RELIGIOUS POLICY

1. PREAMBLE:

1.1. 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 and requiring ultimate commitment, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews or ultimate dimensions of human life.

1.2. Parkside Primary recognises the particular value of the rich and diverse religious heritage of our school community.

1.3. While we acknowledge that the school has an educational responsibility for teaching and learning about religion and religions, and for promoting these, we understand that we should do so in ways that are different from the religious instruction and religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community.

1.4. This policy has been based on the National Policy on Religion and Education of 2003, and covers the different aspects of Religion Education, Religious Instruction and Religious Observances.

1.5. The spirit of the policy is to embrace the religious diversity of South Africa. The South African Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996) upholds the constitutional rights of all

2. RELIGION POLICY

In accordance with the Constitution, the South African Schools Act, and rules made by the appropriate authorities, the School Governing Body has formulated a Religious Policy as follows:

2.1. The South African Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996) upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion, in public education institutions.

2.2. Within this constitutional framework, and as a public school, we have a responsibility to promote the core values of a democratic society,

through the curriculum, through extracurricular activities, and in our approach in general.

2.3. These core values include equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability, and social honour.

2.4. Equity: The education process in general, and this policy, must aim at the development of a national democratic culture with respect for the value of all of our people's diverse cultural, religious and linguistic traditions.

2.5. Tolerance: Religion in education must contribute to the advancement of inter-religious tolerance and interpersonal respect among adherents of different religious or secular worldviews in a shared civil society.

2.6. Diversity: In the interest of advancing informed respect for diversity, as an educational institution we have a responsibility to promote multi-religious knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of religions in South Africa and the world.

2.7. Openness: Schools, together with the broader society, play a role in cultural formation and transmission, and we must promote a spirit of openness in which there shall be no overt or covert attempt to indoctrinate into any particular belief or religion.

2.8. Accountability: As systems of human accountability, religions cultivate moral values and ethical commitments that can be recognised as resources for learning and as vital contributions to nation building.

2.9. Social Honour: While honouring the linguistic, cultural, religious or secular backgrounds of all learners, we cannot allow the overt or covert denigration of any religion or secular world-view

3. PRINCIPLES OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICY AT PARKSIDE

3.1. We do not have a state religion. Therefore, Parkside Primary School recognises the rich and diverse religious heritage of our country and adopts a co-operative and Universal model that accepts our rich heritage and faith whilst protecting our young people from religious discrimination and sway.

3.2. This policy is neither negative nor hostile towards any religion or faith and does not discriminate against anyone.

3. 3. It displays a respect towards religious faith and affirms the study of religion and religious observances.

3.4. We believe that by teaching learners about the role of religion in history, society, and the world, a unified, multi-tradition programme in the study of religion can be an important part of a well-balanced and complete education.

3.5. Teaching should, at all times, engender a sense of acceptance, security, and respect for learners with differing values, cultural backgrounds, and religious traditions.

3.6. At no time may any educator in any subject or learning area promote any particular religion, except where an educator is merely affirming his/her personal religious identity and/or asked to expand on matters related to his/her personal identity. Instead of promoting a religious position, there should be, at all times, a balanced approach to teaching and learning about religion. Educators must ensure that all, irrespective of race, creed, sexual orientation, dis

3.7. Educators must ensure that all, irrespective of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, language, gender, or class, feel welcome, emotionally secure, and appreciated.

3.8. Parkside Primary will, where possible, make provision for important holy days in regard to the setting of examinations and tests, to ensure that learners are not prejudiced by their attendance at religious observances.

3.9. The teaching of Religion Education must be sensitive to religious interests by ensuring that individuals and groups are protected from ignorance, stereotypes, caricatures, and denigration.

3.10. The School Governing Body will determine the nature and content of religious observances for educators and learners, such that coherence and alignment with this policy and applicable legislation is ensured. It may also determine that a policy of no religious observances be followed.

3.11. Our policy for religion in education, therefore, is designed to support unity without uniformity, and diversity without divisiveness.

3.12. The level at which religious practices, religious dress and insignia, as well as traditions/customs are recognised at Parkside will be governed by the Code of Conduct, the Uniform Code and other relevant policies of the school and the Department of Education.