

Parental Guidance: Right to Withdraw from Religious Education Information for Parents and Carers : Your Legal Right

As a parent or carer, you have the legal right to withdraw your child from Religious Education (RE) lessons. This right is set out in the Education Act 1996 and applies to all maintained schools, including community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, and foundation schools.

Important note: This right applies to RE lessons only.

It does not extend to:

- Collective worship/assemblies (which has a separate withdrawal right)
- Teaching about religion in other subjects (such as history, art, or literacy)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)
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Understanding RE in Our School

Before making a decision about withdrawal, it may be helpful to understand what RE involves at our school

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What is Religious Education?

- RE in our school helps children to:
- Learn about different religions, beliefs, and worldviews
- Develop respect and understanding for people of all faiths and none
- Explore big questions about meaning, purpose, and values
- Understand the role of religion in Britain and the wider world
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Our RE Curriculum

Our RE curriculum is designed to be educational rather than devotional. This means:

- We teach about religions, not teaching children to be religious
- Children learn about a range of faiths including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism
- We explore non-religious worldviews such as humanism
- Children are encouraged to ask questions and think critically
- All faiths and beliefs (including no faith) are treated with equal respect
- RE is a statutory part of the curriculum but is separate from the National Curriculum, being determined by the locally agreed syllabus.

How to Request Withdrawal

If, after careful consideration, you wish to withdraw your child from RE, please follow these steps:

1. Arrange a Meeting

We ask that you arrange a meeting with the headteacher to discuss your request. This allows us to:

- Understand your reasons and concerns
- Explain what RE involves at our school
- Discuss any alternative arrangements
- Explore whether partial withdrawal might be appropriate

2. Submit a Written Request

Following the meeting, please submit a written request for withdrawal. This should include:

- Your child's name and class
- A clear statement that you wish to withdraw your child from RE
- Whether the withdrawal is total or partial (e.g., from specific topics)
- Your signature and the date
- You can send this to the school office or email it to [school email address].

3. Confirmation

We will confirm your request in writing and inform you of the arrangements that will be made.

What Happens During RE Lessons?

When your child is withdrawn from RE, we will make appropriate arrangements for supervision. These may include:

- Your child working in another classroom on alternative educational activities
- Supervised independent study in an appropriate space
- If you prefer, you may arrange to collect your child during RE lessons, though you would be responsible for their safe return to school
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Please note:

We cannot provide specific additional teaching during RE time

Your child will be supervised but will miss the learning that takes place in RE

Alternative work will typically be independent study appropriate to their age

Partial Withdrawal

Some parents prefer to withdraw their child from specific aspects of RE rather than all lessons. For example:

- Withdrawal from learning about specific religions
- Withdrawal from visits to places of worship
- Withdrawal from particular topics
- We are happy to discuss partial withdrawal options, though this may be more complex to arrange practically.

Points to Consider

Before making your decision, you may wish to consider:

- Educational impact: RE contributes to children's understanding of the diverse world we live in and supports their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- Social impact: Your child will miss shared experiences with their classmates during RE lessons.
- Future examinations: While RE is not examined at primary level, understanding of world religions is valuable for secondary school and beyond.
- British Values: RE lessons support the promotion of fundamental British Values, particularly mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- Inclusivity: Our RE curriculum is designed to be inclusive and respectful of all backgrounds, including families with no religious affiliation.

Reviewing Your Decision

You may withdraw your request for withdrawal at any time by informing the headteacher in writing. We will be happy to welcome your child back to RE lessons.

We also encourage you to review your decision periodically as your child grows and develops, and as the RE curriculum progresses through different topics.

Collective Worship

The right to withdraw from RE is separate from the right to withdraw from collective worship (assemblies). If you wish to discuss withdrawal from collective worship, please request a separate meeting with the headteacher.

Questions or Concerns?

We understand that decisions about your child's education are important. If you have any questions or would like to:

- Observe an RE lesson
- See our RE curriculum planning
- Discuss your concerns in more detail
- Obtain further information about the locally agreed syllabus

Please contact the school office to arrange a meeting with the headteacher or RE coordinator.

Further Information

- Locally Agreed Syllabus: Our RE curriculum follows the Hartlepool locally agreed syllabus. You can request a copy from the school office or view it on the Hartlepool local authority website.
- RE Curriculum: Sample lesson plans and topics covered in each year group are available on request.
- Ofsted: Information about how RE contributes to pupils' education can be found in Ofsted guidance.