



Faith Policy (Vision, Curriculum, Collective Worship)

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Executive Summary: Key Policy Commitments

This policy brings together the principal expectations governing the religious character, Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD), collective worship, prayer, reflection and wider faith and ethos life of Nishkam Schools. The points below summarise the main Trust-wide commitments; the full policy provides the detailed requirements and guidance.

- The religious character of each school should meaningfully shape its faith curriculum, collective worship and wider ethos. The schools currently within NSMAT are Sikh religious character schools, or have a Sikh religious ethos, and their REFD curriculum is therefore rooted principally in Sikh Dharam, with Sikh Dharam forming at least 50 percent of the planned curriculum. Should a school of another designated religious character join the Trust in future, its faith curriculum would similarly be rooted principally in its own founding tradition, while retaining the shared Nishkam approach.
- REFD intentionally combines two connected dimensions. Religious Education develops accurate subject knowledge, religious literacy, conceptual understanding and disciplinary thinking. Faith Development adds a distinct formative dimension, enabling pupils to explore the spiritual dimension of human life, their spiritual nature and development as part of the human journey, and questions of meaning, purpose, connection with the Divine, virtues, inner growth, responsibility, service and human flourishing.
- Nishkam Schools are Sikh Dharam inspired, multi faith and virtues led. Pupils are supported to develop their own religious, spiritual or human identity while learning meaningfully from Sikh Dharam and other religious and non-religious traditions. The Trust does not seek to convert pupils or require personal religious belief.
- The curriculum seeks to educate the whole person. Alongside rigorous knowledge and thinking, pupils encounter virtues, inner hurdles, sacred wisdom, prayer, reflection, service and lived examples that help them consider how human beings may grow in character, spiritual awareness and responsibility towards others and creation.
- REFD, faith, virtues, prayer and collective worship provision is strategically led by the Trust. Core curricula, schemes of learning, prayer and assembly materials, the Trust Faith Calendar and the Nishkam Passport are Trust provided or quality assured, with schools responsible for high quality and faithful implementation.
- All schools provide a daily act of collective worship shaped by the religious character of the school and the Trust's multi faith, virtues led approach. In current Sikh character schools, pupils should regularly encounter Sikh prayer, sacred music and faith practice, alongside meaningful opportunities for pupils of other faiths and those of no faith to engage respectfully through prayer, reflection, stillness and sacred wisdom.
- Freedom of conscience is fundamental. Personal acts of faith and specific physical gestures should not be coerced; pupils are assessed on knowledge, understanding and thinking rather than their personal faith or spiritual state; and legal rights of withdrawal from REFD and collective worship are respected. Expectations concerning prayer etiquette and head coverings should be applied sensitively in accordance with this policy.
- GNNSJ (SSGD for APS) are the Designated Religious Authorities for the Trust's current Sikh religious character schools and safeguards the authenticity and integrity of the Sikh Dharam inspired ethos. Trustees and the Trust provide strategic oversight and quality assurance, while school leaders, REFD and faith leaders, teachers and staff share responsibility for faithful implementation and for modelling the ethos in daily practice.

I. Introduction and legal context

Nishkam Schools are designated as schools with a Sikh religious character (or for PWPS Leeds, with a Sikh religious ethos). Religious Education is provided in accordance with the religious character of the schools, the Trust's Funding Agreement, and the guidance of the designated religious authority for Nishkam Schools Multi Academy Trust, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha.

2. Religious character and curriculum orientation

The religious character of each school should meaningfully shape its faith curriculum, collective worship and wider ethos. The schools currently within NSMAT are designated as schools with a Sikh religious character, or in the case of PWPS Leeds a Sikh religious ethos. Their REFD curriculum is therefore rooted principally in Sikh Dharam, with Sikh Dharam forming at least 50 percent of the planned REFD curriculum. This provides pupils with substantial and progressive knowledge of the founding religious tradition of their school, alongside meaningful encounter with other religious and non-religious traditions.

This is a principle of religious character rather than a requirement that every school within the Trust should follow a Sikh-majority curriculum irrespective of its designation. Should a school of another designated religious character join the Trust in future, its faith curriculum would similarly be rooted principally in its own founding tradition. For example, a Christian school would ordinarily have Christianity as the principal religious tradition within its faith curriculum, while retaining the wider Nishkam commitments to multi faith encounter, virtues, service, spiritual development, freedom of conscience and the dignity and flourishing of all.

Nishkam Schools seek to educate pupils to become good human beings who are rooted in virtues, have integrity of character, respect the dignity of all people, and are able to practise their own faith and beliefs with confidence and humility.

To uphold human dignity and freedom of conscience, Nishkam Schools do not seek to convert pupils from one religion to another. Pupils are supported to understand, maintain and respect their own religious, spiritual or human identity, while learning meaningfully from the wisdom of Sikh Dharam and other religious and non religious traditions.

All school activities contribute to the religious character and ethos of the school. The following aspects have a particularly important role:

- Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD) curriculum
- virtues and values education
- collective worship, prayer and reflection
- spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- service and contribution to the common good
- the wider ethos, relationships and culture of the school

3. Vision and ethos

The Nishkam approach is rooted in the belief that education should nurture the whole human being. Human beings consist of body, mind and soul. These dimensions are distinct but interrelated, and each requires care, development and attention if pupils are to flourish fully.

Nishkam Schools are Sikh Dharam inspired schools with a multi faith, virtues led approach to education. The Trust's vision is expressed through three connected commitments.

- **Faith inspired: learning from the wisdom of religions**

Pupils explore the Divine context of humanity and the wonder Divinity within creation. They learn about religious traditions with accuracy and respect, and they also learn from the wisdom that religious traditions offer about the human journey, moral responsibility, spiritual growth and the common good.

Pupils are supported to develop their own religious, spiritual or human identity, while respecting the beliefs of others, including those with no religious tradition.

- **Virtues led: nurturing compassionate and responsible human beings**

The fostering of human virtues forms the foundation of goodness. Through the curriculum and wider life of the school, pupils are supported to grow through a conscious focus on Divine virtues. They learn to become self-reflective, build meaningful relationships, understand their responsibilities to the global family and all creation, and live with compassion, humility, service, forgiveness and responsibility.

- **Aspiring for excellence: in all that we do**

Pupils and staff are encouraged to become the best human beings they can be, in all aspects of spiritual, social and academic life. The Trust seeks to foster a culture of optimism, confidence, hope and determination, supported by a rich and challenging curriculum, excellent teaching, awe, wonder and a love of learning.

4. Sikh Dharam inspired curriculum and multi faith encounter

Nishkam Schools are designated as schools with a Sikh religious character or Sikh religious ethos. The Trust describes this identity as being Sikh Dharam inspired, with a multi faith, virtues led approach.

This is shaped by four important principles.

- First, the Sikh Dharam begins with Ik Oan(g)kar, the One Divine Creator. This teaches that there is One Creator and One creation, and that the Divine presence is reflected throughout creation. This inspires the Trust to honour the dignity of every person and to recognise the sacred value of all life.
- Second, while all beings share a common Divine origin, diversity and uniqueness are also respected. The Sikh Dharam does not seek converts and is emphatic in respecting all religions. Nishkam Schools therefore seek to nurture pupils within a Sikh ethos while respecting pupils of all faiths and those of no faith.
- Third, the Sikh Dharam is lived through practice and action, not only through belief or theory. Daily life is rooted in gratitude, prayer, remembrance and nishkam sewa, selfless

service. Pupils are therefore encouraged to connect learning with action, reflection, service and responsibility.

- Fourth, Nishkam education is inspired by the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Trust believes that true education has the power to transform human beings, helping pupils grow in wisdom, humility, compassion, courage and service.

This identity is also further expressed through the school motto:

Man neeva, mat uchi — ‘the lowering of the ego and humbling of the mind, while elevating virtue and wisdom in the presence of Almighty God.’

Nishkam Schools also draw particular inspiration from the Sikh principle of nishkam sewa, selfless service, and from the prayerful commitment to *Sarbat da bhalla*, the ‘welfare, flourishing and prosperity of all humanity’. Pupils are introduced to the spirit of *Bhuray da bhalla*, the call to ‘go beyond the self and wish good even for those who may be perceived as difficult, hostile or wrong’.

5. Faith Practice, Prayer and Reflection in a Multi-Faith Environment

Faith and virtues are understood not only through learning, but through lived experience. Pupils should therefore be provided with opportunities to engage with their own traditions and encounter the traditions of others in ways that are authentic, respectful and developmentally appropriate.

These opportunities may include assemblies, collective worship, daily prayer, reflection time, guided stillness, visits to places of worship, service opportunities, faith celebrations, encounters with faith practitioners, and reflection on sacred stories and teachings. Such opportunities are offered as invitations to participation and reflection rather than requirements for personal belief.

Collective worship, prayer, reflection and assemblies should be delivered in accordance with Trust guidance, the Trust Faith Calendar and the Collective Worship Policy within this document. Schools should promote a consistent approach to reverence, prayer etiquette, reflection and participation while respecting freedom of conscience and the multi-faith context of the school.

Nishkam Schools' multi-faith, virtues-led ethos is rooted in a Sikh Dharam-inspired perspective that recognises both the uniqueness of individual traditions and the shared values of human dignity, responsibility and virtuous living. This ethos should be reflected across REFD, collective worship, assemblies, PSHE, service opportunities and the wider culture of the school.

This document should also be read and understood alongside the Trust's **Sikh Articles of Faith Policy**. Schools must ensure that pupils are supported to understand, wear and practice their Articles of Faith with dignity, confidence and respect, and that staff understand their responsibilities through induction, CPD and appropriate pastoral support.

6. Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD)

6.1 Purpose and intent of REFD

REFD intentionally goes beyond Religious Education considered solely as the academic study of religions and worldviews. Religious Education provides the knowledge, understanding and disciplinary thinking needed to understand religions and worldviews accurately and seriously. Faith Development adds a distinct formative dimension: it recognises the spiritual dimension of human life and enables pupils to explore their spiritual nature and development as part of the wider human journey.

Through Faith Development, pupils consider questions of meaning and purpose, connection with the Divine, the development of virtues, the workings of the mind, inner hurdles, service, responsibility and human flourishing. They encounter the wisdom and practices through which religious and philosophical traditions seek to support spiritual, moral and inner growth. This does not require pupils to adopt a particular belief or faith. Rather, it creates structured opportunities for pupils to explore these dimensions from within their own religious, spiritual or non-religious standpoint.

REFD brings together Religious Education and Faith Development within a single, integrated approach. Religious Education provides pupils with accurate, substantial and well-sequenced knowledge of religions and worldviews. Faith Development shapes how this knowledge is explored and applied. It means that pupils do not encounter religion only as an external system of beliefs, practices, identities and traditions, but are also invited to consider the wisdom, meaning and formative purpose within them.

The Faith Development dimension therefore influences the questions pupils are encouraged to ask, the connections they make and the opportunities they are given for reflection and application. Alongside learning what religious and philosophical traditions teach, pupils consider why these teachings matter, how they seek to transform the individual and society, and what they may contribute to questions of purpose, character, responsibility, service and human flourishing.

This does not lessen the academic rigour of Religious Education or require pupils to adopt a particular belief. Rather, it aims to deepen the educational encounter and enables learning about religion into learning from religion by combining careful knowledge and critical understanding with reflection on lived meaning, spiritual growth and the formation of character. Pupils are supported to engage thoughtfully from their own religious or non-religious standpoint while developing respect for the convictions and experiences of others.

The overarching intent of REFD is to enable pupils to become religiously literate, spiritually reflective, morally responsible and virtues led human beings. REFD therefore contributes to the education of the whole person. It supports pupils to explore the Divine context of humanity, the wonder of creation, the development of virtues, the overcoming of inner hurdles and the human potential to do good unconditionally.

REFD is not limited to the academic study of religions as systems of belief, identity, culture or ritual. These are important, but the curriculum also recognises that religious and philosophical traditions seek to shape and transform human life. They offer wisdom about life's deepest questions, including how people can live with purpose, connect to the Divine, guide the mind, overcome inner obstacles, cultivate virtues, serve others, contribute to the common good and realise their highest human potential.

The purpose of REFD is therefore both educational and formative. It helps pupils develop knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews, while also encouraging them to reflect on what it means to become truthful, compassionate, courageous, humble, service minded and responsible human beings.

REFD enables pupils to:

1. learn about religion and worldviews with accuracy, depth and respect
2. develop religious literacy and conceptual understanding
3. learn from the wisdom within religious and philosophical traditions
4. explore the human journey, moral responsibility and spiritual growth
5. understand how beliefs shape practice, community, identity and character

6. engage with questions of meaning, purpose, truth, suffering, service and human flourishing
7. develop respect for people of different religious beliefs and worldviews
8. reflect on their own values, identity, responsibilities and life choices

6.2 Curriculum principles and disciplinary concepts

The REFD curriculum is built around knowledge, concepts, reflection and lived application. These principles apply across the whole curriculum from EYFS to KS5, not only within one key stage.

Pupils do not simply learn isolated facts about religions. They encounter a carefully sequenced body of knowledge, concepts, stories, practices, scriptures, examples and questions. Over time, pupils revisit key ideas with increasing depth, breadth, maturity and independence to progress their knowledge and skills.

The REFD curriculum is shaped by five disciplinary concepts:

1. Accurate knowledge

Pupils build secure knowledge of religious traditions, including beliefs, teachings, scripture, history, practices, communities and lived experience. This includes depth of study in Sikh Dharam and meaningful study of other major religious traditions.

2. Interpreting meaning and purpose

Pupils explore why beliefs, practices, stories, articles of faith and sacred texts matter. They consider how religious traditions express understandings of truth, life, God, the Divine, humanity, creation, suffering, service and ultimate purpose.

3. Reflecting on lived impact

Pupils consider how religion shapes character, values, moral decision making, worship, service, community life and ways of living for individuals and communities. They learn that religious traditions are living, diverse, dynamic and meaningful, rather than static or fixed systems.

4. Thinking carefully and responsibly

Pupils learn to ask thoughtful questions, use evidence, recognise diversity within and between traditions, compare carefully, analyse ideas and evaluate arguments respectfully. They are taught to move beyond unsupported opinion towards reasoned, informed and compassionate dialogue.

5. Engaging through reflection and experience

Pupils recognise that religion is not only studied as information, but also encountered as a lived reality. Reflection, prayer, silence, service, sacred story, music, encounter and lived examples help pupils understand how religious traditions seek to form the human being.

These disciplinary concepts sit alongside substantive concepts. (the important ideas that pupils revisit across the curriculum). These include, for example: God, the Divine, Naam, Dharam, Hukam, creation, prayer, worship, scripture, Guru, sangat, seva, compassion, forgiveness, justice for human dignity, peace, service, the mind, ego, virtues, vices, inner hurdles, community, identity, sacrifice, moral responsibility and human flourishing.

By returning to these concepts over time, pupils develop depth, breadth, fluency and connected understanding. They learn not only what religious traditions teach, but what those teachings are seeking to cultivate in human life.

6.3 Curriculum structure and entitlement

The REFD curriculum is structured as a progressive all-through journey from EYFS to KS5 which embeds both spiral and conceptual progression and well as developing skills in disciplinary thinking.

All REFD, faith, virtues and prayer content is either provided by the Trust or quality assured through the Trust's agreed processes. This includes schemes of learning, faith and virtues resources, prayer materials, key assembly resources and the Nishkam Passport.

Schools are responsible for faithful implementation at school level. This Trust-led approach ensures consistency of entitlement, progression, quality and ethos across Nishkam Schools, while allowing school leaders and teachers to bring the curriculum to life through high quality teaching, reflection, discussion, prayer, service, encounter and lived school culture.

EYFS and KS1

In EYFS and KS1, pupils follow a Nishkam REFD curriculum that is age appropriate, story rich, reflective and rooted in the Trust's Sikh Dharam inspired, multi faith and virtues led ethos.

This curriculum introduces pupils to foundational themes such as wonder, gratitude, kindness, prayer, care for creation, family, belonging, service, honesty, compassion and respect for others.

It provides early foundations for the more developed KS2 and KS3 REFD curriculum.

KS2 and KS3

In KS2 and KS3, pupils follow a bespoke Nishkam REFD curriculum. The Key Stage 3 REFD curriculum builds upon prior learning from Key Stage 2 where appropriate, while establishing a shared foundation of knowledge and understanding for all pupils, including those joining Nishkam Schools at Key Stage 3.

This curriculum is designed around deep human, spiritual and moral questions. Pupils study areas such as the Human Journey, Compassion, Prayer, Service, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Mool Mantar, the Ten Gurus, the Mind, the Ego, Peace and Forgiveness, Vices and Inner Hurdles, Acceptance and Trust, the Sahibzadas, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Naam and Amrit Sanchar, Commitment and Initiation, Miri Piri, Sant Sipahi, Women in religious history, and the contributions of religious communities locally and globally.

The curriculum enables pupils to build knowledge, deepen understanding, develop vocabulary, engage with scripture and sacred story, and reflect on the relationship between belief, character and lived practice.

KS4

At KS4, pupils follow an EdExcel GCSE Religious Studies pathway that includes the Sikh Dharam and Christianity. The GCSE pathway builds on the knowledge, concepts, vocabulary and thinking developed through the earlier REFD curriculum.

KS5

At KS5, pupils are offered an EdExcel A-level Religious Studies pathway that includes the Sikh Dharam and Christianity. Further progression and enhanced resources are available where appropriate. This may include formal study, wider faith and virtues education, visits to institutions of Higher-Education, leadership opportunities, service, dialogue, reflection and deeper engagement with questions of faith, ethics, meaning and responsibility.

6.4 Sikh Dharam and multi faith learning

In schools designated with a Sikh religious character or Sikh religious ethos, Sikh Dharam forms at least 50 percent of the planned REFD curriculum schedule across the entire course.

This enables pupils to develop a deep, progressive and secure understanding of the Trust's founding religious tradition, including Sikh beliefs, teachings, scripture, history, practice, identity, ethics, virtues and lived experience.

The remaining curriculum time enables pupils to engage meaningfully with other major religious and non-religious traditions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hindu Dharam, Buddhist Dharam and other worldviews where appropriate.

This approach is rooted in the Sikh Dharam, enriched through a multi faith encounter, and directed towards wisdom, virtue, service and human flourishing.

This approach enables pupils to recognise both distinctiveness and shared wisdom. They learn that traditions differ in theology, scripture, practice and worldview, but that many are deeply concerned with wisdom, virtue, compassion, service, responsibility, forgiveness, justice, peace and the formation of the human person.

6.5 Virtues, inner development and the Nishkam Passport

The Nishkam REFD curriculum places particular emphasis on virtues and inner development. Pupils explore how religious and philosophical traditions seek to nurture qualities that enable individuals to live well and contribute positively to society.

Through stories, teachings, practices and examples from different traditions, pupils encounter virtues such as compassion, truthfulness, humility, service, forgiveness, courage, gratitude, responsibility and love. They consider how these virtues can be understood as gifts from the Divine, and how connection to the Divine can help human beings cultivate and strengthen them.

Alongside this, pupils learn that many religious traditions recognise the challenges and inner hurdles in the mind that can hinder human flourishing. They explore vices such as ego, anger, greed, pride, selfishness, hatred and attachment, and examine how different religious traditions understand these tendencies and seek to overcome them through wisdom, self discipline, reflection, prayer, service and ethical living.

This is not taught in a way that shames pupils. Pupils are helped to understand the power of the mind, that all human beings experience inner struggle, and that religious and philosophical traditions offer wisdom, practices and disciplines to support personal growth, self awareness and the development of Divine virtues and good character.

This work is supported by the Trust's wider virtues and values education, including the Nishkam Passport. The Nishkam Passport is a core Trust resource for faith and virtues education. It supports pupils and staff in understanding virtues, recognising inner hurdles and developing the language of virtues across the school community.

The curriculum and wider learning environment are also enriched by the Trust's three Golden Threads.

1. Love and forgiveness rather than enmity, hatred and fear

Pupils explore how love and forgiveness can overcome division, resentment and hostility.

2. Peace and collaboration rather than blame, conflict and war

Pupils consider how human beings and communities can move from blame and conflict towards reconciliation, shared responsibility and peace.

3. Trust in the Divine rather than arrogance, ego and self-centredness

Pupils reflect on how trust in God, the Divine or a higher moral purpose can nurture humility, courage, patience and service, while helping people resist pride, ego and the illusion that the self is the centre of all things.

Together, the virtues, the Nishkam Passport and the Golden Threads help ensure that REFD is not only concerned with knowledge, but also with wisdom, character and the formation of compassionate, responsible human beings.

REFD is supported by the Trust's wider approach to Honouring the Spirit and the language of virtues. Staff are expected to model virtues in their interactions with pupils and adults, maintaining dignity, avoiding shame and supporting restorative approaches where appropriate.

6.6 Teaching, learning and assessment

At the heart of effective classroom learning is the careful building of knowledge, understanding and reflection over time. Pupils need clear explanations, accurate vocabulary, meaningful examples, regular opportunities to revisit prior learning, and carefully structured discussion.

Learning should not be reduced to opinion or personal response. Pupils should first be taught the essential knowledge they need, then supported to develop skills in order to interpret, connect, question, analyse and evaluate with increasing confidence and maturity.

- In each lesson, pupils should leave with a clear understanding of the key concept, teaching, story, practice, question or virtue being studied. They should be able to use appropriate vocabulary, explain the significance of what they have learned, and make thoughtful connections with prior learning.
- By the end of each unit, pupils should have developed a coherent body of knowledge. They should understand the main teachings, concepts and practices studied, explain how beliefs shape lived experience, and reflect carefully on the moral, spiritual or philosophical questions raised by the unit.
- By the end of each key stage, pupils should have developed a secure, progressive and connected understanding of the Sikh Dharam and other major religious traditions. They should be able to think deeply about the human journey, understand the role of virtues and inner development, engage respectfully with difference, and use knowledge to support thoughtful analysis, evaluation and dialogue.

High quality learning experiences in REFD should be intellectually rich, spiritually thoughtful with focus on the Divine, and age appropriate. They include direct teaching, sacred stories, scripture, lived examples, carefully chosen texts, discussion, questioning, reflection, comparison,

encounter, prayer or stillness where appropriate, and opportunities for pupils to express their understanding clearly.

Critical thinking, analysis and evaluation are taught explicitly. Pupils are supported to distinguish between description, explanation, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. They learn how to use evidence, compare perspectives, recognise diversity of interpretation, evaluate arguments and respond thoughtfully to ultimate questions.

Teaching in REFD and other faith related matters should be thoughtful, reflective, intellectually serious and faithful to the ethos of the Trust. Schools should follow the REFD Policy and only use Trust provided and approved materials for REFD lessons.

Teachers should promote pupils' freedom of thought, choice and practice, while safeguarding against coercion, misunderstanding and harmful expressions of prejudice or intolerance.

Teaching and learning in REFD includes:

1. accurate subject knowledge
2. clear vocabulary instruction
3. retrieval of prior learning
4. careful sequencing of concepts
5. modelling of thoughtful responses
6. structured discussion and dialogue
7. opportunities for reflection
8. respectful engagement with scripture, sacred story and lived faith
9. written and spoken tasks that require explanation, analysis and evaluation
10. assessment that checks knowledge, understanding and the ability to apply learning

Assessment in REFD should be proportionate, meaningful and aligned with the curriculum. It should help teachers understand what pupils know, remember, understand and can do, while supporting pupils to develop confidence in using religious vocabulary, explaining significance, making connections, analysing ideas and evaluating arguments respectfully.

Pupils are assessed on their knowledge, understanding, thinking, communication and ability to engage thoughtfully with the curriculum. They are not assessed on their personal faith, religious commitment, private beliefs or spiritual state.

Assessment may evaluate pupils' ability to:

- recall and apply key knowledge;
- use religious and subject-specific vocabulary accurately;
- explain beliefs, practices, teachings and concepts;
- interpret sacred stories, scripture and other sources of authority;
- make careful comparisons within and between religious and non-religious traditions;
- explain how beliefs, values and worldviews influence practice and daily life;
- engage thoughtfully with questions of meaning, purpose, virtue and responsibility;
- construct reasoned written, spoken or creative responses;

- analyse and evaluate different viewpoints respectfully and using appropriate evidence.

Homework should reinforce taught content and provide opportunities for retrieval, reflection, consolidation and response to feedback. Where appropriate, it may encourage pupils to reflect on questions of identity, values, beliefs and worldview, while respecting freedom of conscience and recognising that personal responses remain the choice of the individual pupil.

7. Collection Worship, Prayer And Reflection

7.1 Aims and purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship, prayer and reflection are to:

- provide pupils with regular opportunities to experience worship, prayer, reflection and stillness
- Teach and role model to pupils how to engage respectfully and reverently
- express gratitude, humility and reverence towards God, the Divine or sacred truth
- deepen pupils' understanding of Sikh Dharam and the Trust's Sikh religious character
- enable pupils to learn from the wisdom, prayers, sacred texts and practices of different religious traditions
- support pupils to reflect on their own beliefs, values, identity and responsibilities
- affirm virtues such as compassion, humility, service, forgiveness, courage, gratitude and responsibility
- help pupils consider and respond to spiritual, moral, social and cultural questions
- promote a shared ethos, positive attitudes and a sense of belonging
- strengthen community spirit across the school
- support pupils to understand the Divine context of humanity, the wonder of creation and the human potential to do good unconditionally

7.2 Characteristics of collective worship, prayer and reflection

Collective worship, prayer and reflection should be a spiritual, educational and inclusive experience.

As a **spiritual** experience, it should:

- refresh the spirit through stillness, prayer, reflection and sacred wisdom
- provide time to pause, breathe, reflect and be still
- help pupils consider life's deeper questions
- encourage gratitude, humility and reverence
- support pupils' spiritual and moral development

As an **educational** experience, it should:

- help pupils learn about worship, prayer, sacred texts and religious practice
- broaden and deepen understanding of faith traditions
- challenge pupils to think deeply without indoctrinating them
- connect worship and reflection with virtues, behaviour, relationships and service
- help pupils understand how faith is lived in practice

As an **inclusive** experience, it should:

- relate to pupils' experiences, questions and needs
- affirm the dignity of each person
- respect pupils of different faiths and those of no faith
- foster shared values, virtues and purpose
- allow pupils to participate respectfully without coercion

7.3 Requirements

All schools must provide a daily act of collective worship. In Nishkam Schools, this provision is shaped by the Sikh religious character of the Trust and delivered through a multi faith, virtues led approach.

Collective worship, prayer and reflection may take place as a whole school, phase, class, year group, single faith or multi faith activity.

As a Sikh religious character Trust, schools should provide regular opportunities for Sikh prayer, Sikh sacred music, Gurmukhi or Punjabi prayer learning and Sikh faith practice. Alongside this, schools should provide meaningful opportunities for pupils of other faiths and those of no faith to engage respectfully through reflection, stillness, virtues, sacred wisdom and, where appropriate, prayer or contemplation from their own tradition.

Collective worship, prayer, reflection and assembly content should be Trust provided or Trust quality assured. Schools should use the Trust Faith Calendar as the main framework for worship, assemblies, faith celebrations, commemorations, virtues, vices, Golden Threads and links with PSHE/RHE.

Prayer, reflection, assembly and faith practice materials should be Trust-provided or Trust-approved. Schools should not introduce new faith, virtues, prayer, assembly or religious character resources without ensuring alignment with Trust expectations and, where required, obtaining Trust approval.

Schools should not introduce new worship, prayer, faith, virtues or religious character materials without ensuring that they are aligned with Trust expectations and, where required, approved by the Trust.

Pupils are expected to attend collective worship unless they have been withdrawn in accordance with the legal right of withdrawal. During collective worship, pupils are expected to participate respectfully. Personal acts of faith, prayer or specific physical gestures should be invited and taught with reverence, but should not be coerced.

7.4 Trust Faith Calendar, assemblies and school life

The **Trust Faith Calendar** provides the framework for assemblies, collective worship, reflection, faith celebrations, commemorations, virtues education and the exploration of the Trust's Golden Threads. It is set annually by the Trust and allocates a weekly event, virtue and inner hurdle to explore each week, while also identifying links to PSHE/RHE, SMSC and British Values.

Schools should use the Trust Faith Calendar as a framework, together with the Trust-provided core content, to ensure consistency in the delivery of key themes, celebrations, commemorations and Trust-wide priorities in assemblies, collective worship, reflection times, and wider faith and virtues education.

The Trust Faith Calendar should help pupils learn about:

- Sikh celebrations and commemorations
- celebrations and commemorations from other religious traditions
- virtues, vices and inner hurdles
- the three Golden Threads
- global and local events viewed through a faith, virtues and responsibility lens

Key Sikh celebrations and commemorations, including Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurburab and Vaisakhi, should be marked as part of the life of the school. Trust wide themes and resources should be implemented consistently where provided.

Assemblies may also respond to significant events within the school community or wider local, national or global community. Where this happens, content should be prepared carefully, contextualised appropriately and aligned with Trust expectations.

Parents and governors may be invited to attend class assemblies and special celebrations where appropriate. Parent involvement can strengthen the relationship between home and school and reinforce the shared responsibility for pupils' spiritual, moral and character development.

7.5 Conduct, reverence and participation

Collective worship, prayer and assemblies provide opportunities to teach and practise reverence, humility, gratitude, attentiveness and respect.

Schools should create an appropriate atmosphere for worship and reflection. This may include the use of sacred music, classical music, silence, prayer, scripture, poetry, images of creation, natural imagery or carefully chosen displays as a focal point for reflection.

Pupils should be taught to:

- enter collective worship in a dignified and respectful way
- recognise worship and prayer as a special time
- use the time for calm reflection, stillness and attentiveness
- listen carefully to teachings, prayers, sacred texts and reflections
- participate respectfully in reflection, recitation, kirtan, hymn singing or sacred music where appropriate
- understand the meaning of prayer etiquette, including bowing the head, closing the eyes, sitting respectfully, standing appropriately and maintaining silence

Within many faith traditions, closing the eyes during prayer is a meaningful posture that supports inward reflection, reduces distraction and helps focus attention on God, the Divine or sacred truth. Pupils may be invited to adopt this posture as part of learning how to pray with reverence and concentration. However, participation in specific physical gestures remains non compulsory, and pupils may demonstrate respectful engagement in other appropriate ways where individual needs (for example SEND pupils) require this.

Staff should actively model reverence, silence, prayer etiquette, appropriate participation and respect. Pupils should be taught why these routines matter, not simply expected to comply.

Pupils may be encouraged and supported to contribute to collective worship through readings, reflections, sacred music, prayers, drama, poetry or presentations, where these are appropriate and aligned with Trust expectations.

Any invited clergy, faith representatives, speakers or external contributors should be agreed by the school and, where required, approved by the Trust in advance.

7.6 Head coverings during prayer and worship

During Prayer and reflection times.

- All Sikh pupils are required to cover their heads
- All other pupils are very much encouraged to cover their heads
- All staff are very much encouraged to role model the of covering of heads as part of the etiquette of prayer during prayer times

In Nishkam Schools, covering the head during prayer and worship is understood as an expression of reverence, humility and respect. It helps create a sense of sacred space and acknowledges the presence of the Divine during moments of prayer and reflection.

The practice of covering the head is found in different ways across many religious traditions. It may express humility, modesty, devotion, submission to God, reverence for sacred space or awareness of Divine presence. For many people of faith, covering the head during prayer serves as a visible and tangible expression of respect for the sacredness of the moment and a conscious desire to approach prayer with attentiveness and reverence.

In Sikh Dharam, covering the head is an important expression of respect and is closely connected to Sikh identity, dignity and humility before Waheguru (God).

Background; the religious significance of the covering of the head

- **In Christianity** practices regarding head coverings during prayer vary across time, regions, and denominations. During certain periods in Christian history, it was common for both men and women to cover their heads during religious services and prayer. This practice was influenced by interpretations of biblical passages like 1 Corinthians 11:4-7, where Paul discusses head coverings. Today, head coverings are most commonly seen in Catholic and Orthodox traditions.
- **In Islam**, both men and women are encouraged to cover their heads during prayer. Muslim men wear a skullcap called a "kufi" or "topi," while Muslim women may wear a headscarf known as a "hijab" or a "khimar." The act of covering the head is seen as a symbol of submission to the will of Allah and a reminder of the modesty and humility required in prayer.
- **For Sikhs**, the practice of covering one's head is an integral part of the Sikh identity. Sikhs wear a Dastar or for females a Dastar or 'Chooni' (head scarf) as a constant reminder of the ever presence of Waheguru, the divine and reminds the Sikh to act with humility, dignity and respect.
- **In Judaism**, the tradition of covering the head is primarily associated with men. Jewish men often wear a small skullcap known as a "kippah" or "yarmulke" as a sign of respect and again as acknowledgment of God's presence.
- **For Hindus**, customs related to head coverings can vary across different cultural groups as a personal expression of devotion or humility.

Schools should apply this expectation sensitively, with appropriate regard to individual need, SEND, parental discussion and freedom of conscience.

The provision of 'Head Coverings':

Head coverings should be brought to school each day, as prayer and reflection are part of school life at Nishkam. Schools should ensure that head coverings are available for pupils or staff who forget to bring their own.

- *Head coverings will be made available for anyone who forgets to bring their own.*
- *Grey head coverings can be purchased from My Uniform Hub although white head coverings are also allowed.*

Expectations regarding head coverings should be consistent with the **Trust Uniform Policy** and **Sikh Articles of Faith Policy**.

7.7 Organisation of collective worship

Collective worship, prayer and reflection should be organised in a way that reflects the Sikh religious character of the school, the Trust's through single faith prayer learning, multi faith prayer opportunities, and virtues led reflections. ethos, and the needs of pupils. Assemblies, guided by the Trust faith calendar, are linked to virtues, vices, Golden Threads

As a Sikh religious character Trust, regular opportunities should be provided for Sikh prayer and Sikh sacred music. Where appropriate, schools should also provide opportunities for pupils of other faiths to encounter prayer, reflection or sacred wisdom from their own traditions, while ensuring that all provision remains aligned with Trust expectations.

Whole school worship may include both multi faith provision and opportunities for single faith practice.

- Single faith provision may include Sikh prayer practice, Gurmukhi or Punjabi prayer learning, kirtan or Sikh sacred music.
- Multi faith provision may include shared reflection on virtues, sacred wisdom, the Divine, creation, service, gratitude, peace, forgiveness and the common good.

7.8 Prayer content and sacred texts

Prayer content used for collective worship should normally be drawn from recognised scriptural, liturgical or established faith tradition sources, or be Trust provided or Trust quality assured.

Pupils may write reflections, intentions or prayers for appropriate use, but these should be guided and checked by staff to ensure that they are respectful, inclusive, age appropriate and aligned with the school's ethos.

Pupils should learn and recite prayers from their own tradition where appropriate. Pupils may also respectfully witness prayers, sacred texts or worship from other traditions without being required to recite or adopt those prayers as their own.

Sikh prayer and sacred music should be taught with accuracy, reverence and appropriate attention to pronunciation, meaning and etiquette. Schools should ensure that staff receive appropriate support where needed, including from the Trust and from staff with relevant Sikh faith knowledge.

Prayer and sacred text content should not be used casually or out of context. It should be introduced with sufficient explanation so that pupils understand its religious meaning and significance.

8. Inclusion, Respect, Freedom of Conscience and Contemporary Debate

These principles apply across REFD, collective worship, prayer, reflection and the wider implementation of the school's Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos. Together, they ensure that pupils can engage with religious and ethical ideas in ways that are educational, inclusive, respectful and consistent with freedom of conscience.

Integrity and authenticity in personal belief should always be respected. Pupils of all faiths and those of no faith should be treated with dignity and included fully in the life of the school. Each pupil's faith, belief or worldview should be valued as a meaningful contribution to the school community.

Pupils should be encouraged to speak thoughtfully, listen carefully and disagree respectfully. Classroom discussion should be structured so that pupils can engage with different perspectives without fear, ridicule, exclusion or pressure.

Teachers should present religious traditions with accuracy, depth and respect, recognising both their distinctiveness and their internal diversity. Traditions should never be presented in a simplistic, stereotyped or dismissive manner. Through REFD and the wider life of the school, pupils should develop an understanding of the universal human spiritual potential, the dignity of every person, and the importance of respecting the right of others to hold beliefs, practise a religion, change their beliefs or hold no religious belief.

Across the life of the school, the Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos should be expressed authentically, but without coercion or proselytising. Pupils should be able to learn about prayer, observe acts of worship, participate respectfully in reflection and ask honest questions without feeling pressured to adopt beliefs that are not their own. Collective worship, prayer and reflection should therefore be inclusive, respectful and developmentally appropriate.

NSMAT is clear that high-quality REFD, collective worship and wider faith and ethos provision must remain educational, reflective and respectful. They must never become coercive, partisan or proselytising.

Teachers may:

- teach about religion and belief;
- explore religious wisdom, virtues and ethical teachings;
- facilitate personal reflection on questions of meaning, purpose, values and identity;
- encourage respectful participation in the school's Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos, including assemblies, collective worship, celebrations, acts of service and reflective activities.

Teachers should not seek to persuade, pressure or encourage pupils to adopt, affirm or practise a particular religious belief.

To maintain this distinction, teachers should clearly differentiate between:

- **Learning about religion and belief** – developing knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and worldviews.
- **Learning from religious wisdom** – exploring teachings, virtues and ethical insights that may inform reflection and discussion.
- **Personal reflection** – encouraging pupils to consider questions of meaning, purpose, values and identity without requiring particular conclusions.

- **Participation in the school's Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos** – engaging respectfully with the school's values, practices, collective worship and community life.

Personal faith commitment, including choosing to adopt or practise a particular faith, remains a matter for the individual and their family. Pupils should understand that authentic faith cannot be forced and that religious belief and practice should be characterised by sincerity, humility and freedom.

REFD, together with collective worship, reflection and the wider life of the school, provides opportunities for pupils to explore contemporary issues and sensitive topics. These may include religion, identity, prejudice, conflict, injustice, community tensions, religious hatred, political conflict, historical trauma, conversion, belonging and other matters that may be morally, socially, culturally, religiously or politically challenging.

The classroom should strive to be a safe space for thoughtful discussion. Teachers have a responsibility to facilitate meaningful and honest dialogue while ensuring that discussion does not promote division, hatred, prejudice or misunderstanding.

When addressing sensitive or controversial issues, teachers should:

- contextualise issues carefully;
- present appropriate facts and multiple perspectives;
- recognise both intra-faith and interfaith diversity;
- distinguish between religion, culture, politics and the misuse of religious language;
- encourage critical thinking, compassion and respectful dialogue;
- remain politically impartial and avoid promoting personal political viewpoints.

Teachers should recognise that some conflicts may involve religious zealotry, while others may be primarily cultural, national or political in nature but expressed through religious language. Pupils should be supported to appreciate the complexity of issues and the multiple, and sometimes competing, experiences and perspectives involved.

Where issues relating to religious conversion, coercion, identity, prejudice, belonging or safeguarding arise, they should be referred to senior leaders and addressed with appropriate care, accuracy and safeguarding awareness. Where pupils are uncomfortable participating in particular elements of prayer or collective worship, schools should respond sensitively and in accordance with legal requirements, parental wishes and the Trust's commitment to freedom of conscience.

Maintaining these principles protects freedom of conscience while enabling Nishkam Schools to remain authentically rooted in their Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos.

9. British values, community cohesion and social responsibility

The curriculum, vision and ethos of the school makes an important contribution to British values, community cohesion and social responsibility.

It provides opportunities to promote respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of different cultures, beliefs and worldviews. It contributes to a positive and inclusive school ethos that upholds human dignity, democratic responsibility, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- The school community provides a positive context within which diversity of cultures, beliefs and virtues can be celebrated and explored.
- The local community provides opportunities for pupils to understand patterns of diversity in religion and belief, and to forge links with different groups in the local area.
- The UK community provides a context for pupils to study the diversity of religion and belief in Britain and how this influences national life.
- The global community provides opportunities to explore matters of global significance, recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

Through the curriculum, vision and ethos of the school, pupils are supported to move beyond simple tolerance towards informed respect, compassion, empathy and social responsibility.

10. Withdrawal from REFD and Collective Worship

Parents have legal rights of withdrawal in relation to both Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD) and collective worship. Nishkam Schools are committed to responding respectfully and sensitively to all requests, in accordance with legal requirements, Trust procedures and the principle of freedom of conscience.

Parents who are considering withdrawal from either REFD or collective worship are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the School Leader before making a decision. The school will respond respectfully to all requests, make appropriate arrangements where required, and follow relevant legal requirements and Trust procedures.

10.1 Withdrawal from Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD)

Religious Education is a compulsory subject for all pupils up to the age of 16. However, Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience.

This right applies specifically to REFD. It does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where religious, spiritual, ethical or philosophical matters arise incidentally, such as history, citizenship, literature, PSHE, SMSC provision or classroom discussion. Nor does it automatically apply to wider aspects of school life that reflect the school's Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos.

10.2 Withdrawal from Collective Worship, Prayer and Reflection

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from collective worship. Once a pupil reaches the age of 16, they may choose for themselves whether to participate in collective worship.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from collective worship, the school will make appropriate alternative supervision arrangements. Withdrawal from collective worship does not prevent pupils from encountering religious, spiritual, moral or philosophical themes elsewhere in the curriculum or wider life of the school, including through REFD, PSHE, SMSC provision, history, literature, citizenship, pupil discussion, assemblies, acts of service and other aspects of the school's Sikh Dharam-inspired ethos.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The effective delivery of Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD), collective worship, prayer, reflection and the wider faith and ethos life of Nishkam Schools is a shared responsibility. Trustees, the Designated Religious Authority, the Trust, governors, school leaders, REFD leaders, faith and ethos leaders and teachers all contribute to ensuring that provision reflects the Trust's vision, Sikh religious character, legal responsibilities and educational aims.

11.1 Designated Religious Authority.

Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) is the Designated Religious Authority and faith body for Nishkam Schools Multi Academy Trust except for Akaal Primary School whose Designated Religious Authority is Singh Sabha Gurdwara Derby (SSGD). Designated Religious bodies provides religious inspiration, authority, oversight and safeguarding of the Sikh Dharam-inspired religious character and ethos of Nishkam Schools.

Religious Bodies are responsible for:

- defining and safeguarding the religious character, ethos and founding vision;
- providing religious guidance on the interpretation and expression of Sikh principles, teachings, practices, values and ethos;
- ensuring that Religious education, collective worship, prayer, reflection, virtues education and wider faith development remain rooted in Sikh Dharam and aligned with the founding vision;
- contributing to the approval and review of key policies, frameworks and guidance relating to religious character and faith development;
- assuring the authenticity, integrity and quality of Sikh Dharam content within REFD and collective worship;
- supporting and challenging the Trust to ensure that Sikh Dharam is appropriately represented within the REFD curriculum;
- contributing to Section 48 inspection and other faith-based quality assurance processes;
- supporting leaders and staff in understanding, modelling and living the ethos of Nishkam Schools;
- helping ensure Schools remain rooted in Sikh Dharam, open to the wisdom of other traditions, committed to selfless service and dedicated to the flourishing of all.

11.2 The Trust

The Trust is responsible for the strategic leadership, development, approval and quality assurance of REFD and the wider faith and ethos provision, including collective worship, prayer and reflection.

The Trust will:

- set the overall curriculum direction for REFD and faith development;
- provide or quality assure curriculum resources, schemes of learning, assessment guidance and professional development;
- ensure progression, consistency and entitlement across all schools;
- support schools in delivering high-quality REFD and collective worship;

- ensure all provision reflects the Trust's vision, ethos and religious character;
- work in partnership with GNNSJ and SSGD to ensure provision remains authentic, coherent and non-proselytising.

All REFD, faith, virtues, prayer and collective worship materials must be Trust-provided or Trust-approved.

11.3 Trustees and Governors

Trustees and governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- provision reflects the Trust's Sikh religious character and ethos;
- legal and Trust requirements are met;
- REFD and collective worship are appropriately resourced, staffed and timetabled;
- leaders monitor the quality and impact of provision;
- parents are informed about REFD, collective worship and rights of withdrawal;
- recommendations from Section 48 inspection and other quality assurance processes are addressed appropriately.

11.4 School Leaders

School leaders are responsible for ensuring that REFD, collective worship, prayer, reflection and the wider faith and ethos provision are implemented effectively at school level.

They should ensure that:

- the Trust curriculum and guidance are delivered faithfully and consistently;
- collective worship takes place regularly and in line with legal and Trust expectations;
- Trust-provided or Trust-approved resources are used consistently;
- REFD and collective worship are well led, monitored and reviewed;
- staff understand the purpose, ethos and expected conduct of collective worship, prayer and reflection;
- pupils make progress in the intended REFD curriculum outcomes;
- provision reflects the school's Sikh religious character and Trust ethos;
- staff receive appropriate induction, training and professional development;
- recommendations from Section 48 inspection and faith-based quality assurance are addressed;
- pupils and parents are supported in understanding the school's ethos, REFD curriculum and collective worship life.

11.5 REFD Leaders and Faith and Ethos Leaders

REFD leaders and faith and ethos leaders are responsible for the day-to-day leadership, coherence and quality of curriculum and faith provision.

They should ensure that:

- the Trust curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively;
- curriculum planning is coherent, progressive and aligned with Trust expectations;
- any enrichment or adaptation remains faithful to the intended curriculum and ethos;
- teachers are supported in subject knowledge, Sikh Dharam content and pedagogy;
- assessment is meaningful, manageable and aligned with Trust guidance;
- implementation is monitored and improved over time;
- Sikh Dharam content is taught accurately and with appropriate depth;

- pupils engage meaningfully with Sikh Dharam and other religious and non-religious worldviews;
- the wider faith and ethos life of the school supports pupils' spiritual, moral and character development.

11.6 Teachers and Staff

Teachers and staff are responsible for delivering the curriculum and modelling the ethos of the school through their daily practice.

They should:

- teach REFD accurately, sensitively and respectfully;
- encourage thoughtful questioning, reflection and critical engagement;
- support pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, respect and reflection;
- avoid stereotyping or misrepresenting religious traditions;
- ensure no pupil is pressured or coerced in matters of belief;
- help pupils understand the distinction between learning about religion, learning from religious wisdom, and personal reflection;
- support pupils in understanding that personal faith commitment is a matter of individual conscience;
- model reverence, humility, respect and appropriate conduct during collective worship, prayer, reflection and sacred music;
- support pupils to enter and participate in collective worship calmly and respectfully.

11.7 Schools

Schools are responsible for delivering the Trust's REFD curriculum and faith and ethos provision in ways that meet the needs of their pupils and communities.

Schools may enrich provision through visits, visitors, local context, reflection opportunities and community partnerships, provided these remain aligned with Trust guidance and approval.

Schools should work in partnership with the Trust and GNNSJ and SSGD to ensure that REFD, collective worship, prayer, reflection, virtues education and wider faith development remain coherent, authentic and aligned with Sikh Dharam inspiration.

12. Monitoring and review

The Trust Board is responsible for approving this policy. School leaders are responsible for ensuring that it is implemented effectively at school level.

The quality and impact of Religious Education and Faith Development (REFD), collective worship, prayer, reflection and the wider faith and ethos provision will be monitored by schools, governors, the Trust and, where appropriate, GNNSJ and SSGD.

Monitoring and quality assurance may include:

- lesson observations and review of REFD provision;
- observation of collective worship, prayer and reflection;
- pupil, staff and parent voice;
- review of curriculum planning, assessment and resources;
- review of assembly content and delivery of the Trust Faith Calendar;
- review of prayer routines, prayer etiquette and opportunities for reflection;

- review of participation, conduct and reverence during worship and faith activities;
- review of the use of Trust-provided or Trust-approved resources;
- review of Sikh prayer practice, sacred music and wider faith development provision;
- consideration of outcomes from Section 48 inspection and other faith-based quality assurance processes.

Findings from monitoring activities should be used to celebrate strengths, identify areas for development and inform ongoing improvement planning.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where required by changes to legislation, statutory guidance, Department for Education policy, Trust requirements, Section 48 expectations or the evolving needs of the school community.

Appendix I: Key Nishkam REFD faith concepts and terminology

Sikh Dharam: The preferred term used by the Trust to describe the Sikh religious tradition, emphasising responsibility and duty to the Divine and all of creation; way of life and spiritual path.

Ik Oan(g)kar: The One Divine Creator. The opening teaching of the Mool Mantar (root prayer) and a foundational principle of Sikh Dharam.

Guru Granth Sahib Ji: The eternal Sikh Guru and sacred scripture of the Sikh Dharam.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji: The first Sikh Guru and founder of the Sikh Dharam.

Mool Mantar: The foundational teaching (root prayer) at the beginning of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, expressing the nature of the One Divine Creator.

Naam: Remembrance of and connection with God.

Seva: Service.

Nishkam sewa: Selfless service, performed without selfish desire.

Hukam: Divine order, or Will.

Sarbat da bhall: The prayerful commitment to the welfare, flourishing and prosperity of all humanity.

Bhuray da bhall: The spirit of wishing good even for those perceived as difficult, hostile or wrong.

Man neeva, mat uchi: The lowering of the ego and humbling of the mind, while elevating virtue and wisdom.

Gurudwara: The Sikh place of worship, where prayer, learning, selfless service is practiced in and community.

Inner hurdles: The vices, tendencies or obstacles that hinder human flourishing, such as ego, rage, greed, pride, attachment, selfishness, hatred and indifference.

Human flourishing: The development of the whole person, including harnessing virtues such as wisdom, virtue, responsibility, compassion, service, spiritual awareness and contribution to the common good.