



S73 Provision for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs

Reviewed: Education and Policy Committee

Approved: Full Governing Body

Approved Date: December 2024

Next Review Date: December 2025

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees of Westminster Abbey Choir School (WACS).

At WACS, we aim to provide an inclusive environment where all pupils are encouraged to embrace our school values and be compassionate, courageous and courteous. Pupils are inspired to take on the opportunities open to them, helping them to develop personally and engendering a firm understanding of the world in which we live. Every member of our community is an individual who is embraced for who they are. We expect the highest standards of behaviour from all members of the community towards each other.

Considered provision is made for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs. On entry to the school, parents are asked about particular needs and this information is recorded securely on the School's information management system. Information about particular needs and any necessary reasonable adjustments is communicated to staff sensitively through formal staff meetings or iSAMS records. This information can be updated at any time, as the needs of pupils change.

Religious Needs

As an Abbey Choir School where pupils sing at services every day, the majority of pupils hold a Christian faith, however, we give all pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way in which they affect peoples' lives, by:

- Offering a broad range of topics in assembly and shrine prayers, including secular messages and the exploring of religious festivals, and ensuring that pupils attend.
- Requiring attendance at school and church services.
- Offering pupils the opportunity to explore and develop their faith through a confirmation course in Form III.
- Expressing an interest in the religious activities that pupils take part in and encouraging an open-minded approach to religion and faith.
- Regular School visits from the Chaplain
- Listening to the religious needs of individuals and responding to requests for specific provision. For example, Ramadan guidance to support pupils who are fasting, should we have a Muslim pupil.

It is not a requirement to be a Christian to become a chorister but all pupils have to be comfortable with attending daily services in the Abbey and singing during them.

Dietary Needs

Pupils with individual dietary needs are catered for by the Catering Manager. Those with allergies, intolerances, diabetes etc. may have specially prepared and plated up meals or may select certain items from the food counter. Gluten-free and all other allergy/intolerance symbols are placed on the menus.

The School Matron records information about individual pupils' dietary needs in consultation with parents and the pupil concerned, and these are reviewed with all School staff. Pupils observing religious events or festivals, such as Ramadan, will

have separate catering arrangements for the duration of the festival. Pupils exercise choice in their diets and any option is catered for in the school dining room. Pupils who are Vegans or those who prefer dairy-free options, for example, will always be provided with alternatives. The School Council are given the opportunity to discuss dietary needs and any pupil can fill out a pupil feedback form to give to the catering team with specific requests.

Language Needs

Pupils for whom English is an additional language can receive support in their English studies, however, a high base understanding of English is needed in order to cope with the rigorous demands of singing during daily services on top of the normal school curriculum. The level of support needed is agreed with parents, usually before entry into the school. If at any point, the quality of an EAL pupil's spoken or written English is felt to be impeding progress, we would work with the individual pupil as needed in collaboration with parents to support them to make expected progress.

Cultural Needs

We aim to provide support for those with particular cultural needs. Pupils are assisted in maintaining and sharing their own cultural interests where possible and more broadly we seek to blend these with the cultural education of all pupils. We aim to help pupils to develop culturally through providing an opportunity for pupils to learn about other cultures:

- From other pupils through friendships.
- Through the exploration of other cultures in assembly
- Encouraging consideration and tolerance of the religious commitments of other pupils, such as those who fast during Ramadan.
- Listening to pupils from overseas or from different cultures.

We also appreciate that pupils from differing cultures might need help to adjust to the school culture and offer them assistance with this.