



Dealing with sensitive & controversial issues in Religious Education: a practical guide

(includes guidance on visits, visitors, religious artefacts and drama)

Contents:

- **Introduction**
- **Dealing with sensitive and controversial issues**
- **Visits**
- **Visits checklist**
- **Visitors**
- **Visitors checklist**
- **Drama and role-play**
- **Using religious artefacts**
- **Further information**

Introduction

Our motto is **“bringing communities together and bridging the gap.”** In order to do this we place ourselves as educational professionals in a position where we are challenged and we challenge those who would encourage us to take on their viewpoint without due consideration.

We hope that the young people of Warwickshire enter the adult world well equipped with those skills that will enable them to interact with the variety, range and diversity of peoples brought closer to our everyday lives through global travel and ICT.

This document has been produced to acknowledge the courage of those professionals whose bravery in wanting to deal with controversial and sensitive issues has been second to none. This document is a starter to support colleagues who are beginning their journey along the same road. We acknowledge their tremendous contribution to the education of young people in Warwickshire.

This document is not for the fainthearted - but for the brave. As time goes on and we learn, we will adjust the document to incorporate new knowledge and skills. In the meantime we are sure you will use this document as a good first point of reference.

We look forward to you joining this learning journey with us.

Yours faithfully

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'M. Kaur' and the second signature on the right is 'J. Halola'.

Chairs of SACRE.

Dealing with sensitive & controversial issues

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in Religious Education. Indeed, the key concepts and processes outlined in the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for RE require pupils to engage with a variety of philosophical and ethical issues, and to reflect on their own values in relation to those of others.

It is important teachers are aware that RE covers sensitive matters that may affect some pupils. Teachers should refer to school policies relating to sensitive, controversial and confidential issues in the first instance. In order for RE to be authentic, relevant and meaningful, pupils need to be given opportunities to explore these sensitive and controversial issues. It is essential that teachers plan and manage these opportunities carefully.

One particularly sensitive issue that is raised by a number of topics studied in RE is that of Life and Death. Teacher knowledge of the school, community and individual pupils must inform planning and be used to ensure that the issue is dealt with sensitively. Teachers may need to seek guidance from people trained to deal with bereavement, and should look to school and county provisions for this.

The following guidance is taken from the Warwickshire Healthy Schools Guidance on handling sensitive, controversial and confidential issues:

Teachers should:

- ensure pupils establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other and how sensitive issues will be dealt with;
- judge when to allow pupils to discuss issues on their own in small groups and when to join in and offer support;
- ensure that pupils are clear about the difference between fact, opinion and belief, and that they have access to balanced information and views against which they can clarify their own opinions and views, including contributions made by visitors to the classroom;
- decide how far they are prepared to express their own views, bearing in mind that they are in an influential position and that they have to work within the school's values framework (see below);
- provide appropriate support after a session for any pupil who may be troubled by an issue raised.

Taken from: "Passport – A framework for personal and social development", written by Jane Lees and Sue Plant and commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation

Approaches to teaching controversial issues:

- a) The 'neutral chair' facilitates discussion without expressing any personal views while ensuring that a wide variety of evidence is considered and opinions of all kinds are expressed. However, this can be unconvincing and can even reinforce prejudices if pupils only hear what they want to hear.
- b) In the 'balanced' approach, all aspects of an issue are presented as persuasively as possible, with the teacher acting as 'devil's advocate' if necessary. This runs the risk

that pupils see all sides as equally persuasive and do not develop the skills and information to counteract them. How issues are balanced is also critical: in a discussion of racism, racists and anti-racists would not be given equal weight, but what about abortion, direct action, the drugs trade or pornography?

- c) The 'stated commitment' approach means that the teacher starts by expressing their own views to encourage discussion. This has the advantage of being frank but is in most danger of accusations of bias and indoctrination.

In looking at controversial issues, teachers and pupils should consider:

1. What are the main features of this issue?
2. Why is it an issue and who are the main protagonists?
3. What are their main interests and values?
4. What case do they make, what arguments do they use and how do they make them?
5. What do they say needs to be done and why?
6. What are the actual and possible consequences of their positions?
7. Who or what else might be affected by this issue? Who may not have a public position or profile?
8. What evidence do different sides present, how can it be checked, and what additional information or opinions could be obtained?
9. What evidence would decisively refute or support a particular case, if any?
10. How, where and by whom are these matters dealt with?
11. How have they been dealt with in other countries or at other times?
12. How might this issue affect you and how can you express your point of view and influence the outcome?

Taken from Education for Citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, September 1998

Teachers may also like to consider having a 'confidentiality' box available during units of work into which pupils are invited to put any comments or questions they have. This box might also be used to collect pupils' evaluation / assessment sheets to provide a non-threatening opportunity for pupils to submit any anonymous questions. Teachers need to ensure that the contents of this box are checked regularly between lessons and that any issues or concerns are dealt with, either through the lessons or with individual pupils where appropriate.

Pupils occasionally make personal disclosures, either in class or to individual teachers. They may disclose that they are engaging in under-age sexual activity; that they, or friends or relatives, are using drugs; or that they have been abused. Teachers may come to possess sensitive information about pupils, some of it about illegal activity. All parties need to be clear about the rules of confidentiality and child protection, which apply in these circumstances. **Teachers should be familiar with the school's child protection policy and confidentiality policy to ensure they feel equipped to respond effectively and professionally should any such situation arise.**

For more information about teaching controversial issues visit:

www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk

For more information about sensitive issues / confidentiality visit:

www.warwickshirehealthyschools.com - core theme pages (PSHE) or policy creator

www.healthyschools.gov.uk

Visits

Outdoor learning opportunities are gaining increasing recognition as having the potential to significantly improve pupil engagement and motivation (Ofsted, 2009). The *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* was launched in 2008 and guidance has been drawn together by the Department for Children, Schools and Families with the help of many experts and practitioners. This can be found at www.lotc.org.uk. Outdoor learning experiences in RE can range from creating a sacred garden in the school grounds to a special moment in a cathedral or mosque. Visiting sacred spaces is primarily associated with learning in RE where young people engage with living religions and meet members of faith communities to learn about their beliefs, rituals of worship and celebrations. Details of how these visits might be used at the Foundation Stage and cross-curricular links can be found at www.lotc.org.uk. For a range of case studies of visits to sacred spaces see www.refuel.org.uk/sacred-space/. Visits to sacred spaces require careful planning and evaluation in order to maximise their learning potential and to avoid difficult situations. The section below and the attached checklist are designed to help with this process.

Making Contact

Making contacts with sacred spaces can be difficult and time consuming. Larger places may be involved in the *Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge* (<http://www.lotc.org.uk/lotc-quality-badge/>). Quality badge holders have been identified on the website and the badge gives assurance that the venue has met certain criteria in terms of health and safety and the quality of provision. However, often teachers will need to make contact with smaller local sacred spaces that may not have the resources to take part in the quality badge scheme. Local telephone directories, parents, governors, local newspapers and Warwickshire SACRE may all be sources of contacts. It is important to be aware of the diversity inherent in religious traditions, and teachers must conduct careful research to ensure that the sacred space they are intending to visit is appropriate for the purpose of the visit. If in doubt, contact Warwickshire SACRE for advice. The initial hard work does pay off, as often these visits become regular features of the school calendar. It is important to be aware that many sacred spaces are run by volunteers and that this will affect the time and responses you may get when making contact.

Planning

Learning outside the classroom should be integral to the curriculum and a regular part of teaching and learning rather than an addition. It also needs to be progressive: *'Issues of frequency, continuity and progression are best approached from a whole school/key stage or programme approach to curriculum planning'* (www.lotc.org.uk).

The following questions should be considered in planning and evaluating these curriculum opportunities:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. How will you organise learning?
3. How will you know when you are achieving your aims?

It is crucial for the teacher to prepare the children to consider what sort of place it is that they are visiting and to give children a spiritual context for the visit rather than a list of Do's and Don'ts. Experience suggests that children behave appropriately (when given boundaries) even when their teachers are expecting the worst; teachers who have spent one lesson on sacred spaces - rather than history and a glossary of furniture get far more out of the visit; and the more focussed the visit the better the behaviour and therefore the less likely to offend. It is useful to consider pupil groupings, activities and key questions in advance. Pupils may be given different things to look for, or you may work with members of the community to prepare pupil activities in advance. It is important to consider who will be talking to the pupils, and how they can be supported to ensure that the 'talk' is appropriate to the age, abilities etc of the pupils (guidance for visitors may be useful in this). It is also important to consider the variety of senses that can be used in a visit. Simply providing a worksheet of things to find can limit pupils' experience. Consider activities that encourage pupils to use a variety of senses and that are open-ended in order to have maximum impact.

Factors to consider when visiting sacred spaces:

Local Authority and school guidelines should give teachers clear advice about sensitive issues when taking young people out of school.

Visits to sacred spaces involve acknowledging rituals of respect in different faith traditions. However, there should be no compulsion for pupils to take part in worship.

Timing in relation to the religious calendar, appropriate dress, dietary requirements, general etiquette, issues about photography and hygiene all need to be considered when planning and conducting a visit to a sacred space. It is strongly advisable for the teacher to do a preliminary visit, especially when using the sacred space for the first time. It is essential that information gained from the sacred space is then used to prepare the pupils and any accompanying adults well in advance of the visit. Parents may also need to be informed, as there may be implications for what pupils wear, eat etc on the day.

Some parents may be sensitive about their children visiting a sacred space outside of their own faith tradition. There is no valid reason to prevent young people from any faith taking part in educational visits to sacred spaces. It is important to reassure parents of the values and purposes of such visits and the educational benefits of learning about other faith traditions. For detailed guidance on preventing and dealing with parental objections see www.refuel.org.uk/docstore/26.pdf.

It is essential that a visit does not compromise religious beliefs. For example, the day of the visit may exclude some young people (e.g. Friday, if it were not possible for Muslims to perform midday prayers).

Although there are appropriate ways to dress and behave in the various places of worship do not let this worry you. You will be guests and will be treated with hospitality. It is simply a matter of helping pupils to understand that these spaces are sacred to some people and for them to show that they are sensitive to what is

important to their hosts. This helps pupils to develop feelings of reverence and respect. What is more, the experience can help pupils to gain a greater appreciation of the awe, reverence and mystery that are fundamental features of religion.

Below are some guidelines for visiting sacred spaces from the principal traditions included in the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus. Detailed information on religious traditions can be found at www.reonline.org.uk. However, there is no substitute for discussing expectations and requirements with hosts well in advance of the visit.

The Buddhist Monastery

- Remove shoes before entering temple or shrine room.
- No particular form of dress is required but you should have regard to modesty.
- Respect silence – switch off mobile phones etc.
- Address respected people in a polite manner (students should learn in advance how to greet people in the Asian style by joining the palms together in front of one's chest in a gesture of prayer).
- Do not point feet towards the shrine.
- Food, alcohol, tobacco etc should not be taken onto the premises.
- It is polite to show respect to the *Ajahn* by remaining on a lower level than him. e.g. if he is seated, sit down before speaking to him.
- Monks are reliant upon the support of lay people who are repaid by their teaching. You may wish to take a small donation.
- To protect the modesty of both, women should not come into physical contact with the monks or place anything directly into their hands.
- You will be asked to sit on the floor. If this is not possible please make this known so that arrangements can be made.

The Christian Church

- Inform pupils that there might be places they should not enter and artefacts they should not touch e.g. the vestry, bell tower, or sanctuary area (which in some churches is alarmed).
- No particular form of dress is required but it might be expected that males remove their hats when inside a church.
- Respect silence and switch off mobile phones.
- Icons should be treated with respect.
- Small amounts of money may be taken for the lighting of candles, bookmarks, postcards etc.
- Check about taking photographs.
- Avoid going into the sanctuary and touching the font, lectern, pulpit and any art/crosses etc.
-

The Hindu Mandir

- No particular form of dress is required but you should have regard to modesty.
- Usually no head covering is required.
- You will need to remove shoes and possibly wash your hands on entering.
- The cow is a sacred animal for Hindus and therefore it would be sensitive to wear as little leather as possible.
- You may be offered *prashad*. This is food (fruit or sweets) which has been offered to God for blessing. It is seen as polite to accept and it is important that this food is treated with respect. It is a good idea to ensure that pupils are aware of this in advance. When accepting *parshad* pupils should place their hands together palms upwards to form a cup.

- Movement is part of Hindu worship and it is usually acceptable for pupils to walk around and ask questions, however, pupils should not disturb members of the faith who are worshipping.
- Pupils should not attempt to touch a *murti*.
- You will be asked to sit on the floor. If this is not possible please make this known so that arrangements can be made.
- Boys and girls may be asked to sit separately.
- Food, alcohol, tobacco etc should not be taken onto the premises.

The Jewish Synagogue

- There is no synagogue in Warwickshire
- Most synagogues require modest dress with arms covered to the elbow, legs to the knees and a head-covering for the boys.
- Check to see if there are security procedures in place.
- The synagogue is a place of prayer and therefore a place where respect should be shown (full briefing may be required if pupils are to attend a service).
- Ideally leave food outside, especially pork products.
- Do not touch a *Torah* scroll if on display.
- There may be sensitivities about certain issues, and it is best to discuss what issues the community/speaker are comfortable to discuss in advance, and inform pupils about issues they should avoid and why.

The Muslim *Masjid* (Mosque)

- Modest dress should be worn, covering arms to the wrist and legs to the ankle. Trousers are more suitable than leggings for women.
- Young children under the age of 12 are not considered to be adults and may dress as they do in school unless they wish to adopt any part of Muslim attire for the day (hats/scarves) to enliven their visit.
- Visitors may cover their heads if they wish to show respect to other worshippers or to enrich their own experience although some *Masjids* may request that women have their head covered.
- Everyone should remove shoes on entering.
- Some *masjids* may ask that girls should not visit during their menstrual period. It may be that they are allowed to visit, but not enter the main prayer hall. It is advised that this sensitive issue is discussed man-to-man or woman-to-woman where possible in advance, so that suitable arrangements can be made.
- Pupils will probably be allowed to walk around, but they must be sensible and not disturb people engaged in worship.
- You will be asked to sit on the floor. If this is not possible please make this known so that arrangements can be made.
- Boys and girls may be asked to sit separately.
- Food, alcohol, tobacco etc should not be taken onto the premises.

The Sikh Gurdwara

- Wear trousers and bring scarves to cover heads. A hat is not a suitable substitute. This applies to both sexes.
- You will be required to take off your shoes before entering the prayer hall.
- On entering the prayer hall you should approach the *Guru Granth Sahib* and bow to show respect. This does not imply worship, simply respect for its teaching. It is usual for Sikhs to make an offering at this point. You may wish to also do this.
- You will be asked to sit on the floor. If this is not possible please make this known so that arrangements can be made.
- Boys and girls may be asked to sit separately (women normally sit on the left and men on the right).
- When seated on the carpet try not to allow your feet to point towards, or turn your back towards the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- Food, alcohol, tobacco etc should not be taken onto the premises.
- You may be offered blessed food; either *kara parshad* (made of sugar, ghee and semolina) or sometimes fruit is substituted for visitors. Receiving *kara parshad* is optional, but it is polite to do so. It is acceptable to take it away to share with your family. When accepting *kara parshad* pupils should place their hands together palms upwards to form a cup.
- You may be invited to the *langar* and to enjoy the food and generosity of the Sikh community.

General Guidance on Dress

- When visiting a sacred space you should dress modestly. Where possible, arms, legs, waists etc should be covered. Tight-fitting clothes should be avoided. In many sacred spaces you will be required to sit on the floor and remove your shoes, so this needs to be considered when deciding what to wear.
- Avoid clothes with offensive and inappropriate slogans.
- Avoid excessively long trousers and skirts as they may drag on the floor and therefore contravene expectations for hygiene in some sacred spaces.

Visits Checklist

Before	
Have you given careful consideration to the aims/objectives of the visit and how this relates to previous and subsequent learning?	
Have you informed the headteacher/ governors of the visit where appropriate? (perhaps invite them!)	
Have you conducted your own pre-visit/ and/or found out relevant background information, including a detailed conversation with your key contact, informing them of the aims/objectives, pupils' previous learning, pupils' requirements, timings for the visit, directions, and discussed issues relating to conduct, dress, food, photography etc?	
Have you done sufficient preparatory work with pupils and accompanying staff , including the aims/objectives, and how it relates to pupils' previous and subsequent learning, timings for the visit, and discussed issues relating to conduct, dress, food, photography etc? Also, have you done a focused lesson with pupils teaching about being in a sacred space?	
Have you informed parents/ gained parental consent where necessary and ensured that parents have a good understanding of the purpose and educational benefits of the visit? (you could invite them to come along!)	
Have you followed the required LA Offsite Activity procedures/school policy?	
Have you undertaken appropriate promotion of the event? The RE Council for England and Wales website has a useful toolkit to help with press releases etc	
On the day	
Have you ensured that a pupil/group of pupils say thanks?	
After	
Have you conducted an evaluation of the day , considering how it might be improved in the future?	
Have you sent a card/letter of thanks (possibly with a small donation?) to the place of worship? It is a good idea to highlight the successes of the visit and perhaps suggest some improvements for future visits.	
Have you undertaken follow-up work and sent examples to the sacred space etc	
Have you publicised the event in school newsletter/website/local press etc?	
Have you informed head/governors of the success of the visit?	

Visitors

Inviting members of faith communities into schools has great potential for learning in RE. As with making contacts with sacred spaces, careful research and preparation can develop some excellent contacts who continue to work with the school for years.

It is essential that teachers assess the suitability of the visitor and, where possible, meet with them beforehand. Normal procedures must be followed when inviting visitors into school. This may include informing parents, headteachers and governors.

The more detailed the briefing of the visitor, the better the visit is likely to be. Inform him/her of the ethos, aims and policies of the school, and how their visit fits into the curriculum. Let them know what prior learning has taken place and what pupils will go on to do. Clarify the length and type of input you require. In general visitors should not be asked to tell pupils everything there is to know about their faith or to defend everything that any member of their tradition might do. They are there primarily to provide *one* example of what it means to belong to a particular tradition. It is therefore helpful if the brief can be given in personal terms – for example, a Muslim giving a personal account of going on the *Hajj* or a Pagan describing how they celebrate Halloween.

Ensure that you know what equipment they require and that they have good directions to the school. Also, remember that often speakers have little contact with schools, and they may need very clear instructions about how to interact with pupils of a particular age/ability etc. It is advisable that you work with the visitor in advance to plan a suitable structure and activities. It is vital that the teacher is present during any session with an outside visitor but his/her degree of involvement will vary and should be negotiated with the visitor beforehand.

Pupils will also require careful preparation and briefing to ensure they get the most from the experience. They should be encouraged to prepare questions and to consider exactly what the visit is intended to achieve.

Debriefing with pupils and the visitor provides an opportunity to reflect on what went well and what changes need to be made for future visits.

It may be necessary to pay travel expenses for visitors and this should be discussed in advance to avoid embarrassment. Also, if you are providing lunch, you need to check dietary requirements etc. Washing before certain activities is a religious requirement for some faith communities. It is important to ensure that such facilities are made available to visitors.

Sensitivity

Care is needed when handling sensitive and /or controversial issues that may arise. Staff and pupils should be involved in the establishment of 'classroom rules' which set the climate for the lesson and make clear how all involved in the lesson are expected to behave towards each other during the lesson. This should enable everyone to feel safe and secure.

Part of that discussion should include consideration of what information is for sharing beyond the classroom. These rules apply equally to pupils, staff and visitors.

Confidentiality

Where visitors support the curriculum, they must be made aware of and abide by the school's policy regarding disclosures and confidentiality. The boundary between providing individual advice and providing learning opportunities for groups of pupils must be made very clear to everyone.

Visitors from outside agencies may well have a role in providing confidential advice and support to individual young people as part of their regular work. This circumstance is very different from discussing issues in an educational setting and both the visitor and pupil need to be clear about this distinction.

Visitors Checklist

Before	
Have you given careful consideration to the aims/objectives of the visit and how this relates to previous and subsequent learning? Have you considered how you will ensure that pupils are hearing a balance of opinions?	
Have you had a meeting/detailed conversation with your visitor, informing them of the school's ethos, aims and policies; the aims/objectives of the visit, pupils' previous learning, pupils' requirements, timings for the visit, directions, and discussed their requirements?	
Have you done sufficient preparatory work with pupils including the aims/objectives, and how it relates to pupils' previous and subsequent learning, timings for the visit, and discussed issues relating to conduct, prepared questions etc?	
Have you informed parents/ gained parental consent where necessary and ensured that parents have a good understanding of purpose and educational benefits of the visit? (you could invite them to come along!)	
Have you informed the headteacher/ governors of the visit where appropriate? (Again, invite them!)	
Have you followed the required procedures/policy for visitors to the school?	
Have you undertaken appropriate promotion of the event? The RE Council for England and Wales website has a useful media toolkit to help with press releases etc.	
On the day	
Have you arranged for visitor to be met, allowed sufficient time to set up etc?	
Have you prepared a suitable introduction ?	
Have you ensured that a pupil/group of pupils say thanks ?	
Have you arranged for a debrief with the visitor and ensured that they know where to go after the visit etc?	
After	
Have you conducted an evaluation of the visit , considering how it might be improved in the future? Have you considered pupil feedback?	
Have you sent a card/letter of thanks (possibly including travel expenses)? It is a good idea to highlight the successes of the visit and perhaps suggest some improvements for future visits.	
Have you sent examples of follow-up pupil work ?	
Have you publicised the event in school newsletter/website/local press etc?	

Drama & Role-Play

Drama and role-play are valuable activities in RE. However, it is important to respect pupils' own faith background and to be aware that there may be sensitivities surrounding drama and role-play. Some parents are unhappy about their children participating in music, dance or drama on religious grounds. Some parents may object to their children being asked to take on the role of a person from another faith tradition.

Role-play can be a useful way of helping pupils to understand and explore key concepts that underpin the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus. For example, pupils might be asked to role-play being on a desert island and use this as a basis to explore the concept of authority. Caution must be exercised when planning to use role-play in relation to particular faith traditions. Teachers must give careful consideration to the purpose, necessity and how appropriate such activities are. A visit to a sacred space, for example, may be much more effective and appropriate than re-creating sacred spaces and simulating religious activities. When it is decided that this is necessary, teachers must ensure pupils are aware that role-play is a simulation of religious behaviour and that pupils are not being required to take part in worship. It is advisable to use symbols or dress to mark the transition in and out of role so that there is a clear distinction between the pupil and the role they are taking on. Debriefing is an important part of this process. For an example of how this might be done see www.teachers.tv/video/27970.

Other forms of drama such as acting out stories central to a tradition is common to many religious traditions and can be a valuable learning activity. Examples of this might be the story of Rama and Sita in the Hindu tradition, or dramatic portrayals of Jesus' parables.

Teachers need to be guided by sensitivity and respect in the use of dress and artefacts in drama. Asian clothes, for example, are cultural rather than religious and are unlikely to cause offence. However, the Sikh turban or a Buddhist Monk's robes have religious significance. Jan Munt (2000) suggests that the test should be: *'is the artefact going to be treated with respect in an educational way? Will it add to the pupils' understanding? Will using or wearing it give offence?'*

Dramatic representation of some key religious figures must be avoided. This includes the prophet Muhammad and the Sikh Gurus.

Using Religious Artefacts

Religious artefacts have increasingly been seen as valuable resources in the RE classroom. They can add authenticity and interest to the curriculum. Religious artefacts are essentially objects which are used in worship, such as a chalice in Christianity or a prayer mat in Islam. However, the word 'artefact' has archaeological connotations, whereas religious artefacts are very much integral parts of living traditions. This must be remembered when planning to use artefacts in RE. Whilst there has been an emphasis on the learning potential of seeing, touching, smelling, tasting etc associated with using religious artefacts, it is also important that we consider how these objects are used within the particular traditions. In some cases, it may not be appropriate to allow pupils wholesale access to an object. Indeed, sometimes keeping a distance between pupils and artefacts may help to reinforce an understanding of the numinous and the reverence and mystery associated with religion. It is also necessary to consider how we might be representing faith traditions if learning is planned disproportionately on access to artefacts. For an interesting discussion of these issues see the article by Roger Homan (2000) listed in the further information section.

Where artefacts are used in the classroom it is essential that teachers are aware of their symbolic importance, and that they ensure these objects are treated with respect. If they are handled respectfully, it is unlikely that any offence will be caused. If in doubt, it is advisable for teachers to speak to members of the faith community. This could include pupils, parents and other members of staff.

Artefacts can be expensive, but they can be obtained in a variety of ways, including the loans service (see [http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/91238D9CA183A22D802570A70051896D/\\$file/RE+Resources+Loan+Service.doc](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/91238D9CA183A22D802570A70051896D/$file/RE+Resources+Loan+Service.doc)), donations from local places of worship and local retailers (e.g. Foleshill Road in Coventry). There are also national suppliers such as *Articles of Faith* and *History in Evidence*.

Particular consideration should be given to the handling and storage of the *Qur'an*. It should always be handled with clean hands, kept from dirty floors, wrapped in a clean cloth and placed on a high shelf when stored.

Torah scrolls should not be touched. Replicas are available for use in the classroom. Pupils should be made aware of this. *Teffellin* should be displayed in a box and not handled.

Further Information

Websites:

- <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sacre> - SACRE website
- www.reonline.org.uk - this site has useful guidance on etiquette and what to look out for at different places of worship, as well as prompts for planning visits
- www.articlesoffaith.co.uk - religious and historical artefacts for education
- www.tts-group.co.uk – History in Evidence, supplies artefacts
- www.religiouseducationcouncil.org – this website has a media toolkit that will be useful in publicising visits etc
- <http://www.engagingplaces.org.uk/teaching+resources/art68331> - an inspiring article about organising visits to Sacred Spaces; a sort of 'how to....' that emphasises how to help children experience the numinous on their visit.
- www.warwickshire.gov.uk/icss - website for Warwickshire Intercultural Curriculum Support Services whose aim is to provide and facilitate equal access to the National Curriculum and prepare all children for life in a multi-cultural society
- www.warwickshire.gov.uk/lotc - Warwickshire's detailed webpage for learning outside the classroom
- <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/E826394510CF2977802570C000332D94> - educational visits resources

Books/Articles:

- Bastide, Derek (2007), *Teaching Religious Education 4-11*, Routledge
- Homan, Roger (2000) '*Don't Let the Murti Get Dirty: The Uses and Abuses of Religious Artefacts*' in *British Journal of Religious Education*, (Vol 23:1, Autumn 2000), pages 27-37
- Munt, Jan (2000) '*Drama and Religion*' in *RE Today* (Autumn 2000, vol18, No1), pages 6-7
- *RE Today*, Autumn 2001, Vol19, No1 – this issue has the theme of Life and Death and has a number of articles exploring ways of dealing with this sensitive issue in both primary and secondary schools.
- Rivett, Rosemary (ed), (2007) *A Teacher's Handbook of Religious Education*, RE Today Services
- Smith, Caroline (2006) '*Everyone Visiting Everywhere*' in *RE Today* (Autumn 2006, Vol 24, No1), pages 10-11 – an article in which an RE co-coordinator shares the experiences of taking 4-7 year olds to places of worship

Policies / Guidance

Anti-bullying Policy
Child Protection Policy
Confidentiality Policy

Inclusion Policy
Offsite Activities Guidance (2007)
Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education Policy
Physical Activity Policy
Relationships Sex and Education Policy
Using Outside Visitors Policy and Guidelines
Whole School Food Policy

Healthy Schools have produced the above draft policies to help schools to develop new policies or to update their existing ones. Copies of the draft policies can be found at www.warwickshirehealthyschools.com/ or for further advice contact the Healthy Schools team on healthyschools@warwickshire.gov.uk

Religious dress and symbols in school guidance

Guidance on using visitors in Collective Worship

Dealing with bereavement:

There are currently no policies or guidelines from the Local Authority on handling bereavement and traumatic situations within school. The following charities / organisations may be contacted for further information or advice:

Assist Trauma Care (Rugby branch)

Tel: 01788 560800 Email: assist@traumatic-stress.freeseve.co.uk

Website: www.traumatic-stress.freeseve.co.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Website: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Contact telephone numbers for Warwickshire branches:

Rugby 01788 521455

Coventry & North Warwickshire 02476 670714

South Warwickshire Branch 01926 864343

Counseling Care

Tel: 01608 682956 Email: support@counsellingcare.org

Website: www.counsellingcare.org

For further information or advice you may also contact the Family Information Service (FIS) at fis@warwickshire.gov.uk or on **0845 090 8044**