

KHS Religious Education (RE) Withdrawal Policy

1. Introduction

Kingstone High School recognises and respects the legal right of parents to withdraw their child from Religious Education. At the same time, the school believes that Religious Education provides a vital academic and cultural entitlement, equipping young people with the knowledge, understanding and critical-thinking skills needed to engage thoughtfully with the diverse beliefs and worldviews that shape modern society.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, Religious Education at Kingstone High School broadly follows the **Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus** and is taught as an **academic discipline** based on enquiry, investigation, evidence, discussion and evaluation. It is educational rather than confessional in nature and does not seek to promote any particular religion or belief system. Instead, students are encouraged to explore religious and non-religious worldviews, consider differing perspectives, and develop informed responses to questions about identity, meaning, morality and human experience.

2. Kingstone High School's Position on Religious Education

Kingstone High School believes that Religious Education is an essential component of a modern education. Through the study of religious and non-religious worldviews, students develop the knowledge, understanding and critical thinking needed to engage thoughtfully with contemporary society.

Our curriculum promotes investigation, enquiry and respectful discussion of a range of beliefs. Students are encouraged to think critically, consider evidence, understand differing perspectives and formulate informed conclusions.

As a school serving a predominantly rural community, many of our students have fewer opportunities to encounter the full range of religious, cultural and worldview diversity that exists within modern Britain and the wider world. Religious Education therefore plays a particularly important role in broadening horizons, challenging assumptions and preparing students for life beyond their local context.

The school strongly encourages participation in Religious Education and views withdrawal as an exceptional arrangement. Whilst parents have a legal right to request withdrawal, the school believes that studying religion and worldviews is an important part of preparing young people to live, work and participate successfully in an increasingly interconnected and diverse society.

For this reason, the school will always seek constructive dialogue with parents prior to any withdrawal request being implemented.

3. Legal Framework

- **As an academy, Kingstone High School is required through its Funding Agreement to provide Religious Education for all registered pupils.**

- **Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child wholly or partly from Religious Education.**
- **Students aged 18 or over may exercise this right on their own behalf.**
- **Parents are not required to provide a reason for requesting withdrawal.**

4. The Nature of Religious Education at Kingstone High School

The school recognises that some requests for withdrawal may arise from concerns about the nature of Religious Education.

Modern Religious Education differs significantly from the historical concept of "religious instruction". At Kingstone High School, RE:

- Investigates religions, beliefs and worldviews academically.
- Encourages questioning, reflection and critical analysis.
- Includes both religious and non-religious perspectives.
- Examines the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and society.
- Develops understanding of diversity, identity, culture and ethics.
- Promotes mutual respect and informed dialogue.
- Encourages students to consider evidence and evaluate differing viewpoints.
- Does not require students to believe, accept or practise any religion.

Students study religion and belief as an important aspect of human experience and cultural understanding rather than as an act of religious participation.

5. Procedure for Requesting Withdrawal

Parents considering withdrawal are strongly encouraged to discuss their concerns with the school before making a final decision.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Head of school.

Upon receipt of a request:

1. A meeting will normally be arranged with the Head of Humanities and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
2. Parents will be given information about the content, aims and teaching methods of the RE curriculum.
3. The school will seek to address any concerns or misconceptions regarding the nature of RE.
4. The practical implications of withdrawal will be explained, including supervision arrangements and limitations upon alternative provision.

Following discussion, parents may choose to proceed with a request for full or partial withdrawal.

Whilst the school strongly recommends participation in RE, any lawful request for withdrawal will be respected.

6. Partial Withdrawal

The school recognises that concerns may relate to specific topics or units of study rather than the entirety of Religious Education.

Where appropriate, parents may request partial withdrawal from identified elements of the curriculum.

The exact scope, duration and review arrangements of any partial withdrawal will be agreed in writing and reviewed periodically.

7. Arrangements for Withdrawn Students

Where a student is withdrawn from RE:

- The student will remain under the school's supervision and duty of care.
- The school will seek to identify an appropriate supervised location where reasonably practicable.
- The school is not required to provide alternative Religious Education, specialist teaching or a bespoke curriculum programme.
- The school is not required to incur additional staffing or financial costs as a result of the withdrawal.
- Parents who wish their child to undertake alternative religious or worldview-based study are responsible for providing suitable materials.
- Any materials provided by parents must be age-appropriate, lawful and compatible with the school's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Students remain expected to engage in purposeful educational activity and comply with all school expectations for behaviour and conduct.

Where a suitable alternative supervised location cannot reasonably be arranged, the student will remain in the RE classroom under the supervision of the class teacher. In such circumstances, the student will undertake independent study relating to another area of the curriculum or school-directed educational activity. This should not be regarded as alternative RE provision by the school.

Where parents wish their child to receive alternative religious instruction, arrangements for such provision remain the responsibility of the parent.

8. Limitations of the Right to Withdraw

Parents should note that withdrawal from Religious Education does not extend to other areas of the curriculum.

Students may encounter religious, philosophical, ethical and worldview-related content within subjects such as:

- History
- English
- Sphere
- Geography
- Art

Similarly, discussion of religion, belief, culture, identity, ethics and diversity may arise naturally through wider curriculum activities, assemblies, educational visits, visiting speakers, current affairs and school life.

There is no general right of withdrawal from these aspects of education.

9. GCSE Religious Studies

Kingstone High School offers accredited a Religious Studies GCSE qualification which develops valuable analytical, evaluative, literacy and critical-thinking skills.

Parents seeking withdrawal should be aware that exclusion from RE may affect participation in GCSE Religious Studies courses and may limit opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding relevant to these qualifications.

The implications for future curriculum pathways will therefore be discussed as part of any withdrawal request.

10. Review of Withdrawal Arrangements

Withdrawal arrangements will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain practical and appropriate.

Parents may request that their child returns to RE lessons at any time by contacting the school in writing.

The school reserves the right to review the practical arrangements surrounding a withdrawal in order to ensure that they continue to meet both the needs of the student and the operational requirements of the school.

11. Equality, Inclusion and Respect

Kingstone High School is committed to promoting equality, inclusion and mutual respect.

The RE curriculum contributes significantly to students' understanding of:

- Different faiths and worldviews.
- Diversity within and between communities.
- Respectful disagreement and debate.
- Equality and protected characteristics.
- Life in modern Britain and the wider world.

The school believes that Religious Education makes an important contribution to students' personal development, cultural literacy and preparation for life in a diverse society.

Contact

Parents considering withdrawal from Religious Education are encouraged to contact the Head of Humanities Faculty in the first instance.

Kingstone High School welcomes open dialogue with families and will always seek to ensure that decisions are informed by a clear understanding of the aims and content of the RE curriculum.

Appendix A: Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been informed by the following legislation and guidance:

Primary Legislation

- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
 - Section 69 (Religious Education)
 - Section 71 (Parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education)
- Education Act 1996

Government Guidance

- Department for Education:
 - Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools (2012)
- Department for Education:
 - Academy Funding Agreements and associated requirements relating to Religious Education

Local Guidance

- Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Professional Guidance

- Religious Education Council of England and Wales:
 - Guidance on parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education
- National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE):
 - Guidance relating to the management of withdrawal requests