

Right to withdraw from RE

All pupils are entitled to receive Religious Education (RE) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious Education also supports pupils in developing an understanding of different religions, beliefs and worldviews.

However, the law gives parents the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education (RE) lessons under the **Education Act 1996**. At Thornhill Community Academy, we respect that right.

As an Academy, Religious Education is provided in accordance with the Academy's funding agreement. The law does not prescribe how RE should be taught or organised in schools; however, the RE curriculum should reflect the ethos and values of the Academy, ensure that students make good progress, enable pupils to learn about and from religions, beliefs and worldviews, and be delivered in accordance with current professional teaching standards. 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 all or part of Religious Education without influence from the Academy. As an Academy, we aim to ensure that parents are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE curriculum so that they can make an informed decision.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, the Academy has a duty to supervise them, though it is not required to provide additional teaching or incur additional cost. This time must not be used for other curriculum subject areas, such as additional mathematics or other lessons.

Withdrawal Procedure

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

- Inform the Academy of their request for their child to be withdrawn from RE and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Verbal communication (for example, by telephone or through the student) is not an adequate method.
- Parents will normally be invited to meet with the Subject Leader for RE and a senior leader to discuss any concerns about the RE curriculum and the practical implications 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 any concerns.
- The aim of the meeting is to ensure that parents have all the relevant information needed to make an informed decision. Whilst parents have the legal right to make a written request for withdrawal without providing an explanation, attendance at this meeting is entirely voluntary and is not a condition of exercising that right.

Whilst parents or carers have the right to withdraw children from RE, they should note that children may also encounter religions, beliefs and worldviews, 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 and belief arise in other curriculum subjects such as English, history, geography, art, music or citizenship.