

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



IMPALA CRESCENT
PRIMARY SCHOOL



GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**IMPALA CRESCENT PRIMARY
SCHOOL
RELIGIOUS POLICY
2026**

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GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
IMPALA CRESCENT PRIMARY SCHOOL
Policy on Religion (2026 Edition)

1. Title of the Policy

Religious Policy of Impala Crescent Primary School

2. Effective Date

23 May 2026

3. Revision History

Version	Date	Amendment Summary
1.0		Initial adoption following BELA Act and 2025 Admission Regulations

Date of Next Review: Annually -

4. Preamble

4.1 This policy is adopted in alignment with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the South African Schools Act, 1996 (as amended by the BELA Act), the Admission of Learners to Public Schools Regulations, 2025, and the National Policy on Religion and Education (2003).

4.2 The Constitution guarantees everyone the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, and association, and prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds including religion, belief, and conscience.

4.3 The BELA Act reinforces that no learner may be refused admission on grounds of religion, and that all school policies, including religious policies, must be consistent with the Constitution and national regulations.

4.4 This policy adopts a cooperative model that respects South Africa's rich religious diversity while protecting learners from religious coercion or discrimination.

VISION

Impala Crescent Primary School aims to be a leading institution in the delivery of quality education, where every learner feels valued and inspired.

MISSION

To deliver a curriculum that is based on humanistic values, is future orientated, of a high standard and comprehensive to:

- *Support the schooling process by improving our management, administration, teaching, learning, assessments and overall standards.*
- *Establish both the culture and capacity for lifelong learning amongst our learners and staff. Encompassing values of integrity, passion for accountability and truth.*

5. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

5.1 Prevent any form of religious discrimination among learners and staff.

5.2 Promote tolerance, mutual respect, and unity across diverse religious beliefs.

5.3 Protect minority religions and ensure they are treated with equal dignity.

5.4 Regulate religious observances, instruction, education, attire, symbols, holidays, and admissions in compliance with national and provincial legislation.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Freedom of conscience	The right of an individual to hold or change a belief without coercion.
Religious observance	Activities expressing religious beliefs, including prayer, dress, diet, or holidays.
Religion Education	Educational programme about diverse religions, without promoting any.
Religious instruction	Teaching aimed at promoting adherence to a specific religion.
School day	The compulsory 7-hour contact time, including breaks and assembly.
Total school programme	All curricular, sporting, cultural, and social activities offered by the school.

7. Application and Scope

This policy applies to all learners, educators, support staff, SGB members, and parents of Impala Crescent Primary School.

8. Legislative Framework

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) – as amended by BELA Act
- Admission of Learners to Public Schools Regulations, 2025 (Notice 3415 of 2025)
- National Education Policy Act, 1996
- Gauteng Schools Education Act, 1995 (as amended)
- National Policy on Religion and Education (2003)
- Employment of Educators Act, 1998

9. Policy Statements

9.1 Freedom of Conscience

- 9.1.1 No staff member may indoctrinate or denigrate any religion.
- 9.1.2 The school respects parents' rights to guide their children's religious development.
- 9.1.3 Staff may not be compelled to participate in religious duties against their conscience.

9.2 Religious Observances

- 9.2.1 The school recognises the diversity of faiths, including Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Traditional African, and non-religious affiliations.
- 9.2.2 Religious observances must be conducted equitably, respecting all faiths.
- 9.2.3 School facilities may be used for religious observances on an equitable, voluntary basis.

9.3 Learner Participation in Religious Observances

- 9.3.1 Participation is free and voluntary. No learner may be forced to attend.
- 9.3.2 Non-participating learners will be supervised in alternative educational activities.
- 9.3.3 Parents may request in writing for learners to observe religious holidays or rituals.

9.4 Educator Participation in Religious Observances

- 9.4.1 Participation is voluntary.
- 9.4.2 Educators must remain objective and treat all religions with fairness and respect.
- 9.4.3 Educators may not lead religious activities during contact time.
- 9.4.4 Educators may not reward or punish learners based on religious views.

9.5 Freedom of Religion

9.5.1 Observance by learners

- Learners may observe religious holidays with prior written notice from parents.
- The school will assist learners to catch up on missed academic work.

9.5.2 Observance by staff

- Educators may apply for special leave for religious observance (max 3 days per year).
- Planning for such leave must be submitted to the District Director by end of previous academic year.

9.5.3 School calendar

- Religious holidays of all represented faiths will be noted in the annual school calendar.

9.5.4 Dietary requirements

- The school tuckshop will reasonably accommodate religious dietary needs.
- School functions will encourage inclusive food options.

9.6 Religious Instruction

9.6.1 Religious instruction (promoting a specific faith) is not part of the official curriculum.

9.6.2 Occasional guest speakers may be invited; attendance is voluntary.

9.6.3 Activities like devotional songs, scripture reading, or religious movies are permissible only if voluntary and equitable.

9.7 Religion Education

9.7.1 Religion Education (learning *about* religions) is part of the Life Orientation curriculum.

9.7.2 It aims to develop moral and ethical understanding without promoting any religion.

9.7.3 No learner or educator may be compelled to attend Religion Education classes if it conflicts with their conscience. Written parental request for exemption is required.

9.8 Assembly

9.8.1 Assemblies may include universal prayers or songs on an equitable basis.

9.8.2 No learner or staff member is compelled to participate in religious parts of assembly.

9.8.3 Parents may request in writing that their child be excused from religious components.

9.8.4 Excused learners will be supervised in a designated classroom or allowed to observe their own faith's practices if a facilitator is available.

9.9 Closure of School

9.9.1 Early closure or full-day closure for religious observances requires prior written approval from the District Director.

9.9.2 Application must demonstrate wide consultation with parents and explain how lost time will be recovered.

9.9.3 Closure will not reduce the total number of school days per year.

9.9.4 If no consensus, individual learner leave provisions apply.

9.10 Religious Attire and Symbols

9.10.1 Religious attire or symbols (e.g., cross, headscarf, turban, kippah, nose ring, dreadlocks) are permitted if:

- The learner or staff member provides a written explanation of religious significance to the principal.
- The attire does not pose a safety or health risk or violate the Constitution.

9.10.2 Religious symbols may be used as teaching aids in an educational context.

9.11 School Activities During Religious Holidays

Scheduling of tests, exams, sports, and excursions must reasonably accommodate learners observing religious holidays, where feasible.

9.12 Religion and Admissions (in line with BELA Act & 2025 Regulations)

9.12.1 Admission may not be denied, delayed, or conditioned on the basis of a learner's or parent's religion, belief, or conscience.

9.12.2 The school's admission policy must not contain any religious criteria.

9.12.3 No parent may be required to subscribe to any religious statement or mission of the school as a condition of admission.

9.12.4 Any violation of these provisions constitutes unfair discrimination and may be appealed to the MEC under Section 5(9) of the Schools Act.

10. Rights of Appeal

Any person aggrieved by a decision under this policy (e.g., refusal of religious accommodation, attire restriction, or admission issue) may appeal in writing to the SGB, and thereafter to the MEC for Education, in line with Section 23 of the Admission Regulations, 2025.

11. Short Title

This policy is called the **Religious Policy of Impala Crescent Primary School (2026)**.

12. Approval

Recommended by (Principal)	Signature	Date
[Print name]		
Approved by (SGB Chairperson)	Signature	Date

Recommended by (Principal)	Signature	Date
[Print name]		
Verified by (District Director)	Signature	Date
[Print name]		

This policy supersedes all prior religious policies of Impala Crescent Primary School and takes immediate effect upon approval.

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