

STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Subject:	Religious Diversity
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Person responsible:	Curriculum Director – SEND, Safeguarding & Prevent
Approved by:	SLT
For action by:	Curriculum Directors, Heads of School, Attendance Co-ordinators, Student Support Services
For information to:	All staff

POLICY NO. ED 6/19

Background

HCUC welcomes people from a wide variety of backgrounds. We are a secular college and as such we respect and celebrate the diverse cultural and religious traditions of all who use our resources.

Religion or Belief is a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010. HCUC recognises its Equality Duty as part of the Equality Act which requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Therefore, we are committed to treating all individuals equally and, accordingly, HCUC respects all faiths equally and will therefore neither promote, nor permit to be promoted, any one religious faith or culture over any other. All individuals will be expected to respect and adhere to College policies, rules and regulations, regardless of their personal faith or religion.

College resources exist primarily for the delivery of learning activities, but where practicable, arrangements will be made for people to carry out religious or faith observance, or to provide space for spiritual reflection.

Guidance Notes

The statement on Religious Diversity is intended to be an all-embracing description of HCUC's position and of its determination to respect the religious obligations of individuals whilst maintaining a cohesive College environment.

HCUC:

1. Promotes itself as a secular college and respects equally different religions, faiths, and cultures.
2. Expects everyone to adhere to the Equality & Diversity policy.
3. Expects regular course attendance from all its students as outlined in the Attendance & Punctuality Policy.
4. Recognises a variety of religious festivals throughout the year.
5. As curriculum planning and student success take priority in HCUC, HCUC asks that requests for exceptional leave for essential religious obligations are made by students in writing to their Head of School at least one week in advance. Two days authorised absence is allocated for each academic year.
6. Delegates authority to Curriculum Directors to grant permission to students to take exceptional leave.
7. Requires Curriculum Directors to ensure that the student's exceptional leave is recorded and logged in their office.
8. Provides a variety of meals in Refectories, including vegetarian options, in order to reflect cultural diversity.
9. Endeavours to arrange refectory opening times which are sensitive to the religious obligations of users.
10. Provides where possible facilities for faith observance and ensures that a variety of means are used to publicise this provision (see quiet/prayer room below).
11. Expects all users to respect College resources where they are used for faith observance.
12. Provides the facility for staff to take annual leave, the exigencies of the service permitting, in order to fulfil their religious obligations.

Quiet/Prayer room

A Quiet/Prayer room is made available at certain times of the day when timetabling and room utilisation allow. The primary purpose of HCUC is education and therefore HCUC cannot guarantee this availability. This room can be used as a 'quiet' space by people of all faith groups, beliefs, genders and for those whom religion has no particular significance in their lives. The room may equally be used as a quiet space for people to sit and contemplate, to pray or to take a few moments to de-stress from a busy day.

HCUC will publicise the regular times and days of this room. If a student wishes to use a room outside of these times then he/she can request a room from the main reception.

The management of this quiet/prayer room will be through an oversight committee existing of the Head of Security and Director. The oversight committee will be responsible for managing the appropriate use of this facility and for dealing with any issues arising.

The room should be a safe space for all users. This means that everyone has a duty to respect other users and to ensure the environment remains welcoming to people of all faiths, beliefs, genders, and for those whom religion has no particular significance in their lives.

The oversight committee reserves the right to refuse entry or cease any activity if it believes there is likelihood of a breach of this respect or HCUC's code of conduct.