

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: PARENTS’ RIGHT TO WITHDRAW**

**The law states that:**

* If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from receiving any religious education at the school, then the school must comply. More information can be found NATRE Guidance dealing with withdrawal from RE sample pages.pdf
* How should a parent make the request?
* All requests should be made to the headteacher.
* A written record should be made of the request, any discussion and the outcome.
* The request should be reviewed annually.

**Can the headteacher ask the parent to reconsider?**

* Parents considering withdrawal should be asked to contact the headteacher to arrange a discussion.
* The school can ask why the parent wishes to withdraw the child but cannot require a reason to be given;
* It is reasonable for the headteacher to explain the approach to religious education:
* At St John’s Primary School, RE is inclusive and explores what it means to be human;
* It is not indoctrinating or nurturing children in a faith or promoting any particular belief system;
* RE makes a significant contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Can a parent withdraw their child (ren) from particular parts of RE rather than from the subject as a whole?**

* Yes. However, the headteacher should explain that the aspect is important within the RE programme:
* Visit to a place of worship in RE: it should be made clear that the purpose is to find out about why, where and how worship takes place and is not to participate in worship. The school might consider whether the parent could be invited to accompany the group;
* A faith visitor to school: parents, pupils and visitor should be clear that the purpose is to educate and learn about the experience of a person of faith, not for the visitor to attempt to proselytise;
* A particular religion: this has to be challenged as it is disrespectful of a whole group of people and a disservice to the child’s education. Headteachers should draw the parent’s attention to the relevant school policy/policies.
* Schools must respect the requirements of some faith groups on such matters as the prohibition on pictorial depictions of God or not participating in Christmas activities.

**Can children be withdrawn from other subjects when there is an element of religion in the programme?**

* Generally not – for example, when studying the Catholic and Anglican churches in the Tudor period or a religion- inspired piece of music or art when the learning objectives relate to those subjects;
* However, if religious education is taught as part of an integrated programme the parental right must be respected when the learning objectives are those of religious education.