



Withdrawal from all or part of RE Procedure

ASPIRE

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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 2011, however, the law gives parents¹ 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 Henry Cort Community College 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. At Henry Cort Community College, we believe the RE curriculum fulfils these criteria. Please note that the GCSE exam board we have chosen takes into account religious, non-religious and humanist views.

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 If students are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or work, this is the parent's responsibility, or to incur extra cost. Suitable work relating to the child's religious education should be provided by the parents. **You may not withdraw a student from RE for them to do work in another subject.** Students will usually remain on school premises², unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere. A parent may withdraw a student if they wish them to have an alternative RE provision, of which the parent must arrange. Parents may withdraw a student from a certain part of the RE curriculum and parents are not required to give a reason for this. However, please be aware that if this is during their GCSE RE course this will have a significant impact on their progress and outcomes.

Withdrawal Procedure

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

- Inform the college 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 should be in writing to the Principal; verbal communication (e.g. on the telephone, through the student or a note in a student's books) is not an adequate method.
- Parents will be invited to meet with the Head of Humanities Faculty and the student's Year Head, and, if necessary, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to establish with the college their concerns³ about RE and to discuss the practical implication of withdrawal.

¹ 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

² Pages 27-28 Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010

³ Parents do not have to disclose their reason(s) for withdrawing their child from RE, but it is helpful for the school & Head/Deputy Head of Faculty to understand the reasons for the withdrawal so they may seek to improve religious education provision at the school

- Students will not be allowed to complete homework for other subjects as this is intended to ensure students are reviewing work regularly at home.
- At the meeting, the Agreed Syllabus and curriculum overviews will be made available for the parents/carers to read and ask questions about, should they choose to.
- 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' mind but a meeting with the relevant staff is necessary to ensure parents have all relevant and adequate information to make an informed choice.
- It is the parents' responsibility to provide materials for their child(ren) which have clear outcomes and are connected to the faith/philosophy/world view of the parents to be completed at the time of the RE lessons. To enable for this to be effective, work should be given to the college as a half termly pack. 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 class(es) on an independent basis in order to ensure suitable supervision. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.
- If a student is withdrawn from assembly, they will be allocated to different classes on an independent basis in order to ensure adequate supervision during the assembly. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.
- In addition to the above, parents also have the right to opt out of any visits to places of worship. Prior notification will be necessary to ensure adequate supervision is organised for the student.
- If a student is only to be partially withdrawn from RE lessons that discuss a specific religion or issue, it cannot be guaranteed that reference to these religions or issues will not be made in more general lessons. Parents will need to set appropriate work for this time.

Whilst The Henry Cort Community College 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.

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