

Bahá'í Children's Classes

I N N S W S T A T E S C H O O L S



Welcome to Bahá'í Children's Classes.

Our leaflet talks a little about how it all works within your school.

What are Bahá'í Children's Classes?

Bahá'í Children's Classes are a religious education programme offered in government schools during the time allotted for religious representatives to teach about their religion to students. The content and spirit of these classes reflect the teachings of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh.

What do children learn about God?

It is a Bahá'í teaching that we cannot begin to understand the concept of God (or 'the Unknowable Essence', as God is referred to in the Bahá'í Writings). We explain that, just as the sun is the source of physical life on the planet, so God is the source of our spiritual life. Spiritual qualities or virtues such as trustworthiness, joyfulness, kindness etc are the signs of God within us. We teach the children that our essence is spiritual and that it needs to be nurtured, fostered and educated just like our bodies and minds do.

What do the students learn about the Bahá'í Faith?

The students will develop an understanding about the fundamental principles of the Bahá'í Faith such as:

- * **The oneness of God:** that irrespective of which religion we adhere to, we worship the same God
(only the name and the form of worship differ)
- * **The oneness of religion:** that all the world's major religions are chapters of the one book - a book that is still unfinished. The children learn about the major world religions from a Bahá'í perspective.
- * **The oneness of humanity:** the need for the eradication of prejudices of race, class, creed, nationality, sex.
- * **The equality of women and men.**
- * **Prayer and meditation**
- * **The history of the Bahá'í Faith**
- * **Collective decision making** through the process of consultation
- * **The importance of fostering good character and the development of spiritual qualities** such as honesty, compassion, justice and service which form the foundation of a peaceful world.

They will be encouraged to put into practice what they have learned in the classroom and make a positive contribution to the society in which they live.

Why are the classes being offered?

These classes cater for children from Bahá'í families and other children whose parents wish them to participate. Students from any religious and cultural background are welcome. Children must have written permission from their parents to attend classes.

Who are the teachers and what is their training?

The teachers are volunteer members of the Bahá'í Community and friends from outside the Bahá'í community who have received training in book 3 of the Ruhi Institute Curriculum, "Teaching Children's Classes", followed by Child Protection Policy Training.

How are teachers approved?

Child protection is very important to the Bahá'í Community. All teachers must comply with the legal requirements of New South Wales. In addition to this, the national governing body of the Bahá'ís has a Child Protection Policy with which all teachers must comply. Under this policy, all teachers must undergo Child Protection Policy training, hold a valid Working With Children Check, and receive formal confirmation of accreditation under the national governing body's Child Protection Policy. The national governing body has also issued a code of conduct, Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People, with which all teachers must comply.

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

- Bahá'í Children's Classes are based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.
- The content of the Classes are aimed to contribute to the awakening and development of the spiritual nature of every child attending the classes, complementing the material and physical education provided by schools.
- In Bahá'í Children's Classes the development of spiritual attributes or virtues common to all the world's major religions are explored. In addition content of the program is aimed to develop within the students the knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes required to be world citizens and to embrace the equality of all peoples regardless of race, religion, nationality, class, or gender.
- Students participating in Bahá'í Children's Classes explore ways in which they may be able to contribute to the betterment of society and serve humanity.
- Bahá'í Children's Classes are open to all students regardless of their cultural or religious background subject to parental approval.

Who supervises the programme?

The governing body for the Bahá'ís in the locality where the classes take place supervises the programme. The training of teachers is conducted by the Regional Institute Board for South-Eastern Australia.

Who to contact for further information:

Regional Institute Board for South-Eastern Australia

Email: rib@sea.bahai.org.au

Teacher's name _____

Teacher's Phone _____

A brief Introduction to the Bahá'í Community

Central tenets

A central theme of the Bahá'í Faith is the oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of humanity. The equality of men and women is a significant Bahá'í principle. The Bahá'í Writings emphasise the value of education as the key to material and spiritual progress. At the personal level, the importance of daily prayer, independent search for truth, and high moral standards are stressed. Bahá'ís are obliged to avoid involvement in partisan politics and to be loyal to their government.

An independent world religion

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion which originated in Iran (then Persia) in the mid-nineteenth century. There are now more than five million Bahá'ís from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds who live in virtually every country on earth.

Founded by Bahá'u'lláh

The prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith is Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), whose writings form the body of Bahá'í scripture. He is regarded by Bahá'ís as the most recent in a line of messengers from God, which stretches back beyond recorded time and includes Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Muhammad. While the Bahá'í Faith is an independent religion in its own right, Bahá'ís recognise and honour the divine origin of all major religions.

Bahá'ís work for peace

In Australia, the Bahá'í community has worked actively in the fields of human rights, reconciliation, advancement of women, peace, moral education, anti-racism and the inter-faith movement.

Active internationally

At the international level, the Bahá'í International Community represents the Bahá'í Faith at the United Nations, where it holds consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and UNICEF. It is an active participant in United Nations forums and activities.

On the web

For more information about the Bahá'í Faith please refer to www.bahai.org.au and www.bahai.org.