



Withdrawal from Religious Education Policy

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(ren) from collective acts of worship and/or Religious Education lessons, in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act.

At Biscovey Nursery and Infants' Academy we respect that right. In the UK, the law does not prescribe how religious education should be taught or organised in schools, only that schools should bear in mind that the way RE is taught should reflect the agreed syllabus of the Local Education Authority and the ethos of the school, as well as ensuring that students make good progress, learning about and from the world around them and that Teaching Standards are adhered to.

Objectives

1. To ensure that parents * are aware they have the right to withdraw students from Religious Education classes and/or 'religious' assembly.
2. To ensure that when parents make a decision to withdraw students from either Religious Education classes and/or 'religious' assembly, 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 If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost; suitable work relating to the child's religious education should be provided by the parents. Pupils will usually remain on school premise** Unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere.

Withdrawal Procedure

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

- o Inform the school of their request for their child(ren) to be withdrawn from RE and/or 'religious assembly' and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child(ren)
 - o This should be either in person or in writing to the Headteacher; verbal communication (e.g. on the telephone, through the student or a note in book bags, seesaw or Tapestry) is not an adequate method.
 - o Parents will be invited to meet with the Subject Leader for RE and if necessary, a member of SLT, to establish with the school their concerns *** about RE and to discuss the practical implication of withdrawal.
 - o At the meeting, the Agreed Syllabus and Schemes of Work will be made available for the parents to read and ask questions about, should they choose to.
 - o It is not envisaged that establishing the reason for withdrawal and practicalities of withdrawal from RE be either lengthy or a means to change parents minds, but a meeting with the relevant staff is necessary to ensure parents have all relevant and adequate information to make an informed choice.
 - o Parents of withdrawn children will be asked to provide suitable alternative work of a religious nature for their child(ren) to 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. Students who have been withdrawn will be allocated to different classes if possible however it may be that they remain in the room but not participate in the lesson. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.

Conclusion By following these guidelines, the withdrawal of children from Religious Education will be clear, efficient, and safe for the children.

Mrs Jenkin (Subject Leader for RE)

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* 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.

** Pages 27-28 Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010

*** Parents do not have to disclose their reason(s) for withdrawing their child from RE, but it is helpful for the school & subject leader to understand the reasons for the withdrawal so they may seek to improve religious education provision at the school

- In addition to the above, parents also have the right opt out of any visits to places of worship. Prior notification will be necessary to ensure adequate supervision is organised for the student.
- Whilst Biscovey Nursery and Infants' Academy respects the rights of the parent to withdraw their child(ren) 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.

