

# Curriculum Review



## VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD OF AUSTRALIA INC. (World Hindu Council of Australia)

RI Curricula are referred to by the Department of Education Qld as RI Program Materials.

### Executive Summary

In 2019, the Multi-Faiths RI Peak Body Network commissioned an independent review of common curriculum materials used by Religious Instructors in Queensland Schools. The focus of the review was to assist Principals to be confident that curriculum materials comply with Department of Education Queensland policy requirements. This report is a review of the curriculum materials used by Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc., against 15 policy areas of focus. The review purpose and process is outlined in a separate document on the website [multifaithsri.org.au](http://multifaithsri.org.au).

### Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus

The Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus provided to the reviewer is based on the Curriculum approved by the New South Wales Department of Education. It is a whole of primary school curriculum divided into 3 Sections:

- Kindergarten which would also be suitable for Year 1 as Queensland does not offer religious instruction in the year before Year 1, (known as the Preparatory year or PREP).
- Years 1-4 which may be better suited to Years 2-4 in Queensland.
- Years 5 and 6.

It offers 39 lessons across an academic year. The curriculum has as its foundation in the beliefs of the Hindu faith. It is therefore content structured teaching the major events, concepts and doctrines of the Hindu faith. This curriculum is student related and is designed to engage students' minds and emotions, as well as develop the skills needed for students to explore the nature and content of the Hindu faith.

Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus is designed for use in religious education / religious instruction classes in schools.

The Years 5 and 6 curriculum offers lessons of 20 minutes and not the normal 30 minutes. RI teachers will need to be prepared for a 30 minute timeslot, in accordance with most Queensland State Schools offering a 30 minute timeslot for Religious Instruction.

The curriculum is accompanied by the Special Religious Education Volunteer Teachers' Manual. This manual contains excellent advice for RI volunteers.

All RI volunteers will need to have a Working with Children Card also known as a Blue Card before they commence volunteering at the school.

All RI volunteers will need to be familiar with school policy and procedures before they commence. Volunteers should contact the school's RI coordinator before commencing at the school. This person may be the principal or another staff member, appointed by the principal. The RI coordinator will outline relevant matters including but not limited to:

- School Values
- RI hours of operation
- Complaints Management
- School Contact processes
- Blue Card Requirements

- Behaviour expectations for the students and
- Evacuation and Lock Down procedures.

## Outcome:

**Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus is *highly compliant* with Department of Education Queensland policy.**

There are a total of 39 lessons. The Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus program is suitable for children in a Queensland State primary school.

The tabled curriculum overview enables the instructor to choose activities that are appropriate for the ages and interests of their groups and easily differentiate for student needs.

The reviewer was provided with a sample of student resources in the form of black and white masters.

RI Instructors will need to be cognisant of the reading ability of the students across the class. Some of the words and activities will need to be read and clearly explained to the children as many may not have the cognitive ability to read and complete the activities independently.



Unit										
Lesson	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
1. Appropriate age and lesson time										
2. Supporting a cooperative arrangement. No leaving of materials										
3. No proselytizing or promotion of outside school activities and publications										
4. No activities or content that would cause harm to a child (physical, psychological or emotional well-being)										
5. Supports and promotes a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment										
6. Responds to diverse learning needs – level and age										
7a. A safe physical and cyber learning environment - supports wellbeing										
7b. Fosters behavioural strengths										
7c. Builds positive relationships (peers, staff, parents, community) and promotes positive social interactions										
7d, e. Encourages inclusivity, diversity										
8. Safe supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment										
9. Responsive to school behaviour plan, safe supportive and disciplined learning environment										
10. Smart choices - healthy food and drink										
11. Consistent with Code of School Behaviour										
12. Risk - suggests undertaking an assessment and identifies where risk assessment is needed										
13. Promotes responsible care and use of animals										
14. Does not include activities using items that may cause allergic reactions										
15. Supports effective communication between students, parents communities that is inclusive and valued										

## Review Commentary

### Strengths

- a. **The lessons all have suggestions for learning activities that involve students.**
  - a. Activities are suggested for students to engage in craft activities, songs.
  - b. Little writing is required from students in the optional activities. Most responses required are verbal and auditory.
  - c. Some lessons require the RI Instructor to read aloud the lesson and initiate a discussion with children.
  - d. No food is shared in the lessons.
  - e. No live animals are required in the presentation of lessons.
  - f. All lessons are planned for an indoor classroom. It is important that RI Instructors liaise with the class teacher, prior to the lesson, as to any arrangements which need to be made to facilitate the lesson.
  - g. Little organisation is required. RI Instructors will need access to the class overhead projector or a smart screen television to project the video. To reduce the possibility of accidents while the children are engaged in movement activities it will be necessary to ensure that the learning space is clear of furniture and teaching resources e.g. blocks, toys, and books. The usual resources that students would have and regularly use in their classrooms such as glue, scissors, pencils, crayons should be freely available.

### Considerations

- **Curriculum Overview.** It is important that RI Instructors read the Curriculum Overview, for each lesson, prior to the lesson and familiarise themselves with the content, and of any additional preparation required e.g. yoga mat.
- **Lesson Space** As lessons involve songs and dance the learning space should be cleared of furniture and be large enough for the children to move about when singing.
- **Ability of Students.** In some lessons the students are asked to write an answer, in the form of prose. Not all students will have acquired the same level of drawing, reading, speaking and, writing skills. RI Instructors need to be aware of this to cater for individual differences and abilities.

## Policy Compliance:

The curriculum materials are highly compliant with the 15 policy areas of focus identified in collaboration with the Department of Education policies drawn from:

- The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
- The Department of Education's Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment Procedure
- P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
- Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Statement of expectations for a disciplined school environment
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- The Code of School Behaviour
- Managing Risks in School Curriculum Activities
- Animal Use in Queensland state schools
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- Parent and Community Engagement framework

## Overall Comment from the review team:

The Primary School Hindu Scripture Syllabus is a well-considered resource that aims to provide clear scaffolding for non-trained teachers (i.e. RI Instructors who are volunteers in school classrooms). The lessons are appropriate for primary school students. The lessons provide ample opportunities for all students to be involved and contribute through discussions, reflections and activities.

Peter Doyle

Retired Primary School Principal

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