

Withdrawal from RE policy

2024/25

Approved/reviewed by	
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Introduction

“All pupils are entitled to receive RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum at school which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” - Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, but the law gives parents the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education lessons, in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act. Within Lionheart Educational Trust we respect that right.

The law does not prescribe how religious education should be taught or organised in schools.

Objectives

1. To ensure that parents are aware they have the right to withdraw students from Religious Education classes.
2. To ensure that when parents make a decision to withdraw students from Religious Education, they do so on the basis of an informed decision.
3. To ensure students receive a well-rounded education enabling them to progress and achieve their potential.

Parental right to withdraw children from RE

Parents have the right to choose whether to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. 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.

Withdrawal Procedure

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from RE, they need to:

- Inform the school of their request for their child to be withdrawn from RE and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child. This should be either in person or in writing to the Headteacher. Verbal communication (e.g. by phone, through the student or a note in the journal) is not an adequate method.
- Parents will be invited to meet with the Subject Leader for RE and a senior leader to establish with the school their concerns about RE and to discuss the practical implication of withdrawal.
- At the meeting information about the school's curriculum will be shared and there will be an opportunity for parents to ask questions and raise their concerns.
- The aim of the meeting is to ensure parents have all relevant and adequate information to make an informed choice and, whilst parents have the right to make a written request for withdrawal without any explanation, we would strongly recommend that this meeting takes place prior to their final decision being reached.

In addition to the above, parents also have the right to opt out of any visits to places of worship. Prior notification must be given to ensure that adequate supervision can be organised for the student. Whilst the schools within the trust respect the rights of the parent to withdraw their child from RE, these rights do not apply to a parent's request to withdraw their child from a non-RE subject that may teach about religion or religious beliefs, e.g. History or English.