



# Collegiate Junior School for Girls

## RELIGIOUS POLICY:

### Definitions and acronyms

equitable basis	means on a basis that is deemed fair, right, reasonable and just and gives equal treatment to everyone.
freedom of conscience	refers to the freedom of an individual to consider a fact, point of view or thought independent of others.
freedom of religion, belief, and opinion	Is the right to choose, express or practise any religion, belief or opinion free from coercion, prejudice or interference.
parent	has the meaning assigned to it in the South African Schools Act.
religion	“is used to describe the comprehensive and fundamental orientation in the world mostly with regard to ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews as well as being used collectively to refer to those organisations which are established in order to promote and protect these beliefs” (NPR).
religion education	“is a curricular programme with clear age-appropriate educational aims and objectives, for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world.” (NPR).
religious holiday/holy day/festival	Is a day or period of observation, remembrance, celebration of any cultural or religious activity that is recognised as a feature of a particular cultural or religious community.
religious instruction	“refers to a programme of instruction which is aimed at providing information regarding a particular set of religious beliefs with a view to promoting the inculcation and adherence thereto” (NPR).
religious observance	“are those activities, behaviours, and practices that recognise and express the views, beliefs, and commitments of a particular religion, and may include gatherings of adherents, prayer times, dress and diets” (NPR).
school	refers to Collegiate Junior School for Girls.
school community	includes all learners, all members of staff, all parents and visitors to the school, and residents in the school neighbourhood.
school day	“entails that portion of each day in which it is compulsory for educators and learners to be at school”(NPR) and includes the seven hours contact time that is expected of educators and learners, including breaks, compulsory activities, assembly and designated extramural activities.
HOD	the Head of Department of the Department of Education
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NPR	National Policy on Religion and Education

SMT	School Management Team
SRP	Collegiate Junior School's Religion Policy

## 1. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this religion policy is to:

- 1.1 recognise that everyone has a Constitutional right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion.
- 1.2 ensure that there are no practices at the school that discriminate against learners, their families, or staff on the basis of religion, beliefs, and opinion.
- 1.3 ensure that minority religions, beliefs, and opinions in the school are protected and respected and accorded the dignity and status equivalent to the majority religion in the school.
- 1.4 describe how various aspects relating to religion will be accommodated in the school.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 Collegiate Junior accepts the Constitutional right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion and its obligation to ensure this right is respected by all members of the school community.
- 2.2 Recognising the diversity of religions, beliefs, opinions, and cultures of the school community, the school accepts its obligation to promote the core values of a democratic society.
- 2.3 Collegiate Junior will exercise its right to allow religious observances on an equitable basis and attendance at them will be free and voluntary.
- 2.4 Collegiate Junior will not tolerate discrimination against any person based on his/her religion, belief, or opinion.
- 2.5 Collegiate Junior will act against any person who fails to adhere to this religion policy using appropriate strategies provided in terms of school policies and codes or South African law.
- 2.6 Parents are expected to assist the school in its adherence to this policy by, for example,
  - a) informing the school of dates of religious holidays/holy days/festivals at the time that the school year plan is drawn up in October of the preceding year, and
  - b) informing the school of dietary and other necessary requirements relating to a learner's religion.
- 2.9 No learner, staff member, parent or visitor may attempt to impose a religious belief or opinion on another person, except where the person's participation is free and voluntary in a gathering exclusively for one religion, belief, or opinion.

## 3 Applicable legislation acronyms

This policy is compiled in accordance with the following legislation and amendments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)
- National Education Policy (Act 27 of 1996) and amendments
- South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and amendments
- Eastern Cape Schools Act (Act1 of 1999)
- National Policy on Religion and Education
- Department of Basic Education Circular 01/LEG/2018

## 4 Application and scope of the policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all learners, parents, and staff of the school.
- 4.2 Visitors to the school, including education department officials, and representatives of faith-based organisations and political parties are required to respect the Constitutional right to

freedom of religion, belief and opinion and the principles of this policy while on the school premises or during a school day.

## **5 Responsibilities of the SGB**

- 5.1 The SGB, in conjunction with the school's management, is responsible for developing and monitoring the implementation of the SRP.
- 5.2 The policy will be reviewed every three years and when there are changes in legislation or interpretation of the legislation.
- 5.3 Where necessary, the SGB will assist the principal when action must be taken following breaches of this policy.

## **6 Responsibilities of the Principal**

- 6.1 The principal must ensure that the school community is educated regarding the SRP and that the policy is implemented and adherence to it is monitored.
- 6.2 The principal is responsible for instituting action against any person who acts in contravention of the policy using the appropriate disciplinary and other legal remedies. Where necessary, the SGB's assistance will be required.

## **7 Religion Policy Detail**

### *7.1 Religion education*

- a) The school implements the prescribed Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for Grades R-7 which includes religion education topics within the Life Skills and Life Orientation curricula.
- b) Therefore, participation in religion education is not voluntary as religion education is part of the CAPS and no religious instruction is permitted as part of religion education.
- c) Religion education is taught by qualified and SACE registered educators during the formal school day.
- d) Educators must ensure that the religious interests of all learners are protected.
- e) Educators of religion education may share their religious identity and expand on matters related to their own religious identity when asked but may not promote their own religion, beliefs, and opinions.

### *7.2 Religious instruction in or out of class time*

- a) By arrangement with the principal, religious organisations and school religious clubs are permitted, on an equitable basis, to conduct extra-curricular religious instruction activities on the school premises.
- b) By arrangement with the principal, religious instruction activities, religious societies and gatherings may be permitted on the school premises during agreed upon times.
- c) Religious instruction may be conducted by staff members or by external persons accredited by faith communities. If a teacher is not present in the venue where the instruction takes place, each learner in attendance must have produced a consent form from his/her parent to participate in the activities.
- d) Participation in religious instruction must be free and voluntary.

### *7.3 Religious observances at school*

- a) Learners and staff may be excused, on grounds of freedom of conscience and religion, from attending the religious observance component of any school assembly, function, or gathering.
- b) Learners who choose not to participate in religious observances will be supervised in a designated venue.

- c) Religious gatherings
  - i. On an equitable basis, the school may during school hours hold a gathering to observe the religious holiday/holy day/festival of a particular religion. Learners, their families, and faith leaders of the religion may be asked to participate in the organisation and running of the event.
  - ii. The purpose of the gathering would be to teach all members of the school community about the significance of the religious holiday/holy day/festival and how it is observed.
  - iii. The gathering may not be used to convert persons who are not members of the religion that is being recognised.
- d) Uniform, dress, and the wearing of religious symbols
  - i. The school uniform rules provide for learners to select from a choice of clothing items such that members of all religions will be able to comply with uniform rules.
  - ii. The dress code for staff places no specific restrictions on staff members wearing attire relating to their religion, including the wearing of religious symbols but staff are required to conform to the general dress code for staff as laid out in the staff code of conduct.
  - iii. If it is compulsory for members of a religion to wear a religious symbol or for them to wear additional items of clothing, then the parents may submit their request for the deviation of the school uniform to the SGB who will revert to them. However, as learners are wearing a uniform, the basis of which is a fundamental characteristic of the school, they are requested to respect the discretion of the SGB and if granted permission, to wear these discreetly.
- e) Catering
  - i. Where it is possible, the dietary needs of different religions will be catered for at all school events and tours.
  - ii. Parent committees representing religious groups will be asked to assist the school so that the requirements are understood and can be catered for.

#### 7.4 School times

- a) The times of the school day have been determined to ensure that the required number of hours teaching time per week are met and to enable members of the school community to perform their religious duties. No further school times or class timetables can be made.

#### 7.5 Additional concessions for religious or cultural reasons

- a) This policy and the Code of Conduct for Learners provide as far as possible for the necessary religious observances of learners and staff members.
- b) Where a person requires further concessions, the staff member or parent of a learner must apply to the SGB stating the grounds for requiring additional concessions.
- c) The principal will not unreasonably withhold permission but will do so if the concession is likely to disrupt the disciplined and purposeful school environment or impact on the quality of the learning experience.

#### 7.6 School activities during religious holidays/holy days/festivals

- a) As far as possible, educators will not teach new work on religious holidays/holy days/festivals. They will inform the learners in advance of what will be covered and provide learning materials and reasonable assistance to help them catch up any missed work.
- b) As far as possible, formal assessments will not be conducted on religious holidays/holy days/festivals and testing, and examination timetables will take note of these days.
- c) Major school events, parent meetings, and whole-school sporting and cultural activities will not be scheduled on religious holidays/holy days/festivals unless this cannot be avoided.

- 7.7 *Absence from school on days not designated school holidays for observance of religious holidays/holy days/festivals*
- a) Parents of learners and members of staff may request leave of absence to observe religious holidays/holy days/festivals.
  - b) To assist with planning, this school requires all staff to notify the principal in the first week of the school of the dates when they will require leave for religious observance. In the case where dates are not definite, the approximate dates must be provided.
  - c) Learners are required to produce an absentee letter on the day they return to school.
- 7.8 *School closure for observance of religious holidays/holy days/festivals or practise of religious duties*
- a) The school will not request permission to close the school for observance of religious holidays/holy days/festivals unless it will be impossible to manage the school safely because of the number of staff members who will be absent.
  - b) Once the times of the school day or timetable have been determined, it will not be adapted further to meet the needs of learners or staff to practise their religious duties.
- 7.9 *Use of school facilities by religious groups*
- a) The governing body may allow religious groups to use the school facilities for religious observances. This will be done on an equitable basis. A fee may be charged for the use of the facilities. Activities must be conducted within the rules specified in the use agreement.
- 7.10 *Display of religious symbols*
- a) Religious symbols may be displayed for educational purposes only in the classrooms of educators who teach religion education and then only on an equitable basis.
  - b) Religious groups that have been permitted to use the school facilities for religious instruction of learners during break or after school must remove any religious symbols or religious material from the venue after use thereof.
  - c) Groups hiring the school facilities must adhere to the terms of the use agreement which will include the removal of all religious material after use of the facilities.
- 7.11 *Religion policy and promotion of the core values of a democratic society*
- a) Through this religion policy the school aims to promote the core values as defined in the paragraph 14 of the NPR, namely: equity, tolerance, diversity, openness, accountability, and social honour.

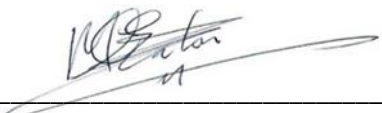
## 8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This religion policy aims to enable members of the school community to be educated about and celebrate diversity without creating divisions. Unity of the school community is promoted without requiring uniformity.

This Religion Policy for Collegiate Junior was adopted by the Governing Body of Collegiate Junior at a meeting held at the school on 3 May 2022.

SIGNED:

CHAIRPERSON




DATE 03/05/2022

PRINCIPAL



DATE 03/05/2022

SECRETARY



DATE 03/05/2022

### POLICY REGISTER DETAILS

TITLE OF POLICY	School Religion Policy (SRP)
DATE APPROVED BY SGB	3 May 2022
EFFECTIVE DATE	3 May 2022
EXPIRY DATE	This School Religion Policy remains in force until amended or replaced <u>and</u> approved by the SGB.
REVIEW DATE	Three years or sooner from date of adoption. Each SGB should review this policy at least once during its term of office.
AMENDMENT HISTORY	Revised October 2020 Revised February 2022