**Ashton Sixth Form College Chaplaincy Policy Statement – Reviewed July 2018**

*1. Introduction/Ethos*

Welcome to the Chaplaincy at Ashton Sixth Form College (ASFC), a facility open to all students and staff of any faith or with no faith at all.

This policy statement outlines the support and services available through the Chaplaincy at ASFC, however some items are likely to change and/or be updated annually as we are committed to listening to ideas/suggestions put forward by members of our community. We actively welcome ideas and it is through suggestions that we are able offer a facility that accommodates people’s needs.

The Chaplaincy works alongside teachers to resource spiritual, moral and religious aspects of the curriculum. Where appropriate, and with the consent of the student concerned, the Chaplain can also work in partnership with senior tutors, counsellor, learning support staff and outside agencies to offer specialist targeted guidance in a joined up manner.

ASFC Chaplaincy works on a multi-faith basis. As such, it does not favour or promote any one particular religion or spiritual way of life; but offers students and staff the space to explore matters of faith and spirituality. The Chaplain comes from a particular faith community, the Church of England, and has been selected on being in good standing with that community. Our Chaplain, is a serving Anglican Priest within the Diocese of Manchester and has been duly licensed to act as Chaplain in this college. The Chaplaincy is committed to working with people from all faith backgrounds (or none) The service seeks to promote greater understanding of people of different faiths, to increase religious literacy and individual knowledge of religions.

*2. Where is the Chaplaincy?*

The Chaplaincy works across the whole community of Ashton Sixth Form College. There is a dedicated Chaplaincy room (MB 1.21) that is accessible throughout the day and evening and weekends whenever the College is open. This can be used for prayer, meditation, reading or quiet reflection. Directions can be given via Main Reception and Student Services Reception; the chaplaincy is located on the ground floor in the Main Building, opposite the Exams Notice Board near Costa.

Within the Chaplaincy room there is a purpose built area (for ritual washing/wudhu) for staff and students to use. This was designed by our own students and staff. Please clean up after use! Some artefacts, icons, books with scripture are available to aid worship. There are prayer mats and floor sheets provided. Floor sheets are washed regularly by a rota of staff from the chaplaincy users group

The chaplaincy room is accessible throughout the college day; however if it is ever locked and you wish to use it the key may be obtained from the Student Services Reception Desk; you will be asked to sign to receive this key and it needs to be returned as soon as you have finished using the room. Alternatively, please ask a member of site staff to unlock for you or speak to someone at reception

The Chaplaincy also developed the concept of the Peace Garden which is overlooked by the chaplaincy and is a small haven of green within an otherwise built environment. Again, it was designed by students with a sustainable water feature. The Peace Garden has trees and shrubs many of which have been purposely planted in memory of staff and students who have died. A commemorative plaque on the wall in the garden lists their names. Short memorial services are arranged from time to time when the college community comes together when friends, relations and colleagues can gather to remember them.

The Chaplain frequently holds events in Costa, classrooms, community areas and outside in the grounds. This demonstrates the cross-college nature of the chaplaincy, commitment to have a presence wherever people are and to be visible/accessible to everyone.

The Chaplain keeps staff and students informed of the dates of religious festivals and celebrations e.g. Eid, Ash Wednesday, Holocaust Memorial Day etc.

The Chaplaincy organises displays and events over the course of the year for students and staff. Again, these are advertised through the student council, staff briefings posters and via tutorials.

*3. Who is the Chaplaincy for?*

The Chaplaincy is for all staff and students studying/working during the day and on evening courses at ASFC. The Chaplain, when appropriate, may visit feeder schools to meet with students who would benefit from additional preparation for their studies at ASFC (e.g. students who are recently bereaved)

Some links are maintained with former students who return to college to assist with Alumni activities. Parents are also able to contact the chaplain directly to discuss chaplaincy matters

Chaplaincy support is offered to all students and staff regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation, in line with the college’s Equal Opportunities Policy

The Chaplain is a regular member of the cross college Equality & Diversity Group, where general and individual issues around equality are raised and resolutions sought. The Equality & Diversity Coordinator provides data which is helpful in managing Chaplaincy facilities and to plan developments.

*4. What do we offer you?*

The Chaplaincy provides a facility for anyone within the college community wishing to practice and explore their own spirituality or faith. It also offers a safe space or for those who may have left a faith community or have questions about that faith. The chaplaincy does not necessarily provide you with answers but offers a confidential space for people to voice their concerns and encourages time for reflection to assist them on their journey of faith.

The Chaplain leads acts of Christian worship and will support and enable worship for followers of other faiths in accordance with guidance from bodies such as Churches Together in England and Wales and the National Inter Faith Network

The Chaplaincy is able to provide a listening ear and space to explore concerns or problems. The service is confidential but works under the college’s Safeguarding policy. The Chaplaincy is open and non-judgmental to all service users however, respect for one another and tolerance is essential and practiced.

The Chaplaincy is an active member of Faiths United Tameside (FUT) and Oldham Inter-Faith Forum (OIFF) which have multi-cultural/multi faith networks and are therefore able to identify wider sources of assistance throughout the Greater Manchester area.

By actively developing and promoting partnerships and links with outside faith communities and agencies, the Chaplaincy can offer a wide range of information, references, resources and contacts. This includes the development of educational trips and regular partnership events. The Chaplain arranges Faith Walks to various places of worship both locally and in the Manchester city centre. Programmes and venues are agreed in discussion with Heads of Departments and guidance from the ASFC’s Health and Safety Officer

The Chaplaincy room is designated as a quiet space in which to pray, meditate, worship, read or simply “be.” It is appreciated that in all worship spaces there is value in meeting with friends and enjoying the company of others. There is however an understanding that the chaplaincy is not a common-room nor social space and people are asked to leave if there is not an intention to use the room for its key function.

The Chaplaincy facilitates faith or interfaith meetings of students or staff for prayer, worship and debate. This may include the booking, facilitating or organising of guest speakers or organisations and is set around the chaplain’s availability to ensure appropriateness. The Chaplain researches all speakers/faith leaders from all faiths who come in to speak to prevent the possibility of radicalisation. Contacts are made through organisations like Faiths. United Tameside and Oldham Inter Faith Forum to assess appropriateness.

The Chaplaincy has a variety of faith resources (DVDs, books, artefacts, aides for worship) and contacts for tutorials, events, curriculum areas, project work and displays. The Chaplain is available to deliver tutorials on relevant topics and/or arrange researched speakers with accompanying resources to support teaching and learning.

* Individual support:

Individual appointments can be arranged with a Chaplain within 5 working days, or sooner in an emergency. Should an appointment be postponed due to an emergency you will be notified as promptly as possible and an alternative time will be offered.

Where possible, individual appointments are held in a mutually convenient place.

* Other forms of support

In an emergency, the Chaplain will respond quickly after an initial assessment for the need for a Chaplaincy presence. On occasion this may include hospital visits, home visits, inter-agency visits and meetings with parents, senior tutors and other ASFC staff.

Prayer, worship services, memorial ceremonies, attendance at funerals and thanksgivings are offered or arranged where appropriate and requested, according to pastoral need. The Chaplain may also represent ASFC at various events.

*5. What can you expect from us?*

Everyone is treated with respect and courtesy. Every individual is precious, special and valued so you are very important to the chaplaincy.

You can expect to be listened to and supported in a safe, welcoming environment. Personal matters will be treated sensitively and in confidence. Information will only be shared with others where individuals give informed consent or there are safeguarding issues.

On occasion, information relating to the harm or potential harm of an individual/of others, will need to be passed on to the Safe Guarding Officer (e.g. information relating to child protection). Where possible, this will be done with the individual’s consent, but if this is not forthcoming, the matter may still have to be referred on, in accordance with ASFC’s Safe Guarding policies.

*6. What do we expect from you?*

We expect you to give us honest information about yourself so we can offer the best service possible.

The Chaplaincy facilities are open to all the whole college community: this includes official visitors and contractors. Visitors can be identified by the official visitor’s lanyard which is worn at all times when on site. No visiting preachers/facilitators or faith leaders can be brought into the Chaplaincy without the prior consent of the Chaplain. This is regardless of their religion or cultural background and is in place to protect our students and staff.

During all contact with the Chaplaincy, we expect you to behave in a way which respects the rights of staff, students and other people using the Chaplaincy.

We ask you to be punctual for appointments and to let us know if you are unable to keep an appointment so it can be offered to someone else.

Please give the Chaplain your opinion if you think there is a way to improve our service. This is how we were able to include wash (WUDHU) facilities and the Peace Garden which were both excellent suggestions and designed by students.

Let us know what you think: Your views are important. What you say is valued, will be treated in confidence and will help us to improve the service we offer to you. A book is kept in the chaplaincy for written comments or you can email on the address below.

*7. How to contact the Chaplaincy:*

The Chaplaincy can be contacted via the details below or through Main Reception, senior tutors, teachers, switchboard and over the site staff radio system - this includes evenings, weekends and holidays when urgently required.

Our Chaplain at ASFC is: Reverend Jean Hurlston B.Ed. (Hons)

Tel: 0161 330 2330 Voice-mail ext.344 E-mail jean.hurlston@asfc.ac.uk