

GODSDIENSBELEID RELIGIOUS POLICY



Aanhef

Hierdie dokument is die godsdienstebeleid van en reëls vir godsdienstebeoefening by Hoërskool Witteberg, soos die beheerliggaam dit op 17 Maart 2021 goedgekeur het. Die godsdienstebeleid en -reëls erken die fundamentele waardes wat in die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 1996; die toepaslike bepalings van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet 84 van 1996 (“die Skolewet”), en ander tersaaklike provinsiale wetgewing vervat word.

Artikel 15(1) van die Grondwet bepaal dat elke persoon die reg het op vryheid van gewete, godsdienste, denke, oortuiging en mening.

Artikel 15(2) bepaal voorts dat godsdienstebeoefening by staats- of staatsondersteunde instellings kan geskied, mits:

- (a) sodanige beoefening die reëls nakom wat deur die tersaaklike openbare owerheid neergelê is;
- (b) dit op 'n billike grondslag geskied; en
- (c) bywoning daarvan vry en vrywillig is.

Hoërskool Witteberg erken dat (a) bogenoemde regte nie absoluut is nie en deur artikel 36 van die Grondwet beperk kan word, en (b) sodanige regte inderdaad beperk is deur 'n hofbevel wat dit as strydig met artikel 7 van die Skolewet verklaar het vir 'n openbare skool om (i) die skool te bevorder of deur sy personeel te laat bevorder as 'n instansie wat 'n enkele of hoofsaaklik 'n enkele godsdienste tot uitsluiting van 'n ander aanhang, en

(ii) hom uit te gee as 'n instansie wat die belange van enige bepaalde godsdiens bo 'n ander bevorder.¹

Daarbenewens erken die skool dat regters van die hoogste hof in die land soos volg bevind het:

- “[F]or equitable offerings ... education authorities [should] ... allow schools to offer the prayers that may be most appropriate for a particular school, to have that decision taken in an equitable manner applicable to all schools, and to oblige them to do so in a way which does not give rise to indirect coercion of the ‘non-believers’ ...
- Requiring that government act even-handedly does not demand a commitment to a scrupulous secularism, or a commitment to complete neutrality ... [F]or example, in the context of religious observances at local schools, the requirement of equity may dictate that the religious observances held should reflect, if possible, the religious beliefs of that particular community or group.”

Hoewel die Nasionale Godsdiensbeleid nie-bindend is, het die skool die inhoud daarvan in ag geneem in die ontwikkeling van hierdie skoolspesifieke beleid en reëls.

Artikel 7 van die Skolewet verleen aan die beheerliggaam die mag om die reëls te bepaal ingevolge waarvan godsdiensbeoefening moet geskied. Hierdie mag is onderworpe aan die Grondwet en enige ander toepaslike provinsiale wetgewing. Godsdiensbeoefening moet op 'n gelyke grondslag geskied, en opvoeders en leerders se bywoning moet vrywillig wees.

Op grond van bogenoemde het die beheerliggaam van Hoërskool Witteberg hierdie godsdiensbeleid en -reëls met behoorlike inagneming van die godsdienstige samestelling van die skool en die praktiese uitvoerbaarheid van voorsiening vir verskillende geloofsgemeenskappe saamgestel.

¹ *Organisasie vir Godsdienste-onderrig en Demokrasie v Laerskool Randhart and others* (Gauteng High Court case no. 29847/14).

Die skool verwelkom alle leerders, ongeag hulle individuele godsdienstige oortuigings, en sal geleenthede probeer skep vir die beoefening van sodanige oortuigings op alle redelike tye, hetsy as 'n groep of op 'n individuele grondslag, soos dieetvereistes of die bywoning van godsdienstige beoefening buite die skool.

Hoërskool Witteberg onderneem om toe te sien dat elke verteenwoordigende godsdienst by die skool op gelyke grondslag hanteer en godsdienstige diversiteit bevorder word.

Woordomskrywing

'Godsdienst' verwys na die omvattende en fundamentele oriëntasies in die wêreld, met bepaalde verwysing na heilige, spirituele en nie-sekulêre oortuigings; vereis toewyding; sluit georganiseerde vorme van geloof en sekere wêreldbeskouing in, en word ook kollektief gebruik om na daardie organisasies te verwys wat opgerig is ten einde hierdie oortuigings te beskerm en te bevorder.

'Godsdiensteonderrig' verwys na 'n kurrikulêre program met duidelike en ouderdomsverwante opvoedkundige doelwitte wat vir die onderrig en leer van godsdienst, godsdienste en godsdienstige diversiteit in Suid-Afrika en die wêreld deur die Departement van Onderwys voorgeskryf word. Die studie van godsdienst moet ten doel hê om herkenbare opvoedkundige doelwitte te bereik wat in ooreenstemming is met die doelwitte en uitkomst van ander leerareas, en programme in Godsdiensteonderrig moet, soos ander leerareas in die kurrikulum, tot die ontwikkeling van grondliggende waarnemings-, luister-, lees-, skryf- en denkvaardighede bydra.

'Godsdienstoneonderrig' verwys na 'n program met inligting oor 'n bepaalde godsdienst wat ten doel het om navolging van daardie bepaalde godsdienst te bevorder. Die beheerliggaam beskou die huisgesin en geloofsgemeenskap as die hoofvoorsieners van godsdienstoneonderrig. Die skool is 'n opvoedkundige instelling wat nie een godsdienst bo 'n ander bevorder nie, en dus maak godsdienstoneonderrig nie deel uit van die formele skoolprogram nie. Die skool sal egter wél sy geriewe vir sodanige programme

beskikbaar stel, met dien verstande dat godsdiensoonderrig nie met die formele opvoedkundige doelwitte van die skool inmeng nie.

‘Godsdiensoefening’ dui op daardie aktiwiteite of optrede wat aan die waardes van ’n bepaalde geloof of oortuiging uiting gee, en sluit onder andere bidure, voorlesing uit heilige geskrifte, kleredrag en diëte in. Godsdiensoefening kan op die volgende maniere geskied:

- Vrywillige, openbare geleentheid waar die skool se geriewe vir die doel van godsdiensoefening gebruik word
- Vrywillige geleentheid (in skooltyd) deur die skoolgemeenskap (leerders en opvoeders)
- Vrywillige geleentheid in gewone of ander pouses by die skool

Godsdiensoefening

Omdat Hoërskool Witteberg die waardes in die Handves van Regte erken en eerbiedig, verseker die beheerliggaam dat die oefening van alle godsdienste gerespekteer en so ver redelikerwys uitvoerbaar op ’n gelyke grondslag voor voorsiening gemaak sal word.

Opvoeders en leerders sal georganiseerde godsdiensoefening byeenkomste by die skool vrywillig kan bywoon. Die skool sal opvoeders of leerders geensins verplig om aan godsdienstige aktiwiteite deel te neem nie. Alternatiewe reëlins sal getref word vir toesig oor leerders wat nie die godsdiensoefening wil bywoon wat vir godsdienstige groeperinge aangebied word nie.

Godsdiensteonderrig sal ooreenkomstig die Nasionale Beleid oor Godsdienste en Onderwys geskied. Dié onderrig maak deel uit van die leerarea Lewensoriëntering. Die skool neem kennis dat die kurrikulum sy leerders aan ál die vernaamste godsdienste in Suid-Afrika blootstel.

Geen opvoeder sal verplig word om godsdiensteonderrig te gee nie.

(Skool) sal sy geriewe vir godsdienstbeoefening deur enige verteenwoordigende geloofsgroep in die skool beskikbaar stel. Sodanige beoefening mag slegs geskied terwyl ander godsdienstbeoefening ooreenkomstig die godsdienstbeleid plaasvind. Geen godsdienstbeoefening mag op die formele opvoedkundige doelwitte van die skool inbreuk maak nie, en alle godsdienstbeoefening is onderworpe aan voorwaardes wat die beheerliggaam kan opleë.

Die skool sal so ver dit redelikerwys uitvoerbaar is begrip en respek vir godsdienstige diversiteit bevorder en uitbou.

Deelname en klagtes

Die beheerliggaam nooi alle leerders en hulle ouers om die skoolhoof of die beheerliggaam te raadpleeg indien geen voorsiening gemaak word vir die beoefening van hulle spesifieke godsdienstige oortuigings in die skool nie. Die skoolbeheerliggaam sal so ver dit prakties uitvoerbaar is geriewe en geleenthede voorsien vir die beoefening van hierdie godsdienstige praktyke in dieselfde mate as dié wat vir ander godsdienste by die skool voorsien word. Die vasstelling van sodanige geleenthede sal geskied in oorleg met daardie leerders, ouers en die godsdienstige gemeenskappe waartoe hulle behoort.

Indien enige onderwyser, leerder en/of ouer 'n gewetensbeswaar het teen die beoefening van sekere godsdienstige praktyke in die skool, of voel dat deelname aan sekere praktyke nie vrywillig is nie, word hulle versoek om dit onder die beheerliggaam se aandag te bring.

Geteken te Bethlehem op hierdie die 17de dag van Maart 2021

Beheerliggaamvoorsitter

GODSDIENSBELEID RELIGIOUS POLICY



Preamble

This document is the religious policy of and rules for religious observances at Witteberg High School, as approved by the governing body on 17 March 2021. The religious policy and rules acknowledge the fundamental values entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; the applicable provisions of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (“Schools Act”), and the provincial legislation applicable to this school.

Section 15(1) of the Constitution provides that every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.

Furthermore, section 15(2) provides that religious observances by state or state-aided institutions may be conducted, provided that:

- (a) such observances adhere to the rules stipulated by the relevant public authority;
- (b) they are conducted equitably; and
- (c) attendance is free and voluntary.

Witteberg High School acknowledges that (a) the abovementioned rights are not absolute and may be restricted by section 36 of the Constitution, and (b) such rights are indeed restricted by a court order that declared it in violation of section 7 of the Schools Act for a public school to (i) promote or allow its staff to promote the school as adhering to a single or predominantly a single religion to the exclusion of others, and (ii) hold out that it promotes the interests of any one religion over others.²

² *Organisasie vir Godsdienste-onderrig en Demokrasie v Laerskool Randhart and others* (Gauteng High Court case no. 29847/14).

The school further acknowledges that judges of the highest court of the land stated as follows:

- “[F]or equitable offerings ... education authorities [should] ... allow schools to offer the prayers that may be most appropriate for a particular school, to have that decision taken in an equitable manner applicable to all schools, and to oblige them to do so in a way which does not give rise to indirect coercion of the ‘non-believers’ ...
- Requiring that government act even-handedly does not demand a commitment to a scrupulous secularism, or a commitment to complete neutrality ... [F]or example, in the context of religious observances at local schools, the requirement of equity may dictate that the religious observances held should reflect, if possible, the religious beliefs of that particular community or group.”

Although the National Religion Policy is non-binding, the school has taken account of its content in formulating this school-specific policy and rules.

Section 7 of the Schools Act vests the governing body with the power to determine the rules in terms of which religious observances must be conducted. This power is subject to the Constitution and any other applicable provincial legislation. Religious observances must be conducted on an equitable basis and attended freely and voluntarily by educators and learners.

Based on the above, the governing body of Witteberg High School has drafted this religious policy and rules with due regard to the religious composition of the school and the practicability of catering for multiple faith communities.

The school welcomes all learners, irrespective of their individual religious beliefs, and will endeavour to create opportunities for the observance of such beliefs at all reasonable times, whether as a group or on an individual basis, such as dietary requirements or attending religious observances away from school.

Witteberg High School undertakes to ensure that each representative religion at the school is dealt with on an equitable basis, and to ensure the promotion of religious diversity.

Definitions

'Religion' refers to the comprehensive and fundamental orientations in the world, with specific reference to sacred, spiritual and non-secular beliefs; requires dedication; includes organised forms of faith and certain world views, and is collectively used to refer to those organisations that have been established in order to protect and promote these beliefs.

'Religion education' refers to a curricular programme with clear and age-related educational objectives that the Department of Education prescribes for the teaching and learning of religion, religions and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. The study of religion must be aimed at achieving identifiable educational objectives that are in accordance with the objectives and outcomes of other learning areas, and, as with other learning areas in the curriculum, programmes in Religion Education must contribute to the development of fundamental observation, listening, reading, writing and reasoning skills.

'Religious instruction' refers to a programme consisting of information with regard to a specific religion, aimed at promoting adherence to that specific religion. The governing body regards the family and the faith community as the primary providers of religious instruction. The school is an educational institution that does not promote one religion over another, and therefore, religious instruction does not form part of its formal programme. However, the school will make its facilities available for such programmes, provided that religious instruction does not interfere with the school's formal educational objectives.

'Religious observances' refer to those activities or actions that give expression to the values of a particular faith or belief, and *inter alia* include prayer meetings, reading from sacred texts, dress and diets. Religious observances may be conducted in the following ways:

- Voluntary, public events where the school's facilities are used for the purpose of religious observances
- Voluntary events (during school time) by the school community (learners and educators)
- Voluntary events during normal and other break times at school

Religious observances

As the school acknowledges and respects the values entrenched in the Bill of Rights, the governing body ensures that the observance of all religions is respected and accommodated on an equitable basis where reasonably practicable.

Educators and learners will be able to attend organised religious observances at school freely and voluntarily. The school will in no way compel educators or learners to participate in religious activities. Alternative arrangements will be made for the supervision of those learners who do not wish to attend any religious observances offered to religious groupings.

Religion education will take place in accordance with the National Policy on Religion and Education. This education forms part of the learning area Life Orientation. The school takes note that the curriculum exposes its learners to all the major religions prevalent in South Africa.

No educator will be forced to provide religion education.

Witteberg High School will make available its facilities for religious observances by any representative faith group in the school. Such observances may be conducted only while

other religious observances are conducted in accordance with the religious policy. No religious observance may infringe upon the school's formal educational objectives, and all are subject to the conditions that the governing body may impose.

The school will promote and enhance understanding of and respect for religious diversity as far as reasonably practicable.

Participation and complaints

The governing body invites all learners and their parents to consult with the school principal or the governing body if no provision is made for the observance of their specific religious beliefs in the school. The school governing body will as far as practicable provide facilities and opportunities for the observance of these religious practices equal to those provided to other religions at the school. The establishment of such opportunities will take place in conjunction with those learners, parents and the religious communities to which they belong.

If any teacher, learner and/or parent has a conscientious objection against the observance of certain religious practices in the school, or feel that participation in certain practices is not voluntary, they are requested to bring this to the governing body's attention.

Signed at Bethlehem on the 17th day of March 2021

Governing body chairperson