



**POLICY TITLE**

**SECULAR POLICY**

**REVIEW CYCLE**

Annually

**NEXT REVIEW DATE**

1<sup>st</sup> February 2018

**PERSON (S) RESPONSIBLE**

Directorate of Human Resources & Legal Services & Deputy Principal – Performance, Quality & Inclusion.

**APPROVING BODY**

Corporation Board (advised by the Principal and Executive Board)

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a secular environment.

**Version & Date of Issue:** 5, 09/02/2017

**QS Reference:** HR-M-0718

**Issued by:** Olivia Besly

**Authorised by:** Annette Cast

## 1. POLICY

Learners and staff attending Newham College follow many different faiths and come from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. On no account will the College permit any form of discrimination against, or harassment of, learners on religious or cultural grounds. While the College fully endorses the right of learners to freedom of expression, it will not permit learners at College to make any unwelcome attempt to convert another person to a particular religious faith or ideological view.

As a way of ensuring equality of opportunity, the College is maintained as a secular environment, i.e. it does not endorse any religion, faith or culture. This enables the College to be as fair as possible in its treatment of learners.

The College encourages the promotion of integration, understanding and mutual respect in College life for all learners. However, this does not mean that it wishes to promote a secular way of life outside of College.

The College is a place of work and study. Its policies and rules are designed to create the best possible chances for all sectors of the community to study successfully. They are not intended to influence how you live your life outside College.

## 2. PROCEDURES

### 2.1 Prayer/contemplation facilities

As a secular institution, the College does not have a designated prayer/contemplation room. However, if any individual wishes to use a room for silent prayer or contemplation, he/she may request the use of a room. Any such request should be made to the Campus Directorate office. The request will be considered by the Campus Directorate, and if a room is available on the day in question, the person making the request will be told of that, and also the time the room will be available for him/her to use. We are unable to guarantee that a room will always be made available, as space is limited, and there are competing priorities for the use of that space.

If a room can be made available on any given day, it is strictly on the basis of it being used for individual private prayer or contemplation, which is to be undertaken in silence. This means that any attempt to organise or lead group prayers or collective forms of worship is not acceptable. This is essential in order to ensure that persons of all faiths, and none, are equally able to use a room for private prayer or contemplation. Furthermore, individual private prayer or contemplation can only be undertaken by staff during their designated rest breaks, and by learners during periods outside of their timetable.

### 2.2 Religious festivals

As a secular institution, the College does not actively promote any religious festivals. During any religious festival, if employees wish to observe any rituals, they must do so in their rest breaks or take annual leave. If learners wish to observe any rituals, they must do so outside of their timetable.

### 2.3 British values

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The College promotes British values to its staff and learners through lessons and national campaigns. British values are defined as 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.' This will be done through the Respect for All campaign, Black History Month celebrations, LGBT History Month celebrations, the Learner Disciplinary code, the staff disciplinary code and involvement in the Student and national elections. This list is not exhaustive.

Learners and staff should communicate in the classroom and working environment in English unless the use of another language is necessary.

### **3 INFRINGEMENT**

Any member of staff or learner who is actively infringing this policy, may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

### **4 REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice by the Directorate of Human Resources, in conjunction with relevant parties.

### **5 GENERAL**

This policy is to be read cross-referenced with all relevant College and service delivery policies.

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