

Right to Withdraw from RE lessons Policy updated 2026

Parents and carers in the UK have the right to withdraw their child from religious education (RE) in whole or in part without providing a reason. This right is protected by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

To withdraw their child, parents or carers should inform the school in writing or in person to Chris Jackson, Headteacher. The school is then required to comply with the request and excuse the child from RE until the request is rescinded.

Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher and/or RE Leader who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs.

If requested, parents may be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum (such as the aims of RE, learning objectives, and examples of lessons) and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.

Parents can only withdraw their child from RE, not other curriculum areas. For example, pupils cannot be withdrawn from a study of religious art in an art lesson, or parts of the history curriculum such as the study of Christian conversions.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

The school is responsible for supervising the child but is not required to provide additional teaching or incur extra costs. The child will usually remain on school premises, unless they are receiving religious education elsewhere. The parents or carers are responsible for providing suitable work related to the child's religious education if they choose to.

Most commonly, pupils sit at the back of another classroom, in the library or at the back of the classroom reading a book whilst the RE lesson takes place. This time should not be used for other curriculum subject areas, e.g. extra maths or other lessons. (Guidance from NATRE/NAHT "Dealing with withdrawal from RE" document).

In summary:

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education.
- For any requests to withdraw your child from religious education, please contact the school to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher in the first instance.

Schools should also provide a paper copy of this information free of charge if requested by a parent or carer.

Further information about the right to withdraw from RE can be found on the NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) [website](#).