



JEWISH LIFE AND LEARNING POLICY

Reviewed in Autumn 2020 Ratified by Jewish Studies Committee on 08.09.2020

Next due for review in Autumn 2021 - subject to any legislative changes

1. Introduction

- 1.1.** This policy aims to reflect our school's motto **ORAH VIYKAR** and its intention to offer the highest quality of Jewish experience which will equip students for life in their community, modern Britain and the wider global society.
- 1.2.** The Jewish Life and Learning opportunities are built around the school motto, **ORAH VIYKAR** (Light and Honour). JFS students are nurtured towards bringing light and honour to themselves and to all those around them. JFS students are taught that bringing light and honour is paramount in all interactions, with all people regardless of faith, worldview, culture and value-system.

As a school, we aim to inspire our students:

- To be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and excellence
- To be independent learners, willing to question and engage in thoughtful debate
- To be respectful, reflective and resilient
- To be engaged spiritually with Judaism, be proficient and active in Jewish practice and skilled in the study of Torah and traditional Jewish texts
- To be proud and involved in Jewish culture, history, identity and community
- To be committed to the State of Israel and learn Hebrew as part of Jewish heritage
- To be responsible and care for all humankind as loyal citizens of the United Kingdom

2. Central Principles and Values

- 2.1** JFS is a Modern Orthodox, co-educational Jewish school, under the religious auspices of the Chief Rabbi (of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth).
- 2.2** JFS is proud to call itself an Orthodox school as reflected in our ethos and curriculum; however, our students come from a broad range of backgrounds and beliefs. We welcome that diversity within our student body and actively promote the values of tolerance, respect and dignity as key Modern Orthodox principles and as British Values.
- 2.3** JFS is a school where Jewish values pervade the life of the school. We stress the values and traditions of our rich Jewish heritage while preparing our pupils to play an active role within contemporary British Society.
- 2.4** Jewish Life and Learning at JFS is integrated with the School's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural drive and the premium placed on PSHE within and outside of curriculum.

3. Curriculum

- 3.1** The formal and informal Jewish Studies curricula are designed to give pupils skills, knowledge and passion that will enable them to have a continuing positive relationship to Jewish Life and Learning.

- 3.2** We aim for all of our pupils to leave as Hebrew readers who can navigate the Siddur (prayer book) and are able to participate when attending Shul services and Jewish events.
- 3.3** The Hebrew language is more than a tool to access classical Jewish texts. It is central to our identity as Jews in the modern world and our identification with the people and State of Israel, and this is reflected in the significance of Ivrit and Jewish textual skills within the curriculum. Some pupils join JFS already equipped with many of these skills, others do not. Those who do not are given every help and encouragement to attain them.
- 3.4** Tefillah (prayer) and other spiritual opportunities are integral at JFS and in recent years, the School has developed a number of new/enhanced opportunities. Through regular Tefillah/spiritual opportunities, we hope that our students will become increasingly comfortable with Tefillah, develop greater self-awareness, increased self-esteem and enjoy a greater sense of Jewish purpose. These opportunities are outlined in Appendix 1.
- 3.5** Jewish Studies at JFS is taught according to ability, not background. We aim to stretch pupils academically, nurture their independent learning skills and enable them to appreciate the richness of Torah by engaging with text first-hand.
- 3.6** The establishment of the State of Israel is something of great religious and spiritual significance and the existence of a Jewish state in the contemporary world is something that we celebrate in our formal and informal curricula; however, at JFS we are careful to avoid advocating any particular political stance on contemporary Israeli politics.
- 3.7** At JFS, we educate our students about other major world religions and cultures as well as traditional British Values. Consequently, a pupil will leave JFS with attributes of respect, empathy, good citizenship and an appreciation of democracy.

4. Informal Jewish Education

- 4.1** Our formal Jewish curriculum is complemented by a stimulating programme of Informal Jewish Education and cultural activities including Tzedakah (charity) activities and social communal activities. Pupils perform Chesed (acts of kindness), discover Judaism by experiencing it first hand and grow into valued members and contributors to their Jewish and wider communities. We encourage our students to actively contribute to the various communities to which they belong, Jewish, local, national and global.

5. Whole School Jewish Life and Learning

- 5.1** The Jewish Life and Learning should permeate all aspects of the School beyond the JS and JiEP departments.
- 5.2** The School offers a number of visits to complement and reinforce the Jewish values of the school, these include residential visits (e.g. Poland, A Taste of Israel and Lev) and day trips (e.g. social action, Imperial War Museum and East End).
- 5.3** Where appropriate, subjects should include relevant material in their curricula and extra-curricular activities.
- 5.4** Decisions relating to whole school matters (whether at departmental level or more broadly), should take into consideration the Jewish Life and Learning of the school. This will impact on a wide range of issues. Where necessary, staff should consult with the Deputy Headteacher for Jewish Life and Learning to seek guidance.

Appendix 1

Opportunities for tefilah and other spiritual activities include:

- An optional pre-school Shacharit, timetabled each day, with students encouraged to actively participate/lead, followed by a (free) communal breakfast
- An optional daily Mincha service
- Listening to and reflecting on a daily Pause for Thought, recorded by staff or often, their peers on a range of SMSC-rich areas such as Refugee Week, Love your Neighbour and Positive Self-Esteem
- A compulsory weekly Tefillah takes place for Year 7 – it is an explanatory service and is accompanied by a Tefillah curriculum that students work through (this will be expanded to include Year 8 from September 2020)
- A Rosh Chodesh Tefillah/SMSC Programme, enabling our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to further develop their Tefillah skills, to hear from guest speakers and to celebrate the start of a new month together
- A Hebrew Reading Programme, based around learning key prayers from the Siddur