



NATRE Guidance on the Teaching of Religious Education

The following information sets out the guidance for the deliverance of RE in schools in England. Handsworth Grange Community Sports College is a diverse and inclusive school and as such believes wholly in the importance of Religious Education for all students. Religious Education helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world.

English legislation

RE is for all pupils

- Every pupil has a legal entitlement to RE.
- RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)
- This requirement does not apply to pupils below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).
- Special schools should ensure that every pupil receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.²
- The 'basic' school curriculum includes the National Curriculum, RE, and relationships and sex education.
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RE is locally determined, not nationally

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE, recommended by a local standing advisory committee for RE (SACRE) for adoption by a local authority.
- Maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of their school.
- Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of their school unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus. In many of these school types there will be an overarching body, such as a diocese, which can offer support.
- RE is compulsory for all pupils in academies and free schools as set out in their funding agreements. This is a contractual responsibility. Academies may use their locally agreed syllabus, a different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or may devise their own curriculum.

RE is multifaith, and recognises the place of Christianity and the other principal religions in the UK. Non-religious worldviews are included

- The RE curriculum, drawn up by a SACRE or used by an academy or free school, 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. Contemporary guidance from the Government makes clear that the breadth of RE will include the six principal religions of the UK and nonreligious worldviews.

Parental right of withdrawal from RE

This was first granted in 1944 when curricular RE was called 'Religious Instruction' and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now – open, broad and exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. 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 provision will be the parents' responsibility.⁶ This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE, and can do so without giving any explanation.

Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.