

**“Each one of you is a child of God” Pope Francis**



**All Saints is educating for Unity, Responsibility,  
Courage, Wisdom and Generosity**

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
POLICY 2020**

*Catholic schools are encouraged to promote a wisdom – based society to go beyond knowledge and educate people to think, evaluating facts in the light of values. They educate people to take on responsibility and duties, and exercise active citizenship.*

## Educating to Intercultural Dialogue

Inclusivity is at the heart of our school. We want all our children and their families to share a strong sense of belonging and involvement. We regard Religious Education as the cornerstone in the education of our children because, to quote the late Cardinal Basil Hume concerned with the education of the whole person. We respect the rights of parents who want to withdraw their children from Religious Education lessons.

We will always want to first ensure that parents are given the opportunity to discuss the syllabus and the activities planned so that an informed decision can be made. The request must be made in writing to the head teacher although the reason for it does not need to be given. Pupils who are withdrawn from R.E. lessons or religious worship will be supervised by staff and accommodated as well as is possible. However, there is no obligation to provide additional teaching during these periods.

There is no entitlement to withdraw pupils from other National Curriculum subjects, including those where learning may lead to discussions about faith or religions such as in History, Geography, PSHE or Philosophy.

The governors recognise parental rights to withdraw their children from R.E. lessons in accordance with the 1998 Education Reform Act.

There are several steps that need to be taken to make the process safe, efficient and incorporated into the smooth running of the school.

If parents wish to withdraw their child/children from R.E. lessons they need to:

- Make contact with the school in person or by letter

- Establish with the Headteacher their concerns and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child/children.
- Establish with the Headteacher the practical implication of withdrawal.

It is not envisaged that establishing the reason and practicalities be either lengthy or a means to change parents' minds, but it may necessitate a brief visit to school.

Parents of withdrawn children will be asked to provide suitable alternative work of a religious nature for their children for the R.E. period. It will not be the responsibility of the teacher either to set or mark alternative work. Withdrawn children will be allocated to different classes on an independent basis in order to ensure suitable supervision. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.

Conclusion:

By following these guidelines, the withdrawal of children from R.E. will be clear, efficient and safe for the children.

### **Do Catholic schools teach about other religions?**

All Catholic schools are required to teach about other religions as part of the Religious Education curriculum.

This is a feature of Catholic R.E. in all stages of a child's development, from the beginning of primary school until the end of secondary school.

### **Why do Catholic schools teach about other religion?**

Teaching about other religions is important for several reasons:

- Learning about the religion and cultures of those who do not share the Catholic faith is one of the ways in which Catholic schools embody the

call to love one's neighbour. As the Church says, "The love for all men and women is necessarily also a love for their culture. Catholic schools are, by their very vocation, intercultural" (Congregation for Catholic Education p61).

- It is required by the Bishops, who state that the Catholic nature of our schools entails "a willingness...to try to understand better the religion of
- one's neighbours, and to experience something of their religious life and culture." (Catholic Bishops' Conference p3).
- Many of the children in Catholic schools are practising members of other faiths and our schools need to be places of hospitality for these children. It is an act of respect and courtesy that our curriculum helps them to reflect on the nature of their own religious identity. As the Church says, "All children and young people (including those of other faiths in our Catholic schools) must have the same possibilities for arriving at the knowledge of their own religion as well as of elements that characterise other religions." (Congregation for Catholic Education)
- It prepares the pupils in our Catholic schools for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others. This in turn will improve social cohesion and contribute to the common good by increasing mutual respect between those of difference religions.

### **How much of the R.E. curriculum is given to the teaching of other religions?**

In the Primary programme, 'Come and See' two and a half hours during the school year is spent on the teaching of another world religion. This constitutes one week of their Religious Education time.

A further two and a half hours is spent looking at another faith, namely Judaism.

# Withdrawal from Religious Education Policy

Date reviewed by the Governing Body: .....

Date adopted by the Governing Body: .....

Signed : .....

Chair: .....

Headteacher: .....