

## Values, personal opinions and conscience

Parents who send their children to Jesuit schools do so in the expectation that the teaching, the character of the school, and the values and opinions communicated to their children will accord with their own Catholic faith.

The Catholic Church has a long tradition of teaching on ethical and social issues as well as its theological beliefs. The Church tries to balance clear teaching, on sometimes controversial issues, with the practical pastoral care of individuals who may find that teaching difficult to live up to. This is no different in a Catholic school community. We strive for the highest standards, informed by Catholic moral and social teaching, and are committed to compassion, reconciliation and the building up of a community built on love and mutual respect.

The example of your life as a teacher is important. Just as teachers are expected professionally to set a good example to their pupils, so teachers in Catholic schools are expected to give good public example which is consistent with the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

No teacher in a Jesuit school is asked to speak or act against his or her conscience. The Catholic Church explicitly teaches that conscience, informed by appropriate study, is the highest authority for the individual. However, if you choose to work in a Catholic school, there is an expectation that you will do nothing to undermine the Catholic faith and practice that is the school's *raison d'être* and way of life.

Of course, we recognise that many people will have different views on a range of topics. Catholics themselves hold views that sometimes do not accord with the Church's official teaching. In a Catholic school we are responsible for forming children and young adults. We try to do so in a way that imparts the religious and moral views of their parents, and of the Church, and at the same time encourages increasing independence in forming and expressing their own views.

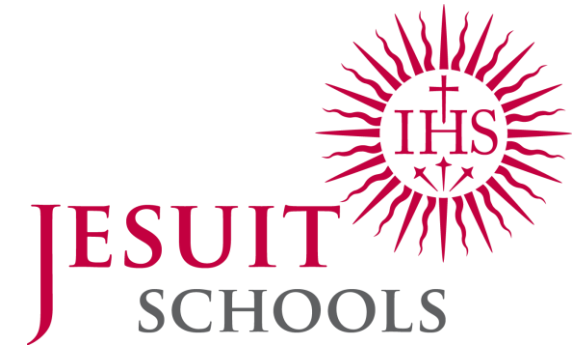
In practice, we are confident you will find Jesuit schools are open and tolerant places. They clearly articulate the tradition of beliefs and values of Catholic Christianity but do not seek to indoctrinate or foist unwelcome views on impressionable young people.

### Further information

The identity and mission of Jesuit schools is set out in a document called *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* which is available on the Jesuit Institute website.

Each school will have its own mission statement which sets out how it realizes its own identity and mission as a Jesuit school in its particular circumstances and for its pupils and community.

The school to which you are considering applying will be very willing to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about teaching in a Catholic school.



## Applying to teach in a Jesuit school

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This leaflet has been prepared to help anyone who might be considering applying for a post in a Jesuit school.

You may be a committed Roman Catholic and know a lot about the Jesuits, or you may be from a different faith, or have no religious background. You may know little or nothing about the Jesuits. Whichever it may be, we hope this short introduction will help you to gain a basic understanding of what Jesuit schools are, and to decide whether a Jesuit school is a place where you will be happy and thrive.

## The Jesuits

The Society of Jesus (popularly known as the Jesuits) is a Religious Order within the Catholic Church. Founded in 1540 by St Ignatius Loyola and nine companions, there are around 18,000 Jesuits today in almost every country of the world.

Most Jesuits are priests, but there are also Jesuit Brothers and Jesuits in studies preparing for ordination. Jesuits take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and lead a common life in community. As well as in schools and universities, Jesuits are to be found in a wide range of other works from parishes and retreat houses, to hospitals and prisons, missions in developing countries, work with refugees, in scientific laboratories, medicine and health care, film, television and the arts, architecture, business and

industry, politics and community action, spiritual direction, writing, academic and social research, philosophy, theology and biblical studies, inter-religious dialogue, archaeology and astronomy, and military chaplaincy.

## Jesuit schools

There are eleven Jesuit schools in Britain, including two comprehensive schools, one state primary school, two senior independent boarding schools, four preparatory schools, and an independent day school in Scotland with its own junior school.

These schools are part of a much wider network of Jesuit education. The Society of Jesus is responsible for 3,780 primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities educating some 2½ million students in over 70 countries. This great responsibility and enterprise is undertaken in partnership with thousands of lay people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, who share the vision and spirit of Jesuit education. It is their generosity and commitment which make the Jesuit identity and mission of the schools a reality. All of the Jesuit schools in Britain are led by lay head teachers.

In most of the schools, a majority of the pupils will come from Catholic backgrounds.

Teachers in Jesuit schools come from a wide range of religious and philosophical backgrounds. Many will be committed Catholics or belong to other Christian churches, while others will have a Catholic or Christian background but have questions about

their faith. Some will be from other religions. Others may have no particular religious belief. All have an important and valued part to play in the education of children and young people in Jesuit schools.

## Expectations of teachers in Jesuit schools

If you join the staff of a Jesuit school, you will be joining a strong Christian community with a sense of purpose. Its underlying values of respect for the individual and giving each person every opportunity to develop their talents and grow as a person will be accorded to you as much as to everyone else. Generosity is a hallmark of Jesuit schools, both in what is expected from staff and as an attitude encouraged and fostered in the pupils.

Many of the expectations of your work as a teacher in a Jesuit school will be exactly the same expectations any good school would have. These include being competent and enthusiastic in your teaching, being interested in and committed to the pastoral care and personal development of your pupils, and playing an active role in the wider life of the school.

In a Jesuit school there will also be expectations that you will support the school's Jesuit character, including its prayer and worship, its historical and spiritual traditions, its emphasis on growth in faith and the service of others, its values of personal responsibility, tolerance and justice, and its promotion of intellectual enquiry and striving for excellence.