

Inclusive Schools: A toolkit to enable freedom of religion or belief to flourish in your school

The questions in this toolkit are intended to provide stimulus for school leaders and teachers to think about opportunities to promote and protect FoRB; enabling it to flourish throughout the school community. Each statement is a learning and development opportunity for thinking about how FoRB can be embedded through all aspects of school life.

To be considered an inclusive school where FoRB is promoted and protected, schools need to be able to evidence actions they are taking. The toolkit is designed to be used in a dynamic way. For example, school leaders may:

- Focus on one area each term for three years to fully embed FoRB principles in all aspects of school life
- Task a senior member of staff or governor to use the toolkit to self-evaluate the school community during an academic year
- Use the toolkit as an ongoing self-evaluation tool, 'RAG' rating against the different aspects
- Use the toolkit to identify professional development and/or resource needs for staff, governors and the wider community

The toolkit is designed to be used in primary and secondary phases, however, some questions may be more appropriate to one phase. School leaders can use their professional judgement about which questions are appropriate in their context.

This toolkit does not provide an extensive list of professional development providers or resources. However, the following provide a starting point for further support:

Culham St Gabriel's E-Learning Course

courses.cstg.org.uk

Culham St Gabriel's Research Reports, briefing and signposting to organisations working in this area:

www.cstg.org.uk/campaigns/promoting-freedom-of-religion-or-belief

Professional knowledge

What do teachers know and understand about promoting and protecting FoRB?

Action taken

Talk about Religion or Belief

Professional Development & FoRB Literacy

- How are teachers provided with religion and belief literacy training, including FoRB education principles; how is religion and belief factored into EDI training?
- How are teachers supported to understand the difference between teaching about religion or belief and promoting religion or belief?
- How are teachers trained to facilitate respectful dialogue about different worldviews, including managing contentious or sensitive classroom discussions?
- How are teachers supported in understanding how FoRB relates to safeguarding and child wellbeing?

Recognising & Responding to Hate

- How are teachers trained to spot and understand all forms of anti-religious hate, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate?
- How are teachers trained to distinguish between curiosity, clumsy language, and hate-motivated behaviour using real-life case studies?
- How are teachers given resources to identify and challenge religious stereotypes and conspiracy theories in the curriculum?
- How are teachers supported with clear reporting and response protocols for religion or belief incidents?

Professional knowledge

What do teachers know and understand about promoting and protecting FoRB?

Action taken

Talk about freedom

Teaching freedom and expression

- How are teachers supported to understand the nature and concept of freedom, and how to teach it across their classes?
- How are teachers provided with frameworks to discuss freedom of speech in age-appropriate ways?
- How are teachers given resources to develop classroom charters that encourage respectful freedom of expression?
- How are teachers supported to understand how freedom relates to responsibilities in democratic societies?

Applying freedom in practice

- How are teachers trained to balance freedom of expression with safeguarding responsibilities?
- How are teachers trained to handle situations where pupil expression conflicts with school values or policies?
- How are teachers supported to develop inclusion strategies that encourage all pupils to express themselves fully?
- How are teachers trained to spot and understand bullying, including where it restricts pupils' freedom of expression?
- How are teachers equipped to help pupils recognise when their freedoms are being restricted in personal or online contexts?

Professional knowledge

What do teachers know and understand about promoting and protecting FoRB?

Learn about Human Rights	Action taken
	<p>Teaching Human Rights and FoRB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are teachers supported to understand FoRB and Human Rights, including how to teach both across their classes? • How are teachers provided with professional development on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other human rights frameworks? • How are teachers given training on the relationship between Human Rights and equality legislation in the UK? • How are teachers given practical tools for involving pupils in school-level human rights initiatives? <p>Applying human rights in practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are teachers trained to spot and understand bullying through a human rights lens? • How are teachers trained to identify when a human rights approach can help resolve classroom conflict?

Curriculum

How does the curriculum promote and protect FoRB?

Action taken

Talk about Religion or Belief

Curriculum Coverage & Balance

- Does the school curriculum include Religious Education at every key stage, with balanced representation of religious and non-religious worldviews?
- How does the curriculum provide opportunities to explore similarities and differences between faiths, beliefs, and secular or philosophical worldviews?
- How does the curriculum integrate learning about religion and belief across other subjects, such as Art, Citizenship, English, History, Geography, Music and PSHE?
- How does the curriculum help pupils understand how religion and belief shape local, national, and global identities?

Lived Experience & Real-World Context

- Does the curriculum include opportunities to learn from lived experiences, such as guest speakers or community links?
- Are pupils introduced to individuals who stand or stood up for their religious or belief rights?
- Does the curriculum explore contemporary and historical examples of FoRB violations and religious persecution, including the Holocaust and the Genocide in the former Yugoslavia?
- Does the school teach about current and historic religious discrimination, and how laws protect FoRB in the UK and internationally?



Critical Thinking & Respect

- Is there explicit teaching about respecting different worldviews within the school community?
- Does the curriculum provide structured opportunities to challenge stereotypes and misinformation about religious or belief groups?
- How are teachers supported with resources from trusted organisations, such as the Holocaust Educational Trust?

Curriculum

How does the curriculum promote and protect FoRB?

Action taken

Talk about Freedom

Curriculum coverage and British Values

- Does the school curriculum include Citizenship Education, with opportunities to learn about freedom in relation to British Values?
- How does the curriculum help pupils understand the balance between individual freedoms and responsibilities in a democratic society?
- How are pupils taught how freedom relates to the rule of law, and how it varies across political systems such as democracies and authoritarian states?
- How does the curriculum explore philosophical ideas about freedom, autonomy, and moral agency?

Exploring freedom through real-world contexts

- To what extent does the curriculum include case studies of individuals or groups who advocated for freedom, such as Nelson Mandela or Malala Yousafzai?
- How does the curriculum cover historic and contemporary instances of freedom being restricted, including the Civil Rights and Suffragette movements, press censorship, and artistic censorship?
- How are protest movements incorporated into the curriculum to explore how freedom is actively defended?
- How are pupils taught how freedom can be restricted by prejudice, propaganda, or unequal access to opportunities?

Critical Thinking & Safe Discussion

- Are there structured opportunities for pupils to debate issues of personal and collective freedom safely and respectfully?
- How does the curriculum support pupils in recognising threats to personal freedom online, such as manipulation, misinformation, and coercion?
- How does the school use literature, drama, or film to explore themes of freedom and oppression?
- Are teachers supported with age-appropriate resources across Citizenship, English Literature and History to teach freedom in both UK and global contexts?

Curriculum

How does the curriculum promote and protect FoRB?

Action taken

Learn about Human Rights

Curriculum coverage and key frameworks

- How does Citizenship Education provide opportunities to learn about Human Rights?
- How does the curriculum teach the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including Article 18 on FoRB, in age-appropriate ways?
- How does the curriculum explicitly cover Article 14 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?
- To what extent are Human Rights concepts embedded across subjects through thematic projects, cross-curricular weeks, or citizenship days?

Real-world application and critical thinking

- How are pupils given opportunities to apply human rights concepts to real-life FoRB case studies in an age appropriate way?
- Does the curriculum analyse how Human Rights violations have shaped historical events, such as apartheid or colonialism, including discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, sex, and gender?
- Does the curriculum cover Human Rights defenders from diverse backgrounds, and people whose rights have been defended through activism, journalism, or legal action?
- Are pupils taught how international law protects, and sometimes fails to protect, Human Rights, and how FoRB supports social cohesion?

Teacher Support & Sensitive Topics

- How are teachers supported with up-to-date resources from reputable organisations such as Amnesty International, UNICEF, and the Council of Europe?
- Are teachers offered structured discussion protocols and guidance for teaching controversial or emotionally sensitive Human Rights topics safely?
- How are teachers supported to embed Human Rights concepts, including the UNCRC, across subjects such as Citizenship, English, History, PSHE and RE?

Leadership practice

How do school leaders implement their vision, mission and ethos to promote and protect FoRB throughout the school community?

	Action taken
<p>Talk about Religion and Belief</p>	<p>Calendar, celebration and community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school maintain a multi-faith/belief calendar, with activities and events planned in reference to it? • How does the school mark minority faith festivals meaningfully, and engage with local, national, and international days of celebration such as Interfaith Week and International Day of Peaceful Coexistence? • How does the school participate in Holocaust Commemoration at local, regional, or national level? • How does the school engage with local religion and belief community representatives to support learning and inclusion? • Is there an agreed process for engaging with religion and belief groups when planning special events?
	<p>Rights, inclusion and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are teachers supported to understand parental and pupil rights regarding religion and belief, including the Right to Withdraw from Religious Education and Collective Worship? • Are parents advised in advance when activities may conflict with religious observance, with reasonable adjustments offered? • Are teachers provided with training on inclusive approaches to collective worship or assemblies? • Does the leadership team review uniform and appearance policies to ensure they do not disadvantage religious or belief expression? • How do all school staff model inclusive language and behaviour that demonstrates respect for all worldviews?

Responding to hate and incidents

- Does the school have clear and well communicated policies for tackling anti-religious hate and bullying, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate?
- Does the school have a clear and well communicated process for reporting, addressing, and collecting data on religion or belief incidents to inform improvement?
- Are leaders trained on the Equality Act 2010 and how to respond appropriately when FoRB-related conflicts arise among pupils or staff?
- How does the school actively challenge stereotypes and misinformation about religion or belief when they arise in the school community?
- Are responses to violations of freedom of religion or belief rooted in trauma informed and shame sensitive approaches?
- In the event that a member of staff is a victim of hate or discrimination perpetrated by pupils how is this reported and how are they supported?

Leadership practice

How do school leaders implement their vision, mission and ethos to promote and protect FoRB throughout the school community?

	Action taken
<p>Talk about freedom</p>	<p>Pupil voice and decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are pupils given meaningful opportunities to participate in school decision-making, through surveys, councils, or listening forums? • Does the school have a pupil leadership body with real influence on school decisions? • How does the school ensure quieter or marginalised voices in its community are heard? • How are pupils taught how to express disagreement respectfully and constructively, to 'disagree well'?
	<p>Culture and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school run debates, discussions, or projects focused on freedom and responsibility? • Do school communications, newsletters, and parent workshops reflect the importance of freedom of thought, expression, and belief? • How do leaders ensure that disciplinary systems do not disproportionately restrict pupil expression?

Staff practice and responding to incidents

- How are staff trained to distinguish between freedom of expression and harmful or discriminatory behaviour?
- Does the school have clear and well communicated policies for tackling anti-religious hate and bullying?
- Are bystander intervention approaches taught to pupils, and are staff supported to use restorative conversations when freedom-related conflicts arise?
- Does the school regularly review behaviour data to identify patterns of exclusion or silencing?

Leadership practice

How do school leaders implement their vision, mission and ethos to promote and protect FoRB throughout the school community?

	Action taken
<p>Learn about human rights</p>	<p>Vision, policy and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the school reference Human Rights through its vision, mission, and values? • Does the school ensure its safeguarding, anti-bullying, and inclusion policies explicitly reference Human Rights and FoRB principles? • How do leaders ensure that recruitment, behaviour, and admissions processes uphold Human Rights principles, including FoRB principles? • How do leaders ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for staff with specific religious practices and observances? • Do leaders advocate for human rights education within local networks, professional associations, and with governors, trustees and members? <p>Visibility and culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the language of Human Rights visible around the school, in classrooms, on notice boards, and in pupil work displays? • Are there opportunities for the school to celebrate international days linked to Human Rights, such as Human Rights Day and World Children's Day? • Are pupils involved in projects, campaigns, or partnerships focused on global citizenship or social justice? • Does the school engage with national or international initiatives such as UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools?

Staff, parents and community

- Do leaders provide continuing professional development to ensure staff can teach Human Rights confidently and accurately across the curriculum?
- Are parents provided with accessible information about Human Rights, behaviour expectations, and how they relate to school life?
- Does the school collaborate with local organisations, such as Human Rights charities and interfaith groups, to promote rights-based practice?