



Connecting with Local Faith Communities



Introduction

The purpose of this document is to connect schools in Lancashire with different faith communities and places of worship in their locality. This is to enhance the 'living religious traditions' strand within the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Dialogue with people from a range of faiths promotes a respect for diversity and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

It is important that any teacher responsible for organising a visit to a place of worship undertakes a **thorough risk assessment**. This would include undertaking a pre- visit and checking that the venue has public liability insurance and a health and safety policy in place. It is also a necessity that each school has a **visitors policy**. Faith representatives might not have a DBS certificate as they will not be in a regulated activity. It will be important to agree the content of any talk to pupils/ students prior to the event. Each school must manage the visit ensuring that all safeguarding and quality assurance checks are considered. For example, any member of a faith or belief community who is asked to talk to pupils should be asked to:

- Share their experiences without criticising the beliefs of others.
- Avoid using ' we believe'- instead being asked to say ' As a Christian/ Muslim/ Jew ... I believe'
- Explain that theirs is an individual worldview and that their views are part of a wider spectrum of diverse belief.
- Respect the values and beliefs of pupils and adults.
- Communicate without any hidden agenda to convert or proselytise

Lancashire SACRE continue to work in partnership with **Building Bridges** to provide schools with support in arranging faith visits, visitors and special assemblies. Further information and access to their Service Level Agreement can be found on the RE website: [Building Bridges - Lancashire Professional Development Service](#).

Disclaimer: Lancashire County Council and Lancashire SACRE take no responsibility for the places or people listed in the following pages.

Visiting Places of Worship

Dress

It would be appropriate to dress modestly when visiting a place of worship. Checking on dress requirements during a pre-visit will be a necessity.

- Shoes are to be removed before entering the prayer rooms of a mosque, mandir, gurdwara or temple.
- Females should cover their head, legs and arms at a mosque. Males should cover their heads during prayer time.
- Females should cover their head and legs at the gurdwara and males should cover their head.



Food and Drink

Food and drink should not be taken into the gurdwara. At an orthodox synagogue food must be kosher.

On occasions places of worship show hospitality by offering refreshments to visitors.

Photos

Please ask for permission before taking photographs.

Behaviour

Teachers should always take responsibility for behaviour.

Parental Approval

Sometimes parents are reluctant to allow consent for a visit to a place of worship. It is their statutory right to withhold approval. However it is recommended that headteachers contact parents to discuss any worries or concerns. This will allow the purpose and facts of the visit to be clearly explained and any unwarranted fears to be alleviated. Celebrating and sharing information after a visit or event is recommended.

