious traditions. This resulted in the many different schools of Buddhism that we see today. The process is continuing. In 1967, an Englishman called Sangharakshita established a new form of Buddhism known as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). The FWBO seeks to adapt Eastern Buddhist ideas for a Western lifestyle.
- There are two main traditions within Buddhism, known as Theravada and Mahayana. Theravada Buddhism is the predominant form in countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka and Burma. Mahayana Buddhism is predominant in countries such as Tibet and Japan. Mahayana Buddhism includes Tibetan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Cha'n Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism.
- The position of Chinese people living in the UK is complex with regard to religious affiliation. Some are Buddhists adhering to the Cha'n tradition; some have family religions which combine Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian elements; and some are Evangelical Christians.

Languages

- Buddhists in the UK speak English and a variety of languages depending on their country of origin.
- The language of Theravada Buddhism is Pali. In Mahayana Buddhism, depending on the country, texts are written in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Japanese or Chinese. This means that within different traditions, different words are used of the same thing. For example, Nibbana in Pali becomes Nirvana in Sanskrit.

Festivals

- Buddhism uses the lunar calendars of the countries concerned, so festival dates vary accordingly. Major festivals tend to be celebrated around the time of the full moon. Not all Buddhist countries celebrate the same festivals, and where the same festival is celebrated, the way it is celebrated and the meaning attributed to it will vary. Some of the major festivals celebrated in countries associated with Buddhism are listed below.

Thailand

- New Year (13-16 April).
- Vaisakha (May/June), celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
- Wan Atthami (May/June), commemorating the Buddha's cremation.
- Rains Retreat (July -October).
- End of Rains Retreat (October), a festival of light.
- Kathina Ceremony (November), presentation of new robes to monks and nuns who have participated in the Rains Retreat.
- Loi Kratong (November), a festival of light.
- Magha Puja (February), also known as All Saints' Day.

Sri Lanka

- New Year (13 April).
- Wesak (May/June), celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
- Poson (June), celebrating the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. ,.
- Asala (July), celebrating the Buddha's first sermon.
- Asala Perahara (July/August), meaning Procession of the Month of Asala.
- The Buddha's First Visit to Sri Lanka (September).
- Kathina Ceremony (October/November), presentation of new robes to monks and nuns who have participated in the Rains Retreat.
- Arrival of Sanghamitta (December/January).

Burma

- New Year (16/17 April).
- Wesak (May/June), celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
- The Buddha's First Sermon/Beginning of the Rains Retreat (July).
- Thitingyut (October), festival of light celebrating the end of the Rains Retreat.
- Kathina Ceremony (October/November), presentation of new robes to monks and nuns who have participated in the Rains Retreat.

Tibet

- New Year and Losar (February/March).
- Saga Dawa (May/June), celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
- Dzamling Chisang (June), day of purification.
- Chokhor (June/July/August), celebrating the Buddha's first sermon.
- Lhabap (October), celebrating the Buddha's descent from Tushita after the Rains Retreat.
- Anniversary of the Death of Tsongkhapa (November).

Japan

- Hanamatsuri (3 March), flower festival.
- Buddha's birthday (8 April).

China

- Summer Retreat (June/July/August).
- Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, also known as All Souls' Day (August).
- The Buddha's Birth (date varies).
- Kuan-Yin (dates vary), festivals celebrating the birth, enlightenment and death of a female Bodhisattva.

United Kingdom (festivals celebrated by the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order)

- Asala (July/August), celebrating the Buddha's first sermon.
- Sarngha Day (November), celebrating the spiritual community of all Buddhists.

Diet

- Consistent with their beliefs in non-violence and respect for all life, many Buddhists are vegetarian.

Death and mourning

- Buddhists accept death as the natural end to earthly life. While the suffering of the bereaved is understood, Buddhists believe that excessive grief is misplaced.
- Buddhists are usually cremated three to seven days after death. At traditional Buddhist funerals, it is customary for the mourners to wear white. Alternatively, modest dress in neutral colours would be deemed appropriate.

Points to note when visiting Buddhist centres, viharas or monasteries

- Visitors should be dressed modestly.
- Shoes are never worn in the shrine room.
- In the shrine room, it is customary for people to sit quietly on the floor.
- Visitors may be invited to participate in meditation. Buddhists do not regard the Buddha as a god and it is important to understand that one is not being asked to join in worship. Meditation is a mental and physical discipline leading to clarity of mind and perception.

Hinduism

Hindus in the United Kingdom

- Hindus first came to live in the UK in significant numbers during the 1950s and 1960s. They came from India; from African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi; from Fiji; and from the Caribbean. Most came as economic migrants; but some, especially from Uganda, were forced to flee persecution.
- Between 55% and 70% of Hindus in the UK are Gujarati. Between 15% and 20% are Punjabi.
- There is tremendous variety within the religious traditions covered by the 'catch all' title of Hinduism. It is a very adaptable religion and most adherents fit the religion into the community in which they live. As a result, there are significant variations in the way that Hinduism is practised from community to community and even from family to family.
- Most Hindus in the UK adhere either to the philosophy of Advaita, a form of monism, or Dvaita, which is monotheistic. Both schools accept the existence of the One Supreme Reality. According to the Advaita position, the One Supreme Reality, referred to as Brahman, is an impersonal cosmic energy permeating everything in the universe. According to the Dvaita position, the One Supreme Reality is a personal being with human-like characteristics.
- The term Vaishnavite is applied to Hindus adopting the Dvaita position who are devotees of either Vishnu or Krishna. They see Vishnu or Krishna as the supreme divine personal reality. Shaivites see Shiva as the supreme divine personal reality. Shaktas are worshippers of Shakti (divine female energy manifested in the form of the goddess known as Kali, Durga, Amba or Parvati).
- The Swaminarayan Hindu Mission is a significant movement in the UK. Hindus in the UK belonging to the Swaminarayan movement are mostly of Gujarati origin. They follow the teachings of Swaminarayan (1781-1830), believed to have been an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Their main UK centre is the beautiful Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, with its elaborately carved white marble temple. Many schools visit this temple.
- The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) includes many Western converts to Hinduism. Devotees, who are sometimes inappropriately referred to as 'Hare Krishnas', follow the teachings of AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977). As Vaishnavites, they worship Krishna as the Supreme Lord. The main ISKCON centre in the UK is Bhaktivedanta Manor in Hertfordshire, which was donated to the movement by George Harrison of the Beatles. ISKCON engages in a wide range of educational activities and many schools visit Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Languages

- In addition to English, Hindus in the UK speak a variety of languages found in the Indian subcontinent. The most common are Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and Tamil.
- Hindus use the ancient language of Sanskrit in their worship and most of the sacred texts are in Sanskrit. Sanskrit words are adapted in form and pronunciation to the many different regional languages, which accounts for the variation in transliterations of words such as Shiva or Shiv, Rama or Ram, Ravana or Ravan, and Ganesha or Ganesh.

Festivals

- Hindus use a lunar calendar, which accounts for the fact that the Hindu year is 10 or 11 days shorter than a Western solar year. Hindu seasons and festival dates do not remain the same each year within the framework of the Gregorian calendar, except for a few festivals which are set by the sun and not the moon. There are a great number of Hindu festivals, many of them celebrated in certain parts of India only, and there is considerable local variation in the way that they are celebrated.

Some of the more important Hindu festivals

- Divali (October/November). The Hindu festival of light (lasting between two and five days) is celebrated throughout India. It celebrates the New Year and the return of Rama/Ram and Sita from exile. It also honours the goddess Lakshmi.
- Vasanta Panchami/Saraswati Puja (January/February), marking the beginning of Spring and honouring the goddess Saraswati.
- Mahashivratri (February/March). Devotees of Shiva spend the night fasting and praying at temples and shrines in honour of the god.
- Holi (February/March). Boisterous North Indian Spring festival at which stories featuring Vishnu and Krishna are recalled and bonfires lit.
- Rama Navami (March/April), celebrating the birth of Rama/Ram.
- Hanuman Jayanti (March/April), celebrating the birth of Hanuman.
- Ratha Yatra (June/July). In India, thousands gather at Puri in Orissa to push huge wagons carrying images of Krishna. The festival is also celebrated with a procession through London involving the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).
- Raksha Bandhan (July/August), when sisters tie Rakhis around their brothers' wrists.
- Janamashtami (August/September), celebrating the birth of Krishna. Thousands of UK Hindus gather at Bhaktivedanta' Manor in Herfordshire (centre of ISKCON) for this festival.
- Ganesh Chaturthi (August/September), celebrating the birth of Ganesha/Ganesh.
- Navaratri/Durga Puja/Dussehra (September/October). This nine day festival is celebrated throughout India. The final three days are the most important. In Northern India, especially in Bengal, the goddess Durga is worshipped on the eighth day. The festival also celebrates the victory of Rama/Ram over Ravana/Ravan.

Prayer

- Prayer can be performed anytime and anywhere, although it is customary for Hindus to pray first thing in the morning and in the evening before the main meal. This should be borne in mind when Hindu pupils go on residential field trips.
- Hinduism embraces a wide range of practices and beliefs. Most Hindus are open-minded and keen to learn about other religions. It is unlikely that Hindu parents will want to withdraw their children from collective worship. However, if schools do want to arrange separate acts of collective worship for Hindu pupils, they can apply to Essex SACRE for a 'determination' (for further details, see SACRE guidance on collective worship in the RE section of the Essex grid for learning: www.e-gfl.org).

Clothing, showering and changing

- While not a concern for many Hindus, there are some who would not consider it acceptable for females to have uncovered legs. The school dress code will need to allow for this by permitting Hindu girls to wear long skirts or trousers. For PE activities, Hindu girls should be permitted to wear tracksuit trousers. For swimming, it is now possible to buy full length body swimsuits in cotton or lycra which cover the legs. Footless tights or leggings could also be worn for swimming.
- Hindus generally consider it improper to be naked in front of others. This presents a problem where a school has communal showers. Where there are individual, private shower cubicles, the difficulty is avoided. In the absence of such facilities, schools should respect the wishes of Hindu pupils not wanting to take showers at school. Hindu families will ensure that regular and thorough washing takes place in the home.
- Even very young Hindu children are likely to feel embarrassed changing with other pupils. Schools should always arrange for girls and boys to change separately and should endeavour to make arrangements for Hindu pupils to change in private.
- For special occasions, such as major festivals and weddings, Hindu girls may want to conform to their cultural background by wearing Mehndi (henna) patterns on their hands and feet, Bindis on their foreheads and nose rings. As these are well-established traditions, schools should allow girls to wear these at the time of the celebrations. Mehndi cannot be washed off and will remain in place for many days. Bindis are worn on the forehead by married women, but they are becoming increasingly popular with young girls. Traditionally, Bindis are made from coloured powder but now they can be bought in 'stick on' form. The Bindi is worn as a 'third eye' to ward off evil, as a sign of dedication or as a sign that the wearer has been blessed. .

Diet

- Hindus do not eat beef, considering the cow to be a sacred animal.
- The majority of Hindus are vegetarian.

Death and mourning

- All possible steps should be taken to enable a Hindu to die at home, since death at a hospital can cause great distress.
- Ideally, Hindus cremate their dead within 24 hours; but this is not always possible in this country.
- The immediate family remain indoors for 10-13 days of mourning, during which outside matters, including contact with school, are dealt with by relatives and friends.

Points to note when visiting a Mandir (temple)

- Women should wear long skirts, dresses or trousers.
- Shoes must be removed on entering the Mandir.
- Some Hindu temples (including the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden) require males and females to sit separately in the worship hall.
- During Arti, a lamp with five wicks is brought down to the worshippers. They place their hands over the flames and then pass their hands over their forehead and down the sides of their face. In taking the light, people are essentially receiving a blessing from the divine -however this is understood! No offence will be caused by anyone declining this.
- Puja (worship) typically concludes with the distribution of Prasaq, usually in the form of sweets, nuts or fruit. It may be considered impolite if this food is not accepted.
- The usual Hindu greeting is for a person to bow slightly with hands held together as if:praying, and to say, "Namas-te". This means, "The god in me recognises the god in you". It is polite to respond in the same way. This is also how Hindus say goodbye to one another.

Islam

Muslims in the United Kingdom

- Muslims first came to live in the UK in significant numbers during the early 19th century when Muslim seafarers and traders from the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent began to settle around the major ports, later moving inland.
- After the First World War there was further settlement by Muslims who had served in the British army.
- The Muslim population increased significantly in the 1950s and 1960s when workers from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean were recruited to work in mills and factories due to the post-war labour shortage. Many Muslim students also came to the UK to study.
- In the early 1970s large numbers of Asian Muslims arrived from Kenya and Uganda, where they faced discrimination and persecution. Recently Muslim refugees have arrived from war-torn countries such as Somalia and Bosnia.
- Islam is second only to Christianity in terms of numbers worldwide. 90% of the world's Muslims are Sunni. The remaining 10% of Muslims, who are concentrated mainly in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and India, are Shi'a..
- Sufism is the mystical strand of Islam and it is found in both the Sunni and Shi'a traditions. Sufis, who are relatively small in number, perform various spiritual practices including meditating, reciting the names of Allah and ritual dancing.

Languages

- Muslims in the UK come from many different ethnic backgrounds and they speak a variety of languages in addition to English. Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hausa, Malay, Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, Turkish and Urdu are among these.
- All Muslims consider it important to be able to read classical Arabic since this is the language of the Qur'an. Many Muslim children attend classes where they learn to read the Qur'an in the original Arabic. Mosques frequently operate Madrasas, religious schools where young Muslims are taught to recite the Qur'an as well as learning about other aspects of their religion; These classes often take place after 'normal' school hours and schools need to be sensitive to the additional pressure that this may place on Muslim pupils.

Festivals, Ramadan and Hajj

- Muslims use a lunar calendar which is dated from the year 622CE. Because a lunar calendar is used, there are just 354 or 355 days in a Muslim year (10 or 11 days less than a solar year). Muslim festivals are not 'seasonal' since, from a Western perspective, each Muslim festival takes place around 10 or 11 days earlier than it did the previous year. The festivals cannot be dated accurately in advance since they depend on the sighting of the new moon for the start of the new month.
- The two main Muslim festivals are Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha. The traditional festival greeting is "Id Mubarak!" ("Id blessings!"). There are also two occasions when Muslims participate in all-night prayer: Laylatul-Bara'at and

Laylat-ul-Qadr. There is also Ramadan, the month of fasting and abstinence, and Hajj, the pilgrimage that all Muslims are required to make at least once in their lifetime.

Laylat-ul-Bara'h

- Laylat-ul-Bara'h takes place 15 days before Ramadan. This is the 'night of forgiveness' when Allah is believed to forgive sins and to inform angels of the fate of human beings for the coming year. Many Muslim families (including children when they are old enough) spend the day and night fasting and praying for the betterment of all.

Laylat-ul-Qadr

- Laylat-ul-Qadr is the night on which the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad is remembered. It takes place on one of the last ten nights of Ramadan. Muslim families (including children when they are old enough) spend the whole night at prayer, either at the mosque or in the home.

Id-ul-Fitr

- Id-ul-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan. It is a time for family and community celebration, sharing and worship at the mosque. Employees usually take between one and two days leave during this festive time.

Id-ul-Adha

- Id-ul-Adha is a three day festival marking the end of the Hajj (the annual pilgrimage to Makkah). During the festival male members of the family attend worship at the mosque. In Muslim countries, families who can afford it, sacrifice an animal (such as a goat, a sheep or a cow) and donate a third of the meat to the poor. In the UK the sacrifice, to which a donation is usually made by the individual, is generally carried out centrally on behalf of the community.

Ramadan

- Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year. It lasts for either 29 or 30 days, depending on the sighting of the new moon. During Ramadan, Muslims are required to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse from before dawn until sunset. Families get up before dawn to eat before sunrise and they enjoy a good meal together after sunset. The impact of Ramadan is felt less during winter, when the period between sunrise and sunset is shorter. During the long summer days, however, normal patterns of sleep are likely to be interrupted, with families eating very late at night and getting up to have breakfast very early in the morning.
- Certain groups of people are exempt from fasting during Ramadan. It is not regarded as sinful for children below the age of puberty to fail to keep the fast. People who are mentally unfit, people travelling long distances, people who are unwell and women who are menstruating, pregnant or breast feeding are also exempt. Travellers, the ill and women who are menstruating, pregnant or breast feeding can make up for lost days by fasting at another time.
- Although there is no requirement in Islam for children to fast before the onset of puberty, some Muslim families expect their children to participate fully as soon as they feel the children are old enough. Often the children themselves want to do this: it makes them feel 'grown up' and they are proud to act as

true Muslims. Schools receiving requests from parents for young children to participate fully in the fast are advised to place on file a written record of the request, and to comply with it. If any concerns arise during the course of the school day about the child's health, then the parents should be contacted immediately. If the parents cannot be reached and if the school is genuinely worried, then concern for the child's health should override other considerations. This is consistent with Islam.

- Clearly prolonged fasting during Ramadan will have a significant effect on Muslim pupils. Schools are advised to adopt the following suggestions to assist Muslim pupils (and their parents) in complying with their religious duties during Ramadan.
 - A list should be made of those pupils who will be fasting and staff should be informed about them.
 - Staff should be sympathetic to fasting pupils and consideration should be given to the fact that as the day goes on, such pupils may experience fatigue, loss of energy, light-headedness, headaches and mood swings. This is particularly true when Ramadan occurs in the summer.
 - Pupils who are fasting should be permitted to stay inside during break and lunchtimes, particularly during hot and cold weather.
 - Schools should make special provision at lunchtimes for pupils who are fasting but who cannot go home. Such pupils may want to rest or be quiet or take part in special activities that can be arranged for them while other pupils are having their lunch.
 - Schools should provide activities in PE and the performing arts which are physically undemanding for pupils who are fasting. Any activity likely to induce sweat or dehydration should be avoided.
 - There are different views on swimming during Ramadan. Some Muslims hold the view that accidental swallowing of water does not constitute breaking the fast as the intention was not to drink. Others say that swimming should be avoided as the inadvertent swallowing of even small amounts of water goes against the spirit of the fast.
 - During Ramadan, fasting pupils should have the option not to participate in residential field trips or after-school or evening activities. -Schools should consider reducing the amount of homework given during Ramadan and should adopt an understanding attitude if homework is not completed to the usual standard by fasting pupils.
 - It is inevitable that national tests and exams will sometimes take place during Ramadan, and Muslim pupils will have to cope as best they can with these. However, there is nothing to stop schools rescheduling their own internal tests and exams to avoid Ramadan.
 - On Friday afternoons, most male Muslims attend the mosque for Salat-ul-Jum'ah, congregational prayers. It is especially important for Muslims to attend these prayers during Ramadan, and if parents take their children out of school for this purpose, this should be treated as authorised absence.
 - Staff should be made aware that it will be difficult for Muslim parents to attend meetings or other functions in the evenings during Ramadan.

Hajj

- Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia. As one of the Five Pillars of Islam, it is a central duty of all Muslims to participate in Hajj at least once during one's lifetime. For reasons already explained, the time of Hajj varies from year to year. If a Muslim family goes on Hajj, children could be absent from school for at least a fortnight.

Prayer

- From the age of seven, Muslim children are encouraged to pray five times a day. Once puberty has been reached, this becomes a requirement. The exceptions are women who are menstruating or who have recently given birth. People who are not fully conscious are also exempted from prayers. The exact times at which Salat (prayer) takes place vary throughout the year but generally speaking the prayer times are as follows: Fajr (dawn), Zuhr (midday), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (after sunset) and Eisha (late evening).
- Prayers are always preceded by an elaborate washing ritual called Wudu. During Wudu the following parts of the body are systematically washed in running water: hands, face, hair, mouth, nose, ears, arms (up to the elbow) and feet (up to the ankle).
- Muslims can pray anywhere provided it is clean. The purpose of the prayer carpet is to provide a clean surface on which Muslims can perform the ritual actions. They pray with bare feet facing the city Makkah (south-east from the UK).
- Schools with Muslim pupils should try to provide a room at lunchtime for midday prayers (Zuhr) and possibly late afternoon prayers (Asr). Ideally, two rooms would be provided: one for boys and one for girls. The prayers take about 10 minutes to perform. For Wudu, the washing ritual preceding prayers, pupils will need to have access to washing facilities.
- It is likely that some Muslim parents will want to exercise their right to withdraw their children from acts of worship that are of a broadly Christian character. Schools wanting to arrange separate acts of collective worship for Muslim pupils can apply to Essex SACRE for a 'determination' (for further details, see SACRE guidance on collective worship in the RE section of the Essex grid for learning: www.e-gfl.org).

Clothing, showering and changing

- Muslims are expected to dress modestly at all times. Boys who have reached puberty must be covered from above the navel to below the knee with loose fitting garments. This means that at secondary school, Muslim boys should be permitted to wear long baggy shorts or tracksuit trousers for PE and long baggy swimming trunks for swimming.
- Some male Muslims, particularly those whose families originate in certain African countries, may consider it a religious duty to wear a head covering such as the Tigiya, a white crocheted skullcap. Boys wishing to observe this practice should be permitted to do so.
- When in public, girls who have reached puberty are to be completely covered in opaque and loose fitting garments, apart from the face, hands and feet which may be uncovered. The school uniform code must accommodate these

requirements (see section on **Dress** in Part 1 of this document). Many schools incorporate shalwar (long trousers) and kameez (long tunic) into their dress code, often with the proviso that these must be in the school colours.

- Whether it is necessary to be veiled is a matter of debate within Islam; but increasing numbers of Muslim women and girls are choosing to wear the Hijab (head covering such as headscarf that leaves the face completely exposed). Schools should allow Muslim girls to wear the Hijab at all times; but it must be recognised that this may sometimes present a safety hazard. There will be occasions when the Hijab will need to be pinned securely around the head for work in practical subjects and when using certain equipment. The school could reasonably request that the Hijab should conform to the colour of the school uniform.
- Clearly the Islamic requirement for girls to dress modestly at all times has implications for activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, swimming and theatrical performances where the costumes may be considered immodest. Schools would be wise to consult with parents before casting a Muslim girl in a role in which her costume would conflict with Islamic dress code. For PE activities, tracksuit tops or longsleeved tee-shirts or sweatshirts can be worn with tracksuit bottoms. Leotards may present difficulties for Muslim girls as they are so close fitting. For swimming, it is now possible to buy full length body swimsuits in cotton or lycra which cover the arms and legs. These will be figure-hugging, but thick tracksuit bottoms, sweatshirts and cotton pyjamas should not be worn as they become heavy when wet and so may constitute a safety hazard. Long-sleeved tee-shirts could also be worn for swimming with footless tights or leggings.
- According to Muslim tradition, when the Prophet Muhammad was asked, "What should we conceal and what can we show of our private parts?", he replied, "Try not to let anyone see them". He was then asked, "What if no one is present?", to which he replied, "Allah ... is most deserving of your modesty". This obviously has implications when it comes to taking showers. Where there are communal showers, some schools have sought the solution in allowing Muslim pupils to shower in their underwear or bathing costumes; but this will not be acceptable because they will be with other pupils who are naked. Where there are individual, private shower cubicles, the difficulty is avoided: In the absence of such facilities, schools should respect the wishes of Muslim pupils not wanting to take showers at school. Cleanliness is very important in Islam and Muslim families will ensure that regular and thorough washing takes place in the home.
- Even very young Muslim children are likely to feel embarrassed changing with other pupils. Schools should always arrange for girls and boys to change separately and should endeavour to make arrangements for Muslim pupils to change in private.
- It is customary for some Muslims to wear verses from the Qur'an in a small cloth or metal container on a chain or string around the neck or upper arm or pinned inside clothing. These, are religious artefacts not jewellery and schools should allow them to be worn at all times. It must be recognised that this may sometimes present a safety hazard, and there will be occasions when the item will need to be taped to the skin using tape such as micropore.

- Many Muslim girls wear Mehndi (henna) patterns on their hands and feet for important occasions such as weddings and festivals. These cannot be washed off and will remain in place for many days.

Diet

- The terms Halal (lawful) and Haram (unlawful) may be used of a wide range of things, but in the UK they are most frequently associated with food and drink. According to the Qur'an, food and drink are Haram when they contain any of the following: any part of a pig or a carnivorous animal, animal blood or alcohol (unless it is an ingredient in a medicine). Eating animals that have a close relationship to human beings (pets and beasts of burden such as dogs, cats and donkeys) is also Haram.
- Muslims may eat fruit and vegetables, dairy products, honey, eggs, fish, poultry and game birds. These are all Halal. They are also permitted to eat the meat of animals (apart from pigs and carnivorous animals), provided that the animal has been slaughtered in accordance with Shari',ah (Islamic law).

Medical treatment

- It is preferred if treatment is administered by someone of the same sex. Muslim women would be highly embarrassed and offended if a man were to deal with gynaecological issues or to be involved in the delivery of a baby.
- The preservation of life is paramount in Islam and abortions are only permitted in certain very serious circumstances.
- During Ramadan, fasting Muslims are not permitted to receive oral medicine or injections during daylight hours unless the condition is serious and a doctor has recommended such treatment.

Death and mourning

- A dying Muslim should be turned to face the city of Makkah (south-east from the UK). If circumstances allow, the person who is dying will be comforted by family and friends saying prayers and reciting passages from the Qur'an. If possible, the last words that a Muslim speaks will be those of the Shahadah (the Islamic creed or declaration of faith).
- After death, the body is tended by Muslims who wash and prepare the body for burial. The dead body should be handled as little as possible by non-Muslims. Where this is necessary, disposable gloves should be worn.
- Muslims must be buried as soon as possible after death (usually within 24 hours). Cremation is not permitted. Women rarely attend burials and there should be no audible crying.
- There are traditionally no mourning days, remembrance days or anniversaries for someone who has died.

Sensitive issues, which may arise in different subjects

Representational art

- Some Muslims regard representational art as tantamount to blasphemy for the reason that they regard it as supremely arrogant of human beings to attempt to replicate any of the perfection of Allah's creation. Teachers could exercise sensitivity towards this strand within Islam by exploring the richness, beauty, order and abstract nature of Islamic pattern, calligraphy and design. When

asked to record from first-hand observation (a National Curriculum requirement at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3), sensitivity may need to be exercised regarding the choice of subject for Muslim pupils. They could be asked to reproduce some Islamic pattern or calligraphy, or possibly to interpret the same object as others in the class in a non-representational or abstract way.

- No Muslim will ever draw a picture of the Prophet Muhammad. This is an absolute requirement in Islam. For many Muslims, this extends to any person featured in the Qur'an or the Bible. Some Muslims go further still, believing that it is against their religion to draw any human figure. If this is the case, schools should not insist upon it. Muslims regard public nudity as wrong. It would not be appropriate to expect Muslim students at secondary schools to participate in life drawing classes.
- To avoid the possibility of their faith being compromised, some Muslim parents *may* seek to withdraw their children from art lessons. The law requires that art is taught to all pupils as part of the National Curriculum. Schools do not have the right to exclude pupils from any part of the statutory art curriculum and parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this either.

Music

- Within Islam, there are a variety of views on music. Within the Sufi tradition, music is seen as a divine gift. It can transport the listener into a sublime state, bestowing a sense of peace and wellbeing and ultimately bringing the listener closer to Allah. Other Muslims regard all forms of music with deep suspicion. The meditative music that is so valued by Sufis is seen as something akin to a drug that lulls, intoxicates and brings about a false state of consciousness. The majority of Muslims would consider singing to the accompaniment of a drum to be acceptable, but adding other instruments to a song may present difficulties as this may be considered Haram (unlawful). Some Muslims condemn all types of popular music because they associate it with some of the more decadent aspects of 'pop culture' (intimate dancing, alcohol and worse).
- One of the ways in which schools might attempt to address concerns of Muslims around music, is by giving Muslim pupils the opportunity to learn' about musical traditions within Islam. There are plenty of resources (recordings, musical instruments, etc) available to support such work. The musical way that the Adhan (the call to prayer) is given and the Qur'an is recited offer possibilities for further exploration (recordings are available). The work of singer/songwriters who have converted to Islam, such as Cat Stevens (now called Yusuf Islam) and Richard Thompson, provide further opportunities for Muslim students.
- Activities involving physical contact between the sexes or where boys and girls are going to be in close proximity present significant difficulties for Muslims. This becomes increasingly important as the children grow older, especially when puberty is reached. Where possible, when music activities involve boys and girls working closely together, schools should arrange for Muslim pupils to participate in same-sex groups. It is not reasonable to expect schools to arrange for such activities to take place at different times for boys and girls.

- To avoid the possibility of their faith being compromised, some Muslim parents may seek to withdraw their children from music lessons. The law requires that music is taught to all pupils as part of the National Curriculum. Schools do not have the right to exclude pupils from any part of the statutory music curriculum and parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this either.
- A number of issues are covered in the section on **Clothing, showering and changing** above.
- Activities involving physical contact between the sexes or where boys and girls are going to be in close proximity (particularly where they may be perceived to be dressed immodestly) present significant difficulties for Muslims. Many activities incorporated into the statutory orders for PE require pupils to work closely together, and where possible schools should arrange for Muslim pupils to participate in activities such as gymnastics, dance and swimming in same-sex groups. This becomes increasingly important as the children grow older, and once puberty is reached, Muslims would want their children to be taught physical activities separately in order to comply with the requirements of their faith. It does need to be recognised, however, that the practicalities of arranging for boys and girls to be taught PE at different times may present genuine logistical difficulties for the school.
- The statutory orders for PE require that all children are taught swimming at Key Stage 2, between the ages of 7 and 11. It is unlikely that schools will be able to arrange for boys and girls to be given swimming lessons at the local pool at different times; but where Muslim parents express concern, it should be possible for Muslim girls and boys to be taught in separate areas of the pool. Secondary schools that choose to provide swimming lessons for their students will need to ensure that Muslim boys and girls are taught at separate times and that the instructors are of the same gender as the students.
- To avoid the possibility of their faith being compromised, some Muslim parents may seek to withdraw their children from aspects of PE. The law requires that PE is taught to all pupils as part of the National Curriculum. Schools do not have the right to exclude pupils from any part of the statutory PE curriculum and parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this either.

Drama and theatrical performances

- A number of issues are covered in the section on **Clothing, showering and changing** above.
- Activities involving physical contact between the sexes or where boys and girls are going to be in close proximity present significant difficulties for Muslims. This becomes increasingly important as the children grow older, especially when puberty is reached. Where possible schools should arrange for Muslim pupils to participate in such activities in same-sex groups. It is not reasonable to expect schools to arrange for such activities to take place at different times for boys and girls. .
- To avoid the possibility of their faith being compromised, some Muslim parents may seek to withdraw their children from drama. The law requires that drama is taught to all pupils as part of the National Curriculum. Schools do not have the right to exclude pupils from any part of the statutory curriculum for

English, which includes drama, and parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this either.

- Muslims believe that it is always wrong to depict the Prophet Muhammad and would find it highly offensive if anyone were to act as the Prophet Muhammad in a piece of drama. Many Muslims have similar difficulties with Biblical scenes being acted out. Schools should accommodate the wishes of Muslim pupils not wanting to take on the role of Biblical characters, holy people or gods and goddesses from different religions and mythologies.
- Schools that want to should continue to put on Nativity plays, but they should respect the wishes of Muslim pupils not wanting to participate in, or even view such plays. Regrettably this will mean that the whole school will not be able to come together for the Nativity play, so an alternative event, bringing the whole school together during the festive season, may need to be organised.

History and Religious Education

- A number of issues are covered in the section on Representational art above.
- For dating purposes, the terms BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (during the Common Era) are to be preferred to BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, meaning 'in the year of the Lord'). Muslims only have one Lord: Allah. To use a term that implies that Jesus is the Lord presents real difficulties for many Muslims.
- Whenever they say or write the name of the Prophet Muhammad or any of the prophets that preceded him, Muslims will say or write, "Peace be upon him" (usually abbreviated to 'pbuh' when written). Muslim pupils wanting to observe this convention in order to show their respect should be permitted to do so. So as not to cause offence, some non-Muslims (including book publishers) choose to adopt this practice; but it is not necessary to do so.
- Muslims should never be referred to as Muhammadans. This implies that they are followers of the Prophet Muhammad rather than Allah.
- The Prophet Muhammad should never be referred to as the 'founder' of Islam. As far as Muslims are concerned, Allah founded Islam. The Prophet Muhammad acted as Allah's messenger and established Islam in the world.
- Copies of the Qur'an should always be treated with great respect. Ideally, the Qur'an should be wrapped in a piece of cloth (such as a lady's scarf) and kept on a shelf at a higher level than any other book. Before being handled, hands should be washed and the book placed on a wooden Qur'an stand.
- All representations of Allah are strictly forbidden in Islam. It is not permissible to 'illustrate' Allah because of the danger of idolatry. Muslim pupils should not be asked to draw God. Descriptions of Allah, however, present no difficulties.

Sex education

- Muslims place the responsibility for sex education firmly within the family. It is likely that Muslim parents will want to exercise their legal right to withdraw their children from those aspects of sex education that are not covered by the statutory orders for Science, from which there is no right of withdrawal.
- Homosexual relationships are strictly forbidden in Islam. This issue will need sensitive handling.

Other sensitive issues

- Muslims greet each other with the traditional Islamic greeting, "Assalaamu-Alaykum" (usually rendered in English as, "Peace be unto you"). If a Muslim were to greet a person with the words, "AssalaamuAlaykum", the appropriate response would be, "Wa-Alaykum-usSalaamll'("Unto you also be peace").
- All forms of gambling are strictly forbidden in Islam. Schools need to be sensitive to this issue when considering fund raising activities such as raffles, draws and sweepstakes.
- Activities involving physical contact between the sexes or where boys and girls are going to be in close proximity present significant difficulties for Muslims. This will apply to discos, proms, etc.
- Muslims generally avoid contact with pigs and dogs, as both of these animals are regarded as impure. Schools need to take this into consideration when inviting people with dogs (e.g. police dog handlers or blind people with guide dogs) into the school, or when organising activities such as farm visits or work experience placements likely to involve contact with pigs or dogs.
- The term 'Dervish' is often used of someone behaving in a wild, uncontrolled and possibly aggressive manner. The 'Whirling Dervishes' are in fact Sufis: members of the Turkish Mevlevi order. They perform a beautiful, highly controlled, slow moving, ritualistic dance called the Sema, during which they spin on one foot for a considerable length of time. This evokes the rotation of the planets around the sun.

Points to note when visiting a Masjid (mosque)

- Clothing must be clean.
- Boys and men must wear long trousers.
- Girls and women must wear headscarves and long skirts, dresses or trousers. Their arms must be covered.
- Shoes must be removed on entering the Masjid.
- Men and women must sit separately.
- In the prayer hall, people should always sit with their feet turned away from the end wall, taking care not to allow the soles of the feet to face towards Makkah.
- Male Muslims are expected to avoid physical contact with women. This includes shaking hands.



Judaism

Jews in the United Kingdom

- The first Jewish settlers came after the Norman conquest. Edward I expelled all Jews in 1290. Jews started to return after the Civil War.
- The great majority of Jews in the UK are Ashkenazi. There are also Sephardi Jews in the UK. There are some differences between the two groups in terms of liturgy and customs.
- Ashkenazi Jews have their origins in Central and Eastern Europe. Ashkenazi Jews migrated in large numbers for economic reasons or to escape persecution in Russia that took place between 1882 and 1941. Further migration occurred from 1933 during the years of Nazi persecution.
- Sephardi Jews came originally from Spain, Portugal and the Middle East. Sephardi Jews have been present in an organised form since the mid 17th century.
- 70% of UK Jews are affiliated to a synagogue. Of these, about 61 % belong to Orthodox synagogues and 27% to the Progressive sector (composed of Reform and Liberal synagogues). 1.5% belong to Masorti synagogues (the controversial teachings of Rabbi Louis Jacobs in the 1960s led to the formation of the Association of Masorti Synagogues in Britain some 20 years later).
- The Orthodox tradition is characterised by its conservative nature. Orthodox Jews accord the Jewish Bible and its rabbinical interpretations full authority in determining law, lifestyle and religious practice. For Orthodox Jews, one's Jewish identity is passed down solely through one's mother and Orthodox services are conducted in Hebrew.
- The Haredim or Ultra-Orthodox include many Hasidic Jews, distinguishable by their specific forms of dress. The Ultra-Orthodox seek to exclude some aspects of modern culture from their lives, especially those aspects which are characterised by what they perceive as the immodesty and material distractions of the modern world.
- Progressive Jews view revelation as 'progressive' because God's will is believed to be constantly unfolding. Thus they see the scriptures as open to further interpretations in order to make them relevant to today; and therefore religious practices as open to adjustment in order to conform to the modern world. Some Progressive Jews believe that a person's Jewish identity can be handed down through the father as well as the mother, and they conduct their services in the vernacular (English is used in the UK) in addition to Hebrew.
- Masorti Jews adopt a position which combines aspects of Orthodox and Progressive tradition. For example, the content and format of all services is very similar to that used in Orthodox synagogues, but men and women may sit together as they would in Reform or Liberal synagogues.

Languages

- The overwhelming majority of Jews in the UK use English as their first language. Classical Hebrew is the language of the Jewish Bible and Jewish worship. Modern Hebrew is the main language of the state of Israel. Yiddish is a Jewish language of Eastern European origin. Many Ultra-Orthodox Jews use Yiddish in conversation and some Yiddish words are in common usage among Ashkenazi Jews. For example, Ashkenazi Jews will invariably refer to the synagogue as 'shul', a Yiddish word meaning school.

Festivals and Shabbat

- Judaism uses a lunar calendar, and festival dates vary from year to year. The Jewish year begins in September/October, and is marked by the festival of Rosh Hashanah (see below). Jewish years are calculated from 3761 BCE, the year of creation according to the Torah. So the year 2006 CE is 5766/5767 in the Jewish calendar.
- Most Jews in mainstream Jewish community life today (outside of the Ultra-Orthodox communities), irrespective of their level of general observance, will at least tend to mark and observe Pesach (Passover) together with the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- Festival days start shortly before sunset. Shabbat (the Sabbath) starts shortly before sunset every Friday and continues until approximately one hour after sundown on Saturday.
- Jews are required by their religion to abstain from performing certain types of task (melachot) during Shabbat and the main festivals, which are listed below. There are 39 forbidden melachot and these are based on the types of task necessary for building the Sanctuary, the portable Temple that the Israelites erected in the desert during the biblical Exodus, and for agricultural and cooking activities necessary for producing dyes from plants. The following activities are some of those falling into categories covered by the 39 forbidden melachot. Schools may need to be aware of these:
 - writing
 - erasing
 - switching electrical switches (including light switches) on or off
 - carrying things in public places
 - travelling by car or public transport
 - baking
 - dyeing
 - tying and untying knots
 - sewing and weaving
 - marking out
 - cutting to shape
 - tearing
 - building
 - lighting and putting out a fire (unless it is life threatening)
 - telephoning
 - putting the finishing touches to a newly made article

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (September/October)

- Rosh Hashanah is the festival celebrating the Jewish New Year. It begins the ten days of repentance which culminate in Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Jews fast for 25 hours during Yom Kippur. The fast starts shortly before sunset and ends about an hour after sundown the following evening.

Sukkot* and Simchat Torah (September/October)

- • Sukkot (the festival of Tabernacles) is an eight day period of which the first two and last two days are festival days. The final day is Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Torah), which marks the end of Torah readings for one year and the start of Torah readings for the following year.

Pesach* (March/April)

- • Pe sa ch (often referred to as Passover) is an eight day period of which the first two and last two days are festival days. The Seder meal (an important family occasion) takes place on the first two nights of the festival.

Shavuot* (May/June)

- During the night before Shavuot (often referred to as Pentecost), many Jews stay awake 'all night studying the Torah in preparation for the anniversary of the revelation on Mount Sinai. The festival lasts for two days and schools may like to bear in mind that traditionally dairy foods are eaten on Shavuot.

(* Festivals marked with an asterisk are celebrated for one day less among Progressive Jews outside Israel and all Jews in Israel. In ancient times, when the calendar was uncertain, an extra day was added to these festivals.)

The following festivals and fast days are not as significant as those listed above. There are no forbidden tasks during these days.

- Hanukkah (December), celebrating the recapturing and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. This festival, often referred to as the Jewish festival of lights, lasts for eight days.
- Purim (February/March), celebrating the story of Esther. Some Jews observe the Fast of Esther on the day preceding the festival.
- Yom Ha-Shoah (April/May), commemorating the victims of the Holocaust.
- Yom Ha-Atzma'ut (May), celebrating the creation of the modern state of Israel.
- Tishah B'Av (July/August). This day, commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and other tragic episodes in Jewish history, is widely observed as a fast day.

Prayer, clothing and shaving

- Observant Jewish men (over 13 years old) are required to perform three sets of prayers every day: morning prayers, afternoon prayers and evening prayers. Today afternoon and evening prayers are generally combined. Women (over 12 years old) may also wish to pray at these times. For all morning prayers, including those taking place at the synagogue, it is customary for Jewish men wear a Tallit (prayer shawl). For morning prayers, except on Shabbat and festivals, Orthodox male Jews also wear Phylacteries or Tefillin (small boxes containing Biblical texts attached by long leather straps to the forehead and left forearm). Ordinarily, this observance will not affect schools: the morning prayers can take place before departing for school and the afternoon prayers after returning home. However, if Jewish students are at

school during one of their prayer times, or if they are on a residential school trip, provision will need to be made for them to pray with a reasonable degree of privacy in a place free from religious imagery and iconography. .

- During synagogue services, all men are required to keep their heads covered. Most use a skullcap which may be called a Kippah, a Yarmulke or a Cappel. Orthodox male Jews consider it a religious duty to keep their heads covered at all times, and boys and young men wishing to observe this practice in school should be permitted to do so.
- Some Orthodox Jewish boys may wear Tsitsit, a white vest-like garment with long tassels, under their shirts every day.
- It is traditional not to wear leather shoes during Yom Kippur and Tishah B'Av and leather shoes should not be worn by mourners during the first week of mourning.
- In the Torah, there is a general prohibition on shaving the side of the face (sideburns). This is the origin of the predilection of the UltraOrthodox for beards and long side curls.
- During various periods in the Jewish year, male Jews are not permitted to shave. This also applies to Jews during the official period of mourning (see section on Death and mourning below). Male Jews are not permitted to shave at the following times:
 - on Shabbat;
 - during any of the major festivals;
 - during Chol HaMo'ed (the intermediate 'weekday' days during the festivals of Pesach and Sukkot);
 - for 33 days during the Omer, a seven week period commencing on the second night of Pesach and finishing on the festival of Shavuot (today this is observed only by the strictly observant, although the Ultra-Orthodox will generally not shave for the whole of the Omer);
 - during the three week period from 17th Tammuz (a fast day commemorating the breach of the walls of the city of Jerusalem) until the 9th Av (Tishah B'Av).
- It is likely that Orthodox Jewish parents will want to exercise their right to withdraw their children from acts of worship that are of a broadly Christian character. Schools wanting to arrange separate acts of collective worship for Jewish pupils can apply to Essex SACRE for a 'determination' (for further details, see SACRE guidance on collective worship in the RE section of the Essex grid for learning: www.e-gfl.org).

Diet

- The laws governing what foods may be eaten by observant Jews are called Kashrut. Foods which may be eaten are referred to as Kosher, meaning fit, acceptable or ritually useable. Foods which are not permitted are called Treif or Treife.
- The only meat that Jews are permitted to eat comes from herbivorous animals which both chew the cud and have cloven hooves. Beef, lamb and goat may be eaten; but pork is forbidden. Poultry and fish with fins and scales may be eaten; but birds of prey, eel, octopus, squid and shellfish are not permitted. In order to be Kosher, the animal must be slaughtered in accordance with Shechita laws laid down in the Torah.

- Another important aspect of Kashrut is that meat and dairy products must be kept completely separate from each other. Different utensils and kitchen equipment should be used for each. Generally milk cannot be consumed or dairy products eaten within several hours of the consumption of meat. Foods containing neither milk nor meat, such as fish, fruit and vegetables, are called Parev. Parev may be eaten with either meat or milk.
- During Pesach, Jews do not eat bread or any foodstuffs that contain or have or may have come into contact with yeast or any other food rising agent. Unleavened bread called Matzah is eaten instead, both ritually and generally. Depending on their level of observance, Jews normally adhere to some of the particular dietary rules for Pesach. This ranges from those who will simply not consume bread or beer (a yeast/hops derivative), to those who will have 'spring cleaned' their homes to eliminate all traces of Chametz (the term for bread and ordinary items that are not permitted during Pesach), changed ('koshered') all their pots, pans, crockery, shelving, etc, and only consume food and drink certified as 'Kosher for Passover' by a suitable Beth Din (rabbinical court). The Ultra-Orthodox extend this further to non-food items such as washing-up liquid, soaps and toothpaste. Schools should be aware that, when Pesach falls during term-time, some pupils, including those not ordinarily identified as being particularly Orthodox or observant, may wish to observe some level of Passover Kashrut.

Medical treatment

- The preservation and prolonging of life is paramount in Judaism. All other laws and requirements may be suspended in order to preserve and prolong life.
- Abortions are only permitted where the life of the pregnant woman is endangered or within the first three months of pregnancy to prevent the birth of a severely deformed child.
- Orthodox Jewish girls would generally prefer to be tended by a female.

Death and mourning

- According to Orthodox tradition, Jews must be buried as soon as possible after death (usually within 24 hours); but not on Shabbat or major festivals. Orthodox Jews never cremate their dead; but some Progressive Jews do. Normally only Jewish males can participate in the custom of filling the grave with earth.
- Mourners are not encouraged to wear clothes that are totally black. It is not customary to send flowers to a funeral. Males attending funerals are expected to wear a head covering, usually a skullcap called a Kippah, a Yarmulke or a Cappel.
- Shiva is the seven day period of intense mourning immediately following the funeral. During this period, all ordinary work is suspended for the mourners, who stay at home and receive visits from family and friends. Gifts of Kosher food, cakes or biscuits are brought in order to ensure that there is enough food for the grieving family. Low wooden chairs are put in place for mourners who are members of the immediate family. Other visitors should not sit in these chairs. Traditionally, daily prayers are held at the house of bereavement. On leaving, visitors wish each mourner a long life.

- Shiva is followed by Sheloshim, a month (or a year among Orthodox Jews) when the mourners do not participate in or go to any entertainment. This should not prevent bereaved pupils from participating in or attending performances with a clear educational purpose, such as playing a musical instrument in a school concert or attending a performance of *Macbeth* when it is a GCSE text. On the other hand, where the intention is mainly social, such as a school disco, or purely for entertainment, such as a trip to a pantomime, then bereaved Jewish pupils should not be expected to participate during Sheloshim.
- A Jew is not permitted to shave during Sheloshim. This custom is widely observed, even among the non-Orthodox, for a period of at least 30 days. Schools should allow male pupils to comply with this requirement, which means that a bereaved young Orthodox Jew may go a whole year without shaving.
- Each year, on the anniversary of the person's death, the Yahrzeit ceremony takes place. A memorial candle is lit and burnt for 24 hours. The grave may be visited. It is customary for visitors to place a stone on the grave before they leave.

Sensitive issues, which may arise in different subjects

- The most sacred objects to a Jew are parchment scrolls containing handwritten passages of scripture. Most sacred of all is the Sefer Torah containing the first five books of the Bible. The small scrolls on which is written the Shema (contained in the Mezuzah and in Tefillin or Phylacteries) are also revered. If a school is fortunate enough to have a parchment scroll, it should always be treated with the utmost respect. It would cause grave offence if such a scroll were to be carelessly handled, torn or dropped. If the Sefer Torah is dropped in an Orthodox synagogue, the entire congregation is expected to fast. If a school has no more use for such an artefact or if it is too worn to serve a useful purpose, rather than disposing of it themselves, the school should arrange for the scroll to be collected by a member of the Jewish community who will ensure that it is buried according to Jewish religious custom. Religious Jews will be happy to help schools with this. Many Jews would take the same view of a reproduction scroll, machine-printed on paper.
- Similar sensitivity should be exercised in relation to photocopies or handouts containing scriptural passages or prayers. When disposing of these, the school should arrange for the photocopies or handouts to be collected by a member of the Jewish community who will ensure that they are buried in the appropriate manner. They should never be shredded or torn or thrown away.
- The Sefer Torah should only be laid flat on a surface when it is 'undressed' (with its cover removed) in order to be read. At all other times it should stand upright and be carried upright.
- Jews seldom write or say the word 'God', other than in the context of prayer. Believing that God is too sacred to be named, they will often write the word 'God' as G-d. Jewish pupils wanting to observe this convention should be permitted to do so.
- Many Jews will not want to draw pictures of God. This is out of respect for the perfection and otherness of God.

- Some Jews (most likely to be those from the Orthodox tradition) will not want to draw pictures of any holy person, god or goddess, including those from other religions and mythologies. This is to avoid any hint of idolatry.
- The second commandment states: "Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth" (Exodus 20:4). Clearly representational art is going to present difficulties for those Jews (most likely to be from the Orthodox tradition) who interpret this commandment literally. When asked, in the context of Art and Design, to record from first-hand observation (a National Curriculum requirement at Key Stages 1,2 and 3), Jewish pupils who would find it unacceptable to sketch, say, something in the natural world could be asked to interpret the same object as others in the class in a non-representational or abstract way.
- Sensitivity needs to be exercised when referring to the Old Testament. To state that the Old Testament is the Jewish Bible is both likely to cause offence and be misleading. Jews read and interpret their scriptures very differently from the ways that Christians read and interpret the same scriptures. A more careful form of words will be needed, such as that the books in the Christian Old Testament correspond to the books in the Jewish Bible.
- The Bible refers to the Jews as the 'chosen people'. This does not imply that they see themselves as superior to other people. Jews believe that God has chosen them for a particular purpose, a purpose that carries with it great responsibility.
- When dealing with the death of Jesus, it should be made clear that Jesus, who was himself a Jew, died at the hands of the Romans rather than the Jews (crucifixion was a Roman method of capital punishment).
- Some Orthodox male Jews, particularly the Ultra-Orthodox, will not have any physical contact with members of the opposite sex in case the woman may be menstruating. This extends to shaking hands. Secondary schools may need to take this into account when grouping students for certain activities in subjects such as PE and drama.
- Some classic works of literature portray Jews as miserly and obsessed with money making. The character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and Fagin in *Oliver Twist* are two examples. It will be important for the teacher to address these negative stereotypes whenever they are encountered.
- For dating purposes, the terms BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (during the Common Era) are to be preferred to BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, meaning in the year of the Lord). Jews do not recognise Jesus as the Lord and to use a term that implies that he is will present real difficulties for many Jews.

Points to note when visiting a synagogue

- With some exceptions among Reform and Progressive synagogues, boys, men and married women must wear hats.
- Members of Jewish congregations tend to dress smartly for worship at the synagogue on Shabbat and festival days. It is likely to be considered disrespectful for a guest to dress casually when attending a synagogue service on one of these occasions.
- In Orthodox synagogues, men and women sit separately.

- It would be disrespectful not to comply with the rules governing Shabbat, particularly when visiting an Orthodox synagogue. Driving up to the synagogue and writing are two things to avoid.
- Nothing used or worn in worship, such as the Siddur (prayer book), should be placed on the floor.
- Orthodox rabbis (and possibly other male members of the congregation) will avoid physical contact with women. This includes shaking hands.



Sikhism

Sikhs in the United Kingdom

- With a worldwide population of approximately 20 million, Sikhism is a numerically small religion when compared with the other major world faiths. Over 80% of the world's Sikhs live in the Punjab which lies partly in Pakistan and partly in north west India. The Sikh community in the UK (estimated to be about half a million) is the largest outside the Indian subcontinent.
- A number of Sikhs settled in the UK between the 1920s and 1940s, with the vast majority of Sikh migrants arriving in the 1950s and 1960s. Many Sikhs came directly to the UK from the Punjab. Others came from East Africa and other former British colonies. Many of the settlers had served in the British army during the First and Second World Wars.

Languages

- The Punjabi language is held in great esteem by Sikhs, and in addition to using English, Sikhs in the UK will endeavour to maintain their cultural roots by teaching Punjabi to their children. Almost all Gurdwaras (temples) run Punjabi classes. Punjabi is written in Gurmukhi script, which is the script of the Guru Granth Sahib and other sacred Sikh scriptures.
- Punjabi speakers can communicate to some extent with Urdu and Hindi speakers as the three languages have some vocabulary and grammar in common.

Festivals

- Sikhs use a lunar calendar and dates for most festivals vary from the Gregorian calendar by anything up to 15 days. However, the date of Vaisakhi is calculated using a solar calendar, which means it always falls on the same day according to the Gregorian calendar.
- The main festivals are Vaisakhi and Divali. There are also Gurburbs, festivals celebrating the birth or death of one of the 10 Gurus. During each Gurburb there is an Akhand Path: a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end, lasting 48 hours.

Vaisakhi (13 or 14 April)

- An Akhand Path (48 hour reading of the Guru Granth Sahib) leads up to the start of Vais-akhi, which celebrates the New Year and the founding of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

Divali (October/November)

- As for Hindus, the Sikh festival of Divali is a festival of lights; but instead of recalling the story of Rama/Ram and Sita, Sikhs remember how Guru Har Gobind rescued 52 princes.

The four major Gurburbs

- Birthday of Guru Nanak (November)
- Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (November/December)
- Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (December/January)
- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan (May/June)

Prayer

- Sikhs are expected to perform morning prayers (Japji) and evening prayers (Rehras) on a daily basis. These take place before the start and after the end of the school day. However, this religious duty should be borne in mind when Sikh pupils go on residential field trips.
- Sikhism is highly tolerant of other religious practices and it is unlikely that Sikh parents will want to withdraw their children from collective worship. However, if schools do want to arrange separate acts of collective worship for Sikh pupils, they can apply to Essex SACRE for a 'determination' (for further details, see SACRE guidance on collective worship in the RE section of the Essex grid for learning: www.e-gfl.org).

Clothing, hair, showering and changing

- All Sikhs (male and female) who have been undergone the initiation ceremony known as the Amrit ceremony are required to wear the Five Ks at all times. These are the Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (wooden comb used to keep the hair in place), Kara (steel bangle), Kirpan (small sword) and Kachera (white cotton shorts worn as underwear).
- There will be safety issues arising from the wearing of the Kara and the Kirpan. Rather than requiring Sikh pupils to remove the Kara for PE, it could be moved up the arm and held in place by a sweat band or bandage.
- The Kirpan is sometimes worn in the miniature form around the neck; but older students who have been fully initiated will be entitled to wear the genuine small sword. The Kirpan is kept in a sheaf, with a retaining strap to prevent it accidentally slipping out, and the sheaf is slotted into a cloth strap, worn diagonally across the body like a sash. The whole thing is worn under one's outer clothing so others are not even aware of it.
- Many Sikhs, including all those who have undergone the Amrit ceremony, never cut their hair. This includes the shaving of facial hair. Schools must allow Sikh pupils to comply with this religious obligation.
- The turban is not one of the Five Ks, yet it is every male Sikh's sacred duty to wear one. Schools must respect this; but since there are no restrictions on the colour of the turban, the school could reasonably request that it matches the colour of the school uniform. Young Sikh boys often wear a piece of cloth over their topknots. This should be treated with as much respect as a full turban.
- Many Sikhs do not consider it acceptable for females to have uncovered arms or legs. The school dress code will need to allow Sikh girls to wear long sleeves and long skirts or trousers. Many schools incorporate shalwar (long trousers) and kameez (long tunic) into their dress code, often with the proviso that these must be in the school colours. For PE activities, Sikh girls should be permitted to wear tops with long sleeves and tracksuit bottoms. For swimming, it is now possible to buy full length body swimsuits in cotton or lycra which cover the arms and legs. Long-sleeved tee-shirts could also be worn for swimming with footless tights or leggings.
- Sikhs generally consider it improper to be naked in front of others. This presents a problem where a school has communal showers. Where there are individual, private shower cubicles, the difficulty is avoided. In the absence of such facilities, schools should respect the wishes of Sikh pupils not wanting to take showers at school. Sikh families will ensure that regular and thorough washing takes place in the home.

- Even very young Sikh children are likely to feel embarrassed changing with other pupils. Schools should always arrange for girls and boys to change separately and should endeavour to make arrangements for Sikh pupils to change in private.
- Many Sikh girls wear Mehndi (henna) patterns on their hands and feet for important occasions such as weddings and festivals. These cannot be washed off and will remain in place for many days.

Diet

- Sikhs are not permitted to eat beef, considering the cow to be a sacred animal. Halal meat is also forbidden (see section on Islam).
- The majority of Sikhs are vegetarian.
- Initiated Sikhs are not permitted to partake of alcohol, tobacco, drugs or other intoxicants and they are forbidden from eating meat, fish or eggs. They are permitted to eat dairy products.

Death and mourning

- Sikhs cremate their dead and scatter the ashes over running water.
- White is the colour of mourning, and when attending Sikh funerals, women should wear a white head covering.

Other sensitive issues

- Some Sikhs object to the portrayal of Sikh Gurus by actors, considering the ten Gurus to be too holy to be represented by 'ordinary' humans. This may have implications if a school wants to act out scenes from the life of one of the Gurus.

Points to note when visiting a Gurdwara (temple)

- Tobacco/cigarettes must not be taken inside the Gurdwara.
- Men and women must wear headscarves. The Gurdwara will generally 'be able to provide these.
- Shoes must be removed on entering the Gurdwara. .
- The Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) should be treated with respect. People should not turn their back on it and they should always sit with their feet away from it, taking care not to allow the soles of the feet to face towards it.
- At the end of the service, each person is given a small amount of Karah Prashad (pudding made out of a mixture of flour or semolina, butter, sugar and water) to eat. Afterwards, it is usual to share a meal in the Langar (communal dining room). Langar is open to people of all faiths. Sitting together and sharing a meal signifies equality, unity and harmony. Therefore most people do not decline Sikh hospitality. At the main Gurdwaras, Langar is open to every person 24 hours a day.

Part III

Christian denominations and groups

Christian Science

Background information

- Christian Science was founded in the USA by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910).
- Mrs Eddy's interpretation of the Bible led her to view spiritual healing of sickness and sin as a natural element of Christian practice.
- In 1875 Mrs Eddy first published *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which Christian Scientists study in conjunction with the King James version of the Bible. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* is seen as a complete statement of Christian Science, which she defined as 'the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine principle and rule of universal harmony' (*Rudimentary Divine Science*).
- The headquarters of The First Church of Christ, Scientist is in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, with branches in most parts of the world. Many towns and cities have Christian Science Reading Rooms for the public.
- Mrs Eddy founded a Pulitzer Prize winning international newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor* (www.csmonitor.com).
- There is no ordained priesthood and church services are conducted by members elected for that purpose. Public practitioners of Christian Science healing are listed in *The Christian Science Journal*.

Medical treatment

- Christian Scientists believe that since, according to the Bible, God is Spirit and Truth and Love, his creation is spiritual, so matter and evil (including sin and disease) are not ultimately real. When God's all-power and all-presence are seen and the spiritual nature of the individual is realised, the illusory nature of illness and disease are understood and healing follows. On this basis, Christian Scientists normally choose healing by prayer over medical treatment, considering it effective and non-invasive.
- Choice of treatment is always up to the individual. Most importantly, the best interests of the child in any situation are paramount. It may be added that UK law in relation to minors is upheld by parents, who take their children for medical attention when required.
- Unless they were unavailable in an emergency situation, Christian Scientists would wish to be consulted before their child is examined and before any medical treatment is given by a doctor, nurse or dentist. Unless it was a legal requirement, inoculation or immunisation would be a matter of parental choice, as it is for all parents.
- Children may wish to contact a Christian Science practitioner for prayer in the event of an illness or accident and parents may provide the school with a list of practitioners for inclusion in the pupil's records.
- Schools are urged to discuss the issue of emergency treatment or first aid with parents who are Christian Scientists and to sign jointly a written agreement clearly setting out what will be acceptable to the parents.
- Where possible, the parents of children who are Christian Scientists, should be contacted before any medical treatment is given. If the parents cannot be contacted, then emergency treatment could be given in accordance with the signed agreement, but contact with the parents must be made as soon as possible.
- The children of Christian Scientists will often not have had any experience of

doctor's surgeries of hospitals.

Diet and other sensitive issues

- Christian Scientists make a commitment to refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs and sexual relations outside marriage. Some members also abstain from drinking tea or coffee.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Background information

- Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints refer to themselves as Latter-day Saints, but are often called Mormons after *The Book of Mormon* (see below).
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded by the American Joseph Smith in the 1830s.
- Members of the Church believe that Joseph Smith was led by an angel to the place where gold plates covered in Egyptian hieroglyphs were buried. Using 'seer' stones called Urim and Thummim, he translated the writing on the plates. In this way, so it is believed, the early history of a group of ancient American peoples and God's dealings with them (600 BCE to 400 CE) was revealed. *The Book of Mormon - Another Testament of Jesus Christ* is Joseph's translation of this epic account. The book tells of the migration of Israelite tribes to America centuries before Christ, their experiences resembling those recounted in the Old Testament. It also tells of Christ's visit to these people shortly after his resurrection and then, later, their decline and fall.
- Joseph himself suffered persecution and martyrdom, and his successor, Brigham Young, led the Latter-day Saints west to avoid further persecution. After an epic journey (1846-1847), they settled at Great Salt Lake. Until 1890, Church members practised polygamy.
- Today the Church headquarters is still based at Salt Lake City in Utah, the city that was founded by Brigham Young. The Church has nearly 200,000 adherents in the UK and more than 12 million members worldwide, the majority living outside the USA.
- The Church is led by a lay priesthood headed by a prophet and 12 apostles. Bishops preside over local congregations. All adult men considered worthy may be ordained into the priesthood.
- Boys are ordained into two forms of priesthood: at 12 and 18 years of age. Many Latter-day Saints serve around the world as full-time missionaries for 18-24 months. This takes place between the ages of 19-25 or later when they retire.
- One night a week (usually Monday) is set aside as a Family Home Evening.
- Many young Latter-day Saints (14-18 year olds) attend scripture study class before going to school.

Diet

- Latter-day Saints make a firm commitment to keeping their bodies and minds healthy, strenuously avoiding all stimulants and harmful drugs. Tobacco, alcoholic drinks, *tea* and coffee are all prohibited, and many Latter-day Saints may not drink Coca Cola or suchlike.
- Church members do not have to be vegetarian, but meat is eaten sparingly.
- The first Sunday of each month is a day of fasting. The savings are donated as a fast offering to the local Bishop and are used to help the poor and needy.

Sensitive issues, which may arise in different subjects

- Latter-day Saints believe literally in the Biblical account of creation. It will be helpful to refer to scientific accounts of the origins of the . universe and the development of different life forms as 'theories'.
- Latter-day Saints make a firm commitment to what they believe are God-given principles. One of these is the belief that the body is a sacred gift of God. This requires an absolute commitment, for people of all ages, genders and sexualities, to celibacy outside of marriage (between one man and one woman). The Church also opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. These issues will need sensitive handling in the context of sex and relationship education (SRE).
- Latter-day Saints do not engage in any form of gambling, and schools need to be sensitive to this issue when considering fund raising activities such as raffles; draws and sweepstakes. Church members would prefer to make donations.

Eastern Orthodox Churches

Festivals

- Most Orthodox Churches follow the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar. This means that most Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas and other fixed festivals 13 days after the Western Churches.
- In addition to Pascha or Easter, known as the Queen of all Feasts or the Feast of Feasts, there are 12 major feasts:
 - Christmas Day (7 January) - celebrates the birth of Jesus.
 - Epiphany (19 January) - commemorates the baptism of Jesus and the first miracle at Cana.
 - Hypapante (15 February) - known as Candlemas in the Western Church, this festival commemorates the meeting of Jesus with Simeon in the Temple.
 - Great Lent Fast (March/April/May) - the Orthodox Lent only partially coincides with Lent in the Western Churches. It involves abstinence from meat, fish and dairy products until Easter.
 - Annunciation (7 June) - celebrates the announcement to Mary by 'the angel Gabriel that she would have a child.
 - Ascension (May) - commemorates the ascent of Jesus into heaven.
 - Pentecost (May) - commemorates when the disciples first proclaimed the Gospel after receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Transfiguration (19 August) - commemorates when Jesus appeared to three of his disciples in a transfigured form.
 - Dormition of Blessed Virgin Mary (28 August) - commemorates the falling asleep or death of Mary the mother of Jesus.
 - Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary (21 September)
 - Exaltation of the Holy Cross (27 September)
 - Presentation of Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple (4 December)

Exclusive Brethren

Background information

- The Brethren are sometimes referred to as Plymouth Brethren because one of the largest early meetings was held there; occasionally as Darbyites (after John Nelson Darby, see below); and sometimes as Exclusive Brethren, because of their uncompromising separation. The group known as Open Brethren (the largest Brethren group in the UK today) broke away from the movement in 1848 and adopt a more liberal stance.
- The Brethren trace their origins to 1827, when a number of Christians in Dublin, wanting to be free of priests, ministers and clerics, began to meet separately from the various church denominations in order to 'break bread' together. These Christians took care to avoid all worldly associations and pursuits while awaiting the return of Jesus.
- The movement soon spread far and wide, especially through Europe, America and the British Empire. Today there are over 40,000 Exclusive Brethren worldwide.
- In the mid 19th century, John Nelson Derby emerged as leader. He established the principle still strongly adhered to by the Exclusive Brethren: that the only written authority is the Word of God contained in the Holy Bible. Whilst they prefer the Darby translation, everything held by Exclusive Brethren is contained in the King James versio'n of 1611. One highly significant verse which governs their way of life states, "The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of the Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19).
- The Exclusive Brethren keep themselves separate and limit their social activities and relationships to those with whom they celebrate the Lord's Supper. Marriages are forged within their own community and they avoid any media through which evil might be communicated, such as the internet, television, video/DVD, fUms and radio. Computers and mobile phones are not used in their businesses.
- It would be wrong to think that Exclusive Brethren live completely cloistered lives. They travel freely in this country and abroad, regularly spreading the Word of God in the streets. In their professional lives they have extensive contact with a wide variety of people from every sphere of life.
- The following guidance will only be relevant to primary schools. The belief of the Exclusive Brethren in the sanctity of marriage is a factor that drives their concern for children not to be corrupted, or affected by moral standards prevalent in the world. As a result all secondary age pupils are educated in schools affiliated to the Exclusive Brethren's own educational trust, the Focus Learning Trust. Some Exclusive Brethren parents do provide home education for primary age children.

Clothing

- In keeping with 1 Corinthians 11:5, girls from Exclusive Brethren families may wish to wear a head covering such as a scarf. This should be respected, although the school could reasonably request that the article should conform to the colour of the school uniform.

- Exclusive Brethren parents would consider it unacceptable for girls to wear trousers. For some, this may extend to wearing shorts for PE and sports. If this is the case, schools should permit girls to wear short skirts instead.

Eating

- Exclusive Brethren are uncompromising when it comes to the matter of eating with others. They will only eat in the company of those with whom they can partake of the Lord's Supper. In other words, Exclusive Brethren will only eat with other Exclusive Brethren. Arrangements should be made for Exclusive Brethren children to eat separately from other children. It may be necessary for the school to provide a separate table for this purpose.

Sensitive issues, which may arise in different subjects

- Exclusive Brethren are very concerned to 'protect children from what they regard as the corrupting influence of media such as the internet, television, video/DVD, films and radio. Schools should be sensitive to this concern, where possible permitting Exclusive Brethren children to opt out of engagement with these forms of communication. If the use is deemed essential for effective learning, then the teacher should carefully vet the material beforehand to ensure that it is not likely to raise concerns or cause offence.
- Exclusive Brethren regard use of computers as damaging to children's cognitive development. Exclusive Brethren children clearly cannot be withdrawn from ICT as this is a statutory component of the National Curriculum. It is a legal requirement for all Key Stage 2 pupils to be taught how to use e-mail (see 3a in the programme of study for ICT) and how to use ICT for the purpose of carrying out research and information retrieval. The latter could be done using CD-ROMs or DVDs, checked for suitability by the teacher beforehand, rather than the internet.
- Exclusive Brethren believe that all forms of physical contact between boys and girls should be avoided. Where there is likely to be such contact (in the context of subjects such as drama and aspects of PE, including dance), schools should arrange for Exclusive Brethren children to participate in same-sex groups.
- Exclusive Brethren believe literally in the Biblical account of creation. It will be helpful to refer to scientific accounts of the origins of the universe and the development of different life forms as 'theories'.
- Believing that these are matters for the home rather than school, Exclusive Brethren parents will invariably want to exercise their right to withdraw their children from RE, collective worship and aspects of sex education not covered by the statutory orders for Science, from which there is no right of withdrawal.

Other sensitive issues

- Exclusive Brethren will not wish their children to participate in any extra-curricular activities. This will include after-school clubs and sporting activities, evening performances and residential field trips.
- Exclusive Brethren (children and adults) will not participate in any form of gambling, and schools need to be sensitive to this issue when considering fund raising activities such as raffles, draws and sweepstakes. Parents who are Exclusive Brethren will invariably be ready to make donations.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Background information

- The modern history of Jehovah's Witnesses began more than a hundred years ago. In the early 1870s, a rather inconspicuous Bible study group began in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, USA, which is now part of Pittsburgh. Charles Taze Russell was the prime mover of the group.
- In July 1879, the first issue of the magazine *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Return* came out. Now called *The Watchtower*, it has a monthly circulation of 27 million in 153 languages.
- By 1880, scores of congregations had spread from the original small Bible study group into nearby states. In 1881, Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was formed, and in 1884, it was incorporated into Russell's group, with him as president. The society's name was later changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.
- In 1888, 50 people were engaged in full-time house-to-house 'witnessing' and the sharing of Biblical literature. Now 700,000 people are doing this worldwide.
- Charles Taze Russell, the Society's first president, died in 1916. He was succeeded the following year by Joseph F. Rutherford. Many changes now took place. A companion magazine to *The Watch Tower*, called *The Golden Age*, was introduced. Now called *Awake!*, this publication has a monthly circulation of over 22 million in over 80 languages. Greater emphasis was placed on door-to-door witnessing, and to distinguish themselves from other Christian denominations, in 1931 they embraced the name Jehovah's Witnesses. The name was taken from Isaiah 43:10-12.
- During the two World Wars, Jehovah's Witnesses in many different countries (including Britain) were imprisoned as conscientious objectors. The persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, which continues in some countries today, reached a peak during the 1930s and 1940s with their refusal to participate in armed warfare or to pay allegiance to national symbols through activities such as saluting flags or singing national anthems. Many thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses died alongside Jews and others in Nazi concentration camps. Jehovah's Witnesses do not participate in any events commemorating these (or other) wars.
- Today Jehovah's Witnesses number in excess of six and a half million worldwide, with over one million in the USA and over 130 thousand in the UK. Their place of worship is called a Kingdom Hall. There are usually five weekly meetings with the following pattern: one on Tuesday evening, two on Thursday evenings and two on Sunday. Once a year in mid-July, they attend a District Convention which lasts for three days (Friday-Saturday).

Key beliefs

- Jehovah's Witnesses believe in one Almighty God, Jehovah, Creator of the heavens and the earth. They believe that the Bible is the Word of God: divinely inspired, literally true and historically accurate. Their preferred version is their own *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, first published in 1961.

- Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the earth will remain forever, and that all people, living and dead, who fit in with Jehovah's purpose for a beautiful, inhabited earth may live on it forever. All humankind inherited imperfection from Adam and Eve, and hence are sinners (Romans 5:12). According to the Bible, "The wages sin pays is death" (Romans 6:23); so how, according to Jehovah's Witnesses, can people live again to share earthly blessings? Only through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, who said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will" come to life" (John 11 :25) and, "All those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out" (John 5:28,29).
- While totally rejecting the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is the Son of God and Chief Witness. He came to rule in 'Kingdom Power' in the heavens in 1914 and soon, at the battle of Armageddon, he will extend his rule to include the whole earth (see Revelation 20). Jehovah's Witnesses attempt to lead blameless lives in preparation for the 1 ,000 year rule of Christ after Armageddon.

Festivals and celebrations

- The fact that Jehovah's Witnesses do not as a rule participate in festivals and other celebrations and events connected with public holidays can be somewhat perplexing to a teacher. Many of the customs associated with these have a non-Christian religious background, and it is this that makes them objectionable to Jehovah's Witnesses. So if a festival, celebration or holiday is in some way linked to gods or goddesses other than Jehovah, or if celebrating it is contrary to their understanding of Biblical principles, Jehovah's Witnesses do not take part.
- This position of total non-participation is adopted in relation to secular events, such as birthdays, New Year's Day, Hallowe'en, Valentine's Day, May Day and Mother's Day, and religious occasions, such as Christmas, Easter,- Harvest and All Saints' Day. Jehovah's Witnesses point out that all of these are connected with non-Christian worship, and that certain features of such worship often dominate the celebrations.
- It should be remembered that parents can only withdraw their children from RE collective worship and aspects of sex education not covered by the statutory orders for Science. Where work in other subjects is linked to festivals and celebrations (Christmas, Easter, Harvest, birthdays, Mother's Day, etc), it should be remembered that parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from the activities concerned. Where practicable, alternative work should be provided for pupils who are Jehovah's Witnesses. If this places too many demands on the school, the parents should be invited in to discuss the issue. Many Jehovah's Witness parents avoid the particular difficulties presented by Christmas by taking their children out of school for the last two weeks of the Autumn term. Guidance from the DfES suggests that parents should be allowed to take up to 10 days of authorised absence every year provided there are valid reasons for the leave to be granted.
- Jehovah's Witnesses do participate in any events commemorating war, such as Remembrance Day (they do not wear poppies), Armistice Day, VE Day, VJ Day or Trafalgar Day.

Patriotic observances

- One of the most sensitive areas of Jehovah's Witness children's interaction with schools involves patriotic observances. This is especially true of the USA, but issues also arise in UK schools.
- Jehovah's Witnesses believe that present human governments constitute "an arrangement of God" that God has temporarily permitted to exist. So Witnesses consider themselves under divine command to pay taxes, tribute and honour to such "superior authorities" (Romans 13:1-7). They show their respect by obedience to the laws of whichever country they are in, and they never engage in anti-government activity of any kind.
- According to Jehovah's Witnesses, there IS no Biblical basis for the nationalistic pride that has so divided the world, and Witnesses follow a course of strict neutrality in respect of all governments of the world today. This affects their children's participation in a number of activities, including Singing the national anthem, saluting the flag and marching in patriotic parades.
- Jehovah's Witnesses do not join in singing songs that extol any earthly nation. When national anthems are played, usually all that people do to show they share the sentiments of the song is to stand up. In such cases, Jehovah's Witnesses remain seated. However, if Witnesses already happened to be standing when the national anthem was played, they would not be expected to take the special action of sitting down; it is not as though they had specifically stood up for the anthem. On the other hand, if a group was expected to stand and sing, then out of respect Jehovah's Witnesses may well stand up; but they would show that they do not share the sentiments of the anthem by refraining from singing.
- Jehovah's Witnesses view the saluting of a nation's flag as an act of worship. Although they do not discourage others from saluting the flag, they cannot conscientiously give what they view as worship to anyone or anything except their God, Jehovah (Matthew 4:10). Jehovah's Witnesses emphasise that they intend no disrespect for any government or its rulers by refusing to salute the flag. It is just that they will not bow down to or salute an image representing the state.

Medical treatment

- Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions both on scriptural grounds (see Acts 15:28-29) and because they believe there are inherent medical dangers in this practice. All Witnesses carry an *Advance Medical Directive/Release Card* in case of emergency, and medical services are aware of the existence of these cards. Children of Jehovah's Witnesses should have such a card in their possession at all times, together with the names of two people to be contacted if an emergency arises. Schools should keep a copy of the *Advance Medical Directive/Release Card* in the pupil's file.

Sensitive issues, which may arise in different subjects

Competitive activities

- Jehovah's Witnesses feel that the competitive spirit (especially the 'winning isn't everything, it's the only thing' ideology) has harmful effects. Witness parents are generally happy for their children to join in co-operative games and activities, but they would not feel comfortable if their child were to

participate in an activity involving an element of competition. This needs to be considered in many class activities, especially in the context of PE and sports.

PE and sports

- According to the Bible, "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim. For bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things" (1 Timothy 4:7,8). In keeping with this, Jehovah's Witnesses appreciate the value of PE and sports activities conducted during school hours. At the same time, however, Witness parents feel that schools often over emphasise sports, and in bringing up their children, they try to moderate the emphasis on sporting prowess. Parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses encourage their children to use after-school hours principally to pursue spiritual interests rather than to excel in sport. Participation in organised sports, they believe, would expose Witness children and young people to unwholesome associations; so they prefer their children to seek recreation with fellow believers.

Accounts of our origins

- Jehovah's Witnesses believe literally in the Biblical account of creation. It will be helpful to refer to scientific accounts of the origins of the universe and the development of different life forms as 'theories'.

Exercising the parental right of withdrawal

- Believing that these are matters for the home rather than school, Jehovah's Witness parents will invariably want to exercise their right to withdraw their children from RE, collective worship and aspects of sex education not covered by the statutory orders for Science, from which there is no right of withdrawal.

Other sensitive issues

Extra-curricular activities

- Most Jehovah's Witness pupils do not participate in extra-curricular activities. Witness families already pursue a programme of activities that centres on their worship, and families are encouraged to include recreation in this family-oriented programme. Jehovah's Witnesses consider it vital that their children enjoy wholesome association, particularly in view of what they perceive as the deteriorating moral standards of human society today. Jehovah's Witnesses take seriously the Bible's warning: "Bad associations spoil useful habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33). These principles shape the view of Witness families towards extra-curricular activities provided by schools.

Voting and elections

- In many schools, pupils are voted into an office or position, such as member of the School Council. Some schools, particularly at times of local or national elections, stage mock elections. Jehovah's Witness children will not participate in such activities, either by accepting an elective office or by voting others into office. In this way they follow the example of Jesus who withdrew when people wanted to make him king (John 6:15). There are no difficulties if a Jehovah's Witness pupil is appointed to a position of responsibility by a teacher, and it is recognised that not all voting is political. Sometimes pupils may be called on by the teacher to give their opinions. There may be no violation of Biblical principles in expressing one's preferences. Jehovah's Witnesses are clear that expressing

an opinion through a show of hands is not the same as electing someone politically to an office.

Fund-raising for charities

- Jehovah's Witnesses may be willing for their children to participate in the school's general charitable activities; however, they would not want them to contribute to the work of religious-based charities, such as Christian Aid or CAFOD.

Rastafarian movement¹

Background information

- The Rastafarian movement originated among dispossessed Black people in Jamaica. Although slavery in Jamaica was officially abolished in 1835, the emancipated slaves had little choice but to continue to work on the plantations. When former slaves and their descendants tried to improve their lot by leaving the rural areas and moving to the towns, Kingston in particular, they could find little work and they were forced to live in abject poverty. For the first half of the 20th century, a quarter of the island's population lived in terrible slums in Kingston.
- Some of the former slaves and their descendants dreamed of returning to Africa, to Ethiopia in particular. This idea of achieving repatriation in Africa was termed Ethiopianism (Africa and Ethiopia were used as interchangeable terms), and the most powerful prophet of Ethiopianism was Marcus Garvey. He was born in Jamaica in 1867 and died in London in 1940. During his life he travelled widely, spending many years in the USA. Ironically, he never visited Africa.
- Rastafarians regard Marcus Garvey (1867-1940) as their greatest contemporary prophet. In 1914 he founded the United Negro Improvement Society, the aim of which was "to lay down our burdens, and rest our weary backs and feet by the banks of the Niger, and sing our songs, and chant our hymns to the God of Ethiopia".
- The flag of the United Negro Improvement Society was red for the blood of slaves and martyrs, black for the skin of the Negro, and green for the lush vegetation of Africa and Ethiopia. Rastafarians incorporated these colours into their symbolism, adding gold for the Rastafarian faith (the Ethiopian flag also has black, red and yellow stripes).
- Marcus Garvey prophesied that a great Black king would be crowned, and that he would be the saviour of the Black people. These teachings were seen to be realised in the figure of Haile Selassie, who was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. Haile Selassie was known as Ras Tafari (Prince of the House of Tafari), and his coronation was seen as fulfilling a prophecy contained in Psalm 68: "Princes shall come out of Ethiopia, and Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God". He took the traditional titles of King of Kings, Lord of Lords and Lion of Judah.
- Rastafarians believe that although Haile Selassie died in mysterious circumstances in 1975, his presence continues as a living reality known as JAH. The terminology 'I n I' is used instead of referring to 'me' or 'you'. This indicates that JAH dwells within all human beings and signifies the unity of all people.
- There is no hierarchy within the Rastafarian movement and very little documentation. The Bible is seen as the divine Word and is considered inerrant or incapable of untruth. It is interpreted by Rastafarians through collective reading, study and debate, known as 'reasoning'.

¹ Unlike all the other information contained in this guidance, the information on the Rastafarian movement, although taken from authoritative sources, has not been checked for accuracy by members of this faith group. This is despite SACRE's best efforts.

- The use of ganja (cannabis) probably began in the early days of the movement. By no means all Rastafarians use ganja, and some infuse it as a tea solely for medicinal purposes. Rastafarians that do use it treat it with great reverence, believing that to take it is a sacrament. It is known as the Wisdom Weed or the Holy Herb ('erb). Rastafarians produce sufficient for their own rituals and keep away from involvement with drug trafficking, believing that this would abuse its sacred quality.
- Music holds great significance for Rastafarians. Drumming is an important element in meetings and reggae is very significant. The global pop star Bob Marley, whose Rastafarian beliefs were reflected in his music, lifestyle and appearance, has become an inspirational figure for Rastafarians.

Festivals

- Ethiopian Christmas (7 January)
- Afrikan Liberation Day, commemorating the establishment of the Organisation of Afrikan Unity in 1963 (25 May)
- Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie 1st (23 July)
- Birthday of Marcus Garvey (17 August)
- Maskaram, New Year's Day in Ethiopia (11 September)
- Coronation Day of Emperor Haile Selassie 1st (2 November)

Hair

- Most Rastafarians wear uncut hair plaited into 'dreadlocks', which represent the lion's mane. In worship, women keep their dreadlocks covered while men expose and 'flash' their locks as if they were conducting lightning. To wear dreadlocks is an acknowledgement that living this life will not be easy, but locks strengthen the wearer in self-discipline, self-advancement and self-identity. Schools must allow Rastafarian pupils to wear dreadlocks if they so wish; but the locks will need to be tied back for activities where they might constitute a risk to safety.

Diet

- Rastafarians place great emphasis on living in harmony with the natural world. The majority are vegetarian and some are vegans. Food rules are very strict and scrupulous cleanliness is maintained when preparing foods. Many Rastafarians do not consume processed food or salt, and no milk, tea or coffee may be drunk, only fruit juices.

Roman Catholic Church

Holy Days of Obligation

- Roman Catholics believe that there are some days during the year that are so special that every Roman Catholic should go to Mass to celebrate. Every Sunday counts as one of these Holy Days of Obligation, and there are seven others:
 - Christmas Day (25 December) - celebrates the birth of Jesus.
 - Epiphany (6 January) - commemorates the adoration of the Magi.
 - Ascension (May) - commemorates the ascent of Jesus into heaven.
 - Corpus Christi (June) - celebrates the institution of the Eucharist.
 - St Peter and St Paul (29 June)
 - The Assumption (15 August) - celebrates Mary, the mother of Jesus, being received into heaven.
 - All Saints (1 November)

Fridays and Lent

- Lent is the traditional time for penance and self-denial, as is every Friday throughout the year. During Lent and on Fridays, Roman Catholics are expected to practise some sort of self-denial, the form of which is left to the individual. Some Roman Catholics uphold the tradition of eating fish on Fridays.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday

- Many Roman Catholics observe these as special days of fasting and abstinence. Fasting in this context means reducing the amount of food that would normally be eaten. Abstinence means not eating meat. Some Roman Catholics believe that the law of fasting binds all those who are between 18 and 60 years of age and the law of abstinence binds everyone (except for the frail and the sick) who is 14 and older.

Diet

- At one time Roman Catholics would not eat meat (apart from fish) on a Friday. Recently, this restriction has been lifted; but all Roman Catholics are still expected to avoid meat (apart from fish) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Death

- It is very important for Roman Catholics to be given their last rites by a priest.

Dress

- Many Roman Catholics wear a cross or crucifix on a chain or string around their necks. These are religious artefacts not jewellery and schools must allow them to be worn at all times. It should be recognised that this may sometimes present a safety hazard, and there will be occasions when the item will need to be taped to the skin using micropore.

Other sensitive issues

- According to traditional Roman Catholic teaching, homosexual practices, abortion and artificial aids to contraception are wrong. These issues will need sensitive handling in the context of sex and relationship education (SRE).

Salvation Army

Background information

- The mission statement of the Salvation Army reads as follows: "The Salvation Army is a worldwide evangelical Christian church and human service agency. Its message is based on the Bible; its motivation is the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Its mission is to proclaim the gospel, to persuade people of all ages to become his disciples and to engage in a programme of practical concern for the needs of humanity. Its ministry is offered to all persons, regardless of race, creed, colour or gender".
- The Salvation Army was founded by William Booth, who was born in Nottingham in 1829. At the age of 13 he was sent to work as an apprentice in a pawnbroker's shop. He did not enjoy his job, but it made him very aware of the poverty in which many people lived and the humiliation and degradation suffered by the poor.
- During his teenage years, William Booth became a Christian. When his apprenticeship was completed he moved to London, again to work in the pawnbroking trade. He joined up with the local Methodist Church and later decided to become a minister.
- He spent several years as a Methodist minister, travelling all around the country, preaching and sharing God's word. Yet he felt that God wanted more from him, that he should be doing more to reach ordinary people. He returned to London with his family, having resigned his position as a Methodist minister.
- He continued to preach, and in 1865 he was invited to lead a series of missionary meetings in the East End. He soon realised he had found his destiny and he formed his own movement, which he called The Christian Mission.
- The Christian Mission was one of 500 charitable and religious groups trying to help in the East End, and Booth struggled to make a real impact. It was not until 1878 when The Christian Mission changed its name to The Salvation Army that things began to happen. The idea of an Army fighting sin caught the imagination of the people and The Salvation Army began to grow rapidly. Booth's fiery sermons and vivid imagery drove the message home, and more and more people found themselves willing to leave their past behind and start a new life as a soldier in The Salvation Army.
- The military spirit of the movement meant that The Salvation Army soon spread abroad. By the time Booth died in 1912, the Salvation Army was at work in 58 countries.

Musical instruments

- From the time of William Booth, brass bands have been a distinctive and instantly recognisable feature of the Salvation Army. It used to be the case that the Salvation Army kept itself apart from the world of secular music. Instruments used in Salvation Army bands would be dedicated to the service of God, which meant that they could not be used for secular purposes or to play secular music. Salvationist pupils using dedicated musical instruments had to obtain special permission before playing them in school ensembles, bands and orchestras. In recent years the Salvation Army has opened itself

up to the world of secular music, making its music available to all. The Head of the Salvation Army music board has stated that in view of these changes, there are no longer any difficulties with young people using their instruments to play in school bands. He considers that it is the player that is dedicated to the service of God, rather than an inanimate musical instrument. Consistent with this, Salvation Army insurance covers the playing of Salvation Army instruments in other bands.

- Nevertheless some Salvationists may still adhere to the traditional view, and their wishes should be respected. It is suggested that in order to avoid any difficulties, when a Salvationist pupil plays their Salvation Army instrument in a school band, permission should be obtained from their local corps band leader or band master.

Sensitive issues

- Salvationists (children and adults) will not participate in any form of gambling, and schools need to be sensitive to this issue when considering fund raising activities such as raffles, draws and sweepstakes.
- Salvationists believe that human beings are created in the image of God and that therefore the body should be treated with respect. For this reason they refrain from alcohol, tobacco and drugs, except when medically prescribed.
- Salvationists believe that homosexual practices and abortion run counter to Biblical teachings, except where abortion can be justified on medical grounds or in cases of rape or incest. These issues will need sensitive handling in the context of sex and relationship education (SRE).

