



LIFE Education Trust

## **SPIRITUALITY POLICY**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Spirituality Policy</b>
<b>Policy adopted by Trust Board</b>	13.7.24
<b>Reported to LGCs for implementation</b>	16.7.24
<b>Implementation Date</b>	16.7.24
<b>Review Date</b>	July 2027
<b>Policy Source</b>	<b>LIFE Trust Policy</b>

## 1. Context

LIFE is a multi academy trust with a broadly Christian ethos and a commitment to support children, employees and schools of all faiths and none. Legally we are recognised as a trust with articles of association approved by the Church of England. Our Church schools have historic Christian foundations and a Christian distinctiveness which we will uphold and support. All of our schools have a legal duty to ensure the spiritual development of all our pupils.

The LIFE vision is that **everyone flourishes**. For our people to flourish we believe that they need to feel a sense of **belonging**, to **achieve** and to **contribute** to our community. Our systems flourish by being **effective, enabling and evolving**. Our Way of LIFE is beautifully aligned to the C of E vision for education in which human flourishing and, "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10) is the end goal.

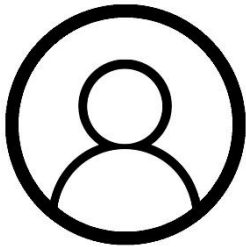
We have three LIFE values: **courageous optimism, boundless creativity and heartfelt compassion**. This focus on hope, creativity and compassion is biblical and theologically sound. We also have three behaviours: **humility, bravery and teamwork** which are clearly seen in Christian tradition and practice.

## 2. Definition

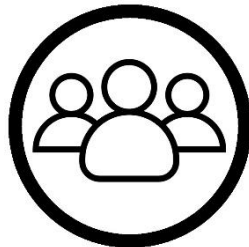
In order to help everyone understand exactly what we mean by spirituality, we have created the following definition:

**Spirituality is about ensuring that everyone flourishes. It involves each of us understanding ourselves, relating well to others, appreciating the beauty in the world and reflecting on the deeper meaning of life. It also involves us contributing to the flourishing of others and the world around us.**

We see four dimensions to spirituality:



**Self**



**Others**



**World**



**Meaning**

**Self** – Spirituality involves **understanding ourselves** as unique individuals, what we are and what we want to become. It includes what we choose to believe and value.

**Others** – It also captures our **interactions with others**, how we choose to see them and relate to them, how we show humility and compassion and how we embrace equity. When we're spiritual, we're filled with optimism and creativity, and we collaborate creatively with others.

**World** – Spirituality also involves **appreciating the beauty in the world**, whether found in nature or in created things and how we contribute to making the world a better place.

**Meaning** – it also extends beyond our everyday experiences, helping us to **reflect on the deeper meaning of life** and the universe.

Our definition is supported by the work of Rebecca Nye (2009) who suggests that spirituality can be defined as **relational awareness**. In her words, specifically designed to be appropriate for use with children and young people, spirituality encompasses our relationship with:

- **Self** (being a unique person and understanding self-perception)
- **Others** (how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships)
- **World and Beauty** (perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to nature and art)
- **Beyond** – (relating to the transcendental and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday')

For **Christians**, spirituality is not just a **journey**, but a walk guided by **faith, hope and love**. It's about embracing the **teachings of Jesus Christ**, living with **courage** inspired by His example, and sharing His message of **compassion and forgiveness** with others. When we're spiritual as Christians, we're strengthened by the **joy** found in our relationship with God. It's about nurturing a deep **connection with God** through **prayer, worship, and service** to others, allowing His love to shine through us. Spirituality for Christians, is developed through listening to God and hearing from him through understanding the bible. The spirituality of Scripture is centred on the triune God: God the Father who is reached through God the Son who is magnified by God the Holy Spirit. By following the path of Christ, Christians discover profound meaning and purpose in their lives, and strive to reflect His light in all that they do.

For those of **other faiths**, there will be **traditions, teachings, practices and expectations** which help guide believers. We recognise these, help believers to celebrate them, and ask everyone to respect them.

For those who have **no recognised faith** or do not express their beliefs through a recognised religion, spirituality remains a **journey of self-discovery** and meaning as they **connect** with themselves, others and the world.

### 3. Language

**Developing a shared understanding of spirituality is essential. At LIFE, we would expect the following language to be used and understood by everyone:**

- A spiritual journey
- Understanding ourselves
- Relating to others
- Appreciating beauty in the world
- Reflecting on deeper meaning
- Courageous Optimism
- Boundless Creativity
- Heartfelt Compassion
- The teachings and life of Jesus
- The teachings of major world religions
- Prayer
- Worship
- Service
- Faith
- Hope
- Love

#### 4. Spirituality in RE

Religious Education is a key vehicle for exploring spirituality and enabling pupils to explore the different world faiths. In our C of E schools we will follow an agreed syllabus and have a significant emphasis on the Christian faith. All schools will ensure strong RE teaching:

- By experiencing wonder and joy through learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews. By asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose.
- By considering questions about God and evaluating truth claims.
- By exploring spiritual practices such as worship and prayer, and considering the impact of these on believers as well as any relevance to their own life.

#### 5. Spirituality across the Curriculum

The following table adapted from the Diocese of Norwich publication *Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Development: a Christian perspective* provides many examples of how we can develop spirituality across different areas of the Curriculum.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
<i>PE</i>	By delighting in movement, particularly when pupils are able to show spontaneity. By taking part in activities such as dance, games and gymnastics which help pupils to become more focused, connected and creative . By being aware of one's own strengths and limitations.
<i>Computing</i>	By wondering at the power of the digital age e.g. use of the internet and social media. By understanding the advantages and limitations of ICT. By using the internet as a gateway to big life issues.
<i>Drama</i>	By allowing for insight, self-expression and the chance to walk in someone else's shoes
<i>Design and Technology</i>	By enjoying and celebrating personal creativity. By reviewing and evaluating created things.
<i>Music</i>	By allowing pupils to show their delight and curiosity in creating their own sounds. By making links between their learning in literacy (or other curriculum area) with music being played as background. By considering how music makes one feel and can 'move us' deeply.
<i>Art and Design</i>	By providing plenty of rich opportunities for pupils to explore both the spiritual dimension and natural phenomena e.g. Northern Lights. By exploring different artists' interpretations of a key figure or event and asking what the artist was trying to convey. By allowing pupils to show what they know through their own expression of big ideas about life e.g. morality; ethical issues. By promoting the process of 'reviewing and evaluating'
<i>PSHE/RSHE</i>	By developing awareness of and responding to others' needs and wants. By exploring meaning and purpose for individuals and society. By developing resilience and inner strength. By valuing self as unique in the image of God. By cherishing relationships. (See <u>Goodness and Mercy</u> resources) And <u>Archbishop of York Youth</u>

	<u>Trust</u>
<i>Geography</i>	<p>By using Google maps and asking pupils to imagine what it might be like to live in different parts of the world.</p> <p>By making links with history when exploring the environment and speculating on why the landscape is as it is.</p> <p>By comparing their lives with pupils living in other countries or other parts of the UK, possibly through a schools linking programme.</p> <p>See <u>Global Neighbours</u></p>
<i>History</i>	<p>By considering how things would be different if the course of events had been different; for example what difference would it have made if the Normans had not been successful in 1066?</p> <p>By looking at local history and investigating the reasons why there is a landmark, building or museum.</p> <p>By speculating about how we mark important events from history and the people who shaped them.</p>
<i>MFL</i>	<p>By exploring the beauty of languages from around the world.</p> <p>By exploring the way language is constructed.</p>
<i>Science</i>	<p>By demonstrating openness to the fact that some answers cannot be provided by Science.</p> <p>By creating opportunities for pupils to ask questions about how living things rely on and contribute to their environment.</p>
<i>Literacy</i>	<p>In responding to a poem, story or text; pupils can be asked 'I wonder what you think happens next?' 'How would you feel if you were the person in the story?' 'Where have you met these ideas before?'</p> <p>By appreciating the beauty of language.</p>
<i>Maths</i>	<p>By making connections between pupils' numeracy skills and real life; for example, pie charts could compare how a child in Africa spends their day with how children in the UK spend their time.</p> <p>By considering pattern, order, symmetry and scale both man made and in the natural world.</p> <p>By appreciating the beauty of shape and space.</p>
<i>Forest School and Outdoor Learning</i>	<p>By exploring and appreciating the beauty of the natural world</p> <p>By considering the creation of all living things</p>
<i>Collective Worship</i>	<p>By providing opportunities to personal and spiritual reflection</p>

## 6. Spirituality in Extra Curricular Activities

Alongside the taught curriculum, there are numerous extra-curricular opportunities for pupils in our schools to explore spirituality. These will include:

- Collective worship
- Trips
- Visits
- Clubs
- Enrichment Days

## 7. Spirituality and Collective Worship

Collective worship is a legal requirement. All pupils must take part in a daily act of **Collective Worship** unless they have been explicitly withdrawn by their parents. According to the DfE:

"Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes."

Our church schools follow the C of E guidance found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/collective-worship-guidance-18052021.pdf>

We see Collective Worship as the opportunity for all pupils to explore spirituality through the areas of self, others, the world and deeper meaning.

## 8. Inspection

Spirituality is part of both the Ofsted and SIAMs inspection frameworks.

### (i) Ofsted

The School Inspection Handbook for S5 inspections looks at the spiritual development of pupils under the Personal Development judgement. It can be interpreted in many diverse ways and inspectors will consider how the school supports and develops pupils' spiritual development quite broadly. This includes being reflective about their religious beliefs and having respect for other people's beliefs and values. It also looks at how a school encourages and develops a much wider sense of spirituality - perhaps an appreciation of music, poetry, nature, etc. An important aspect would be how pupils are able to reflect.

SMSC is defined in the Ofsted School inspection handbook 2021 with the spiritual development of pupils shown by their:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is the over-arching umbrella that encompasses personal development across the whole curriculum.

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's

activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors will always consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school, and evaluate the extent to which the school's education provision meets different pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND.

Ofsted's focus on personal development is important and requires schools to think about the kind of people we aspire to be, the kind of world we aspire to create, and the kind of education we aspire to provide.

**(ii) SIAMS**

Examples of how spirituality features in the 2023 schedule through the following inspector questions (IQs):

IQ1 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?	b) What other strategies do leaders employ to ensure that the theologically rooted Christian vision is a living reality that enables pupils and adults to flourish?			
IQ2 How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision?	a) In what ways does the theologically rooted Christian vision shape the curriculum, including the extracurricular offer?	b) How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?		
IQ3 is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?	a) How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?	c) In what ways is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational, and inspirational?	d) In the context of the school as a Church school, what do pupils and adults understand to be the meaning of spirituality? How does this enhance and enrich collective worship individuals' spiritual development?	e) How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?
IQ4 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in	a) How does the theologically rooted Christian vision enable all to live well together in an inclusive, dignifying, and equitable culture?	b) How do school policies and practice create a culture in which people's wellbeing is enhanced?	c) How is enabling good mental health for all central to the school's work?	

which pupils and adults are treated well?				
IQ5 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create an active culture of justice and responsibility?	a) How does the theologically rooted Christian vision enable positive relationships that balance individual freedom and rights, with responsibility towards others?	b) How does this culture encourage justice and courageous advocacy, enabling pupils to make ethical choices and to be agents of change?		
IQ6 Is the religious education curriculum effective	b) How do school and trust leaders ensure that the religious education curriculum is challenging, accurate, well sequenced, well-balanced, relevant, and diverse?			

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

### (i) Personnel

Everyone at LIFE has a responsibility to read our spirituality policy and support its aims. Those in our Church schools have an additional role in supporting the Christian distinctiveness of their school. In addition, the following people all have specific responsibilities for supporting the spiritual development of our pupils:

- **Teachers**
- **RE Leads**
- **Heads of School**
- **Headteachers**
- **Executive Heads**
- **The Trust Spirituality Lead**
- **Link Spirituality Governors**
- **Governors**
- **The Trust Board**
- **Trust Members**
- **The Diocesan link advisor**

### (ii) Process

A range of documents ensure that we are monitoring the effectiveness of the spiritual development of our pupils. They are:

- **The annual Trust Development Plan**
- **School Development Plans**
- **School Self Evaluation Forms**
- **The termly Spirituality Audit**

Audit report to be attached as appendix 1  
Ceri Daniels and Julian Dutnall - May 2024