



Parent/Carer Right to Withdraw from Religious Education (RE)

Last reviewed on:	January 2026
Next review due by:	January 2028

1. Legal Framework and Entitlement

At Kingsdown School, we uphold the principles set out in the Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010, which states that:

"All students are entitled to receive Religious Education (RE) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum at school which promotes their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development."

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;
- As schools act in loco parentis, a school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parents from RE unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere;
- Withdrawal time should not be used to teach other curriculum areas e.g. additional mathematics sessions;
- If a parent so requests, and so long as the local authority is satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school other than at the beginning or end of any school session, a pupil may be withdrawn from the school premises to receive religious education elsewhere of a kind which is not provided in the school during the periods of time that the child is so excused. It should be noted that arranging alternative religious education is extremely rare.
- If a parent wishes their child to receive alternative religious education that cannot be provided elsewhere (as above), the school is required to allow such education within the school as long as it does not consider there are special circumstances in which it would be unreasonable to do so.
- Any arrangement must not incur any extra cost for the school. This usually would mean that parents could send in RE materials for the pupil to work on during RE lessons
- Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE, and can do so without giving any explanation. (School Standards and Framework Act, 1998)

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective acts of worship and/or RE lessons. This policy respects and acknowledges that right.

The law does not prescribe how RE should be taught or organised, but it requires that schools:

- Adhere to the agreed syllabus set by the Local Education Authority (LEA).
- Ensure that RE reflects the ethos of the school.

- Promote good progress in students' understanding of and from the world around them, while adhering to teaching standards.

2. The Role of Religious Studies at Kingsdown School

Religious Studies (RS) is an essential part of the core curriculum at Kingsdown School and contributes significantly to students' personal and academic development. Our approach ensures that RS:

- Supports statutory requirements: Delivering RE to all students is a legal obligation, and we follow SACRE's recommendation to use a GCSE framework to provide structured, purposeful learning.
- Develops broader understanding: RS fosters empathy, cultural awareness, and the ability to engage with complex societal and ethical issues.
- Prepares students for modern life: RS supports the delivery of Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development, Fundamental British Values (FBV), and principles of equality and respect.

3. Parental Right to Withdraw

Parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw their child(ren) from RE and/or collective acts of worship. This decision should be made freely, without influence from the school. However, we encourage parents/carers to fully understand the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus before deciding.

If a child is withdrawn, the school is not required to provide additional teaching or incur extra costs. Parents/carers must provide suitable work of a religious nature for their child to complete during RE lessons. Withdrawn students will remain on school premises unless alternative arrangements for religious education are made by the parents/carers, as permitted by law.

4. Withdrawal Procedure

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from RE, they must:

1. **Inform the School:** Provide a written request to the Headteacher outlining the extent of withdrawal (e.g., specific lessons, topics, or complete withdrawal). Verbal requests via phone or notes in student planners are not sufficient.
2. **Attend a Meeting:** Parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns.
 - During the meeting, the RE syllabus and schemes of work will be made available, and any questions can be addressed.
 - The purpose of this meeting is to ensure parents/carers have all the information needed to make an informed decision, not to change their minds.
3. **Sign agreement:** If parents/carers wish to continue with the withdrawal of their child, the **Parent/Carer Withdrawal Request Form for Religious Education (RE)** must be completed and signed (see Appendix 1).
4. **Provide Alternative Work:** Parents/carers must supply suitable alternative work of a religious nature for their child to complete during RE lessons. Teachers are not responsible for setting or marking this work.

5. Partial Withdrawals

In cases of partial withdrawal (e.g., from specific lessons or topics), it cannot be guaranteed that references to these religions or issues will not occur in broader lessons.

6. Conclusion

At Kingsdown School, we value the role of Religious Studies in fostering personal growth, academic success, and cultural understanding. While we respect the legal right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from RE, we encourage full participation to ensure students benefit from the comprehensive learning opportunities RS offers, including the chance to earn a GCSE qualification.

Signed by :

Emma Leigh-Bennett
Headteacher

Signed by :

Chair of Governors

Date :

Date :

Appendix 1

Kingsdown School: Parent/Carer Withdrawal Request Form for Religious Education (RE)

Section 1: Introduction

At Kingsdown School, we are committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Religious Education (RE) is a statutory part of this curriculum, and we deliver it through the core curriculum in KS3 and GCSE Religious Studies course as part of our core curriculum at KS4. This approach aligns with national guidance and the recommendations of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). It also provides students with a structured, purposeful curriculum that enhances their academic and personal development.

Parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective acts of worship and/or RE lessons, as stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. However, we encourage parents/carers to consider the educational benefits of RE, which helps students develop empathy, cultural awareness, and the skills to navigate an increasingly diverse society. If you choose to exercise this right, please read and complete this form.

Section 2: Legal Position

1. All students are entitled to receive RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010).
2. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from RE lessons and/or collective worship without influence from the school.
3. Schools are not required to provide alternative teaching for students who are withdrawn, nor to incur extra costs. Parents/carers are responsible for providing suitable work of a religious nature for their child(ren) to complete during these times.

Section 3: Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

If you decide to withdraw your child from RE lessons and/or collective worship:

- Notification: You must inform the school in writing using this form and specify whether the withdrawal is partial (specific lessons or topics) or complete.
- Alternative Work: You must provide suitable work of a religious nature for your child to complete during RE lessons.
- Supervision: Your child will be supervised on school premises in an alternative location but will not receive additional teaching.
- Visits to Places of Worship: You may also request to withdraw your child from visits to places of worship. Prior notification is required to ensure adequate supervision is arranged.
- Implications: Withdrawal from RE may limit your child's opportunity to develop key skills and knowledge about diverse religions and beliefs, which are valuable

for understanding modern society. Your child will not have the opportunity to achieve a GCSE qualification in Religious Studies, which can contribute to academic outcomes such as Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores.

Section 4: Acknowledgement and Declaration

By signing this form, you confirm that:

- You understand your legal right to withdraw your child(ren) from RE lessons and/or collective worship.
- You have discussed your concerns with the school and understand the educational objectives and benefits of RE at Kingsdown School.
- You accept responsibility for providing alternative work of a religious nature for your child(ren) during RE lessons.
- You acknowledge the implications of withdrawal, including the potential academic and personal development opportunities your child will forgo.

Child's Name: _____

Year Group: _____

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Reason for Withdrawal: _____

Extent of Withdrawal (please tick):

- Full withdrawal from all RE lessons
- Partial withdrawal (specific topics, please specify): _____
- Withdrawal from collective worship
- Withdrawal from visits to places of worship

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Section 5: School Use Only

Meeting Held With: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Notes/Comments: _____

Signature of School Representative: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____