



Religious Education Policy

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1. Context

In accordance with the 1944 Education Act and the Religious Education reform Act of 1988, as amplified in the Circular 3/89, the Governing Body of the Bolsover School requires Religious Education to be provided as part of the curriculum for all students.

Schools have to teach RE but parents can withdraw their children for all or part of the lessons. Pupils can choose to withdraw themselves once they're 18. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act parental rights to withdraw their child(ren) from Religious Education remains unchanged. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child(ren) is asked to discuss the matter with the form tutor or RE tutor in the first instance. Where the parent still wishes to withdraw their son / daughter from the school alternative work will be set and this will be supervised by the Inclusion Unit team. Notification to withdraw a child should be in writing and addressed to the Headteacher.

Local councils are responsible for deciding the RE syllabus, but faith schools and academies can set their own. The content of the Religious Education programme at The Bolsover School will be in accordance with the most suitable Locally Agreed Syllabus. The GCSE syllabus will be the one deemed most suitable by The Red Hill Academy Trust.

Right of withdrawal: Parents (or students who are over 18) have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from RE. In addition, teachers have the right not to teach the subject. Our approach to RE, however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal.

2. What is Religious Education?

Although there is no National Curriculum for RE, all maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum requirements to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE. All maintained schools therefore have a statutory duty to teach RE. Academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding agreement to make provision for the teaching of RE.

The RE curriculum is determined by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), which is responsible for producing the locally agreed syllabus for RE. Agreed Syllabuses used in schools (maintained or academy), which are not designated with a religious character must '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'. Schools with a religious designation may prioritize one religion in their RE curriculum, but all schools must recognise diverse religions and systems of belief in the UK both locally and nationally

3. Why is Religious Education in schools important?

'All children need to acquire core knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the religions and worldviews which not only shape their history and culture but which guide their own development. The modern world needs young people who are sufficiently confident in their own beliefs and values that they can respect the religious and cultural differences of others, and contribute to a cohesive and compassionate society.'

(The Right Hon, Michael Gove, 2013 RE Review and new 'non-statutory' National Curriculum Framework for RE)

The new National Curriculum is designed to be 'knowledge based' and to allow teachers more freedom. A new non-statutory Curriculum Framework for RE in England was developed by the RE Council for England and Wales (REC) in order to bring RE into line with these national developments.

The non-statutory Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England is a document designed to guide Local Authority SACREs, academies, free schools, providers of RE in schools with a religious character and governing bodies. The section that follows explores the aims and purpose of RE in meeting the needs of 21st-century education, using the new non-statutory National Curriculum Framework for RE.

4. What is high quality Religious Education?

Alongside the subject's contribution to pupils' mental, cognitive and linguistic development, RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE lessons should offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate. Lessons should also allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.

The law requires that local authority RE agreed syllabuses and RE syllabuses used in academies that are not designated with a religious character 'must 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'. This means that from the ages of 11 to 16 pupils learn about diverse religions and worldviews, including Christianity and the other principal religions, all types of school need to recognise the diversity of the UK and the importance of learning about its religions and worldviews, including those with a significant local presence.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

A. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom* found in religions and worldviews;
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

B. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

C. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
 - articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

5. How Religious Education is taught

Students in Years 7-10 are to receive a minimum of 2 lessons per fortnight (timetable cycle). Students in Y9 will begin studying the short course AQA GCSE in line with the Trust curriculum, the exam for this will be sat at the end of Y10. Religious Studies full course will also be offered as an optional GCSE at Key Stage 4. Aspects of religion, religious tolerance and indeed life in Britain in the 21st Century are increasing in importance, both nationally and indeed in the eyes of Ofsted.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 Religious Education will be taught, wherever possible, by teachers within the Humanities faculty. The specialist GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11 will primarily be taught by the one specialist member of staff, supported by the wider Humanities team wherever possible.