Severne Primary School

Religious Education

Guidance on withdrawal from RE

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Legal requirements

'There is a statutory requirement for schools to provide a basic curriculum. For most schools, this consists of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education curriculum'. *(Page 41 of The Birmingham Agreed syllabus 2022.)*

Withdrawal from RE

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child from RE. This right to withdraw includes a whole or partial removal from the following:

- Receiving religious education (RE) given in the school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum.
- Attendance at religious worship in the school (note: sixth-form pupils can choose for themselves to opt out of religious worship).

The right to do so is set out in section 71(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. *(The Key)*

Parental right of withdrawal from RE was first granted in 1944 when curricular RE was called 'Religious Instruction' and, as such, had connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now. It takes account of world faiths and non-religious world views so that children can learn about and from religious traditions without being inducted into those traditions. In the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This RE provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools that do and do not have a religious designation. Students who are aged 18 or over also have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents can also exercise the right to withdraw their child from part of RE, and can do so without giving any explanation.

Parental requests to withdraw from RE

We would encourage all parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of the RE syllabus and its relevance to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs before making any request.
We would also ask that you discuss any consideration to withdraw with staff at school before making a formal request in writing, to ensure that you are making a fully informed decision.

Please note that when withdrawing students from RE, you will not be required to provide a reason we just ask that you do so from an informed position.

Providing an alternative to RE lessons

We have a duty to supervise any pupils who have been withdrawn from RE, but not to:

- Provide additional teaching that is not RE.
- Incur extra cost.

We will not ask parents/carers to supervise their children if they're withdrawn from RE.

Trips to places of worship

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child from any trip that is part of the RE curriculum.

Prior to requesting a student's removal, we would ask that you contact the school so that we can:

- Explain what will happen on the trip, and how it links to the pupil's learning.
- Explain any adverse effects on the pupil of not attending the trip, e.g. not getting the opportunity to visit a new place they might not experience otherwise.
- Outline how the trip may foster good relations between individuals from different cultures and backgrounds, and explain how the trip fits into the curriculum scheme of work as is in keeping with the Equality Act 2010.