

Religious Education (RE)/Worldviews Withdrawal Guidance

At The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (the Trust), the purpose of RE reflects the Agreed Syllabus of the Local Education Authority (i.e., Lincolnshire County Council) and the ethos of the Academy/Trust. According to the Agreed Syllabus, there is one main aim to RE:

To produce pupils who are religiously literate and able to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief.¹

Each setting across the Trust adopts an approach of genuine open enquiry, which respects the beliefs of all children.

Notwithstanding its place in the basic curriculum for all schools, the law gives parents² the right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective acts of religious worship and/or RE lessons³.

Objectives of this guidance

1. To ensure that parents/carers are aware they have the right to withdraw pupils from RE classes and/or 'religious' assembly.
2. To ensure that when parents/carers choose to withdraw pupils from either RE classes and/or 'religious' assembly, they do so on the basis of an informed decision.
3. To ensure that pupils receive a well-rounded education which enables them to progress and achieve their potential.

Parental right to withdraw children from RE

Parents/carers have the right to choose, without influence from the academy, whether to withdraw their child from RE. However, the Trust must ensure that 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 If pupils are withdrawn from RE, academies have a duty to supervise them, although not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Suitable work relating to the

¹ *Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018-2022* [Lincolnshire-Agreed-Syllabus-for-Religious-Education-2018-2022-FINAL.pdf \(lincolndioceseeducation.com\)](https://www.lincolndioceseeducation.com/2022-FINAL.pdf)

² In this document, 'parent' and 'parental responsibility' relates to a child's biological or legal parents, carers and/or legal guardians and the legal responsibilities they have for that child.

³ Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended.

child's religious education should be provided by the parents. Pupils will usually remain on academy premises, unless they are lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere (as agreed by the academy).

While the Trust respects the rights of a parent/carer to withdraw their child(ren) from RE, these rights do not apply to any parental request to withdraw their child from a non-RE subject that may teach about religion or religious beliefs, e.g., History or English.⁴

Withdrawal procedure

- If a parent/carer chooses to withdraw their child from RE, they need to inform the appropriate academy of their request for their child(ren) to be withdrawn from RE and/or 'religious assembly' and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child(ren). This request must be made in writing to the Academy Headteacher. Verbal communication (e.g., on the telephone or through the pupil) or an informal note are not acceptable methods.
- Parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Head of RE/Subject Leader, and possibly a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to establish with the academy their grounds for withdrawal from RE and to discuss the practical implications. At the meeting, the academy's RE Programme of Study and Schemes of Work will be made available for the parents/carers to read and ask questions, should they choose to do so. It is not envisaged that establishing the reason for withdrawal and the practicalities of withdrawal from RE will be either lengthy or a means to change parents'/carers' minds. However, a meeting with the relevant staff is necessary to ensure parents/carers have all the appropriate information to make an informed decision. Parents/carers do not have to disclose their reason(s) for withdrawing their child from RE, but it is helpful for the academy and subject leader to understand the reasons for the withdrawal so they may seek to improve religious education provision.
- The responsibility for what takes place when the pupil is withdrawn and under the supervision of the academy lies ultimately with the parents/carers. Parents/carers of withdrawn children will be asked to provide suitable alternative work for their child/ren which has clear outcomes and is connected to the faith or philosophy of the parents/carers. This work will be completed at the time of the RE lesson. It will not be the responsibility of the teacher either to set or mark alternative work. The time when the pupil is withdrawn is intended for the delivery of the basic curriculum for RE and not the National Curriculum or other aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils who have been withdrawn will be allocated to different rooms on an independent basis in order to ensure suitable supervision. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.
- If a pupil is withdrawn from assembly, the Form Tutor and Head of Year will also be informed to ensure adequate supervision during the assembly.
- In addition to the above, parents/carers also have the right to opt out of any visits by their child/ren to places of worship. Prior notification will be necessary to ensure adequate supervision is organised for the pupil.

Review of a request to withdraw

The Academy may wish to review a request each year, in discussion with the parents/carers.⁵

⁴ *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, pp27-29.

⁵ This is in accordance with *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, pp27-28