

### **Right to withdraw from RE:**

*“All pupils are entitled to receive RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum at school which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development”* - Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010.

However, the law gives parents the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education lessons, in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act. At Thornhill Community Academy, we respect that right.

In the UK, the law does not prescribe how RE should be taught or organised in schools, only that schools should bear in mind that the way RE is taught should reflect the agreed syllabus of the Local Education Authority/Academy funding agreement. In addition, the curriculum should reflect the ethos of the school, as well as ensuring that students make good progress, learning about and from the world around them and that Teaching Standards are adhered to. At Thornhill Community Academy, we believe the RE curriculum fulfils these criteria.

### **Parental right to withdraw children from RE**

Parents have the right to choose whether to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the Academy although as an Academy, we aim to ensure parents are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, we as an Academy have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. This time is not to be used for other curriculum subject areas, such as extra maths or other lessons.

### **Withdrawal Procedure**

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from RE, they need to:

- Inform the Academy of their request for their child to be withdrawn from RE and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child. This should be either in person or in writing to the Headteacher. Verbal communication (e.g. by phone or through the student) is not an adequate method.
- Parents will be invited to meet with the Subject Leader for RE and a senior leader to establish with the Academy their concerns about RE and to discuss the practical implication of withdrawal.
- At the meeting information about the RE curriculum will be shared and there will be an opportunity for parents to ask questions and raise their concerns.
- The aim of the meeting is to ensure parents have all relevant and adequate information to make an informed choice and, whilst parents have the right make a written request for

withdrawal without any explanation, we would strongly recommend that this meeting takes place prior to their final decision being reached.

Whilst parents or carers have a right to withdraw children from RE, they should note that children may also encounter religions and beliefs and wider aspects of faith in other areas of the curriculum from which there is no right of withdrawal. On occasion, spontaneous questions about religious matters are raised by pupils or issues related to religion arise in other curriculum subjects such as English or history.