



BENSHAM MANOR School

RE - RIGHT TO WITHDRAW POLICY

Updated: September 2026

Introduction

“RE is an important curriculum subject. It is important in its own right and also makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion.” – Department for Children, Schools and Families, Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, p3.

At Bensham Manor School, the purpose of RE reflects the agreed syllabus of the Local Education Authority and the ethos of the school. According to the Agreed Syllabus, there are two main purposes to RE: 1. So pupils can learn about religions and beliefs which have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures. This is developing their religious literacy, which is essential to understand the modern world; 2. So that pupils can reflect more deeply on their own and others’ sense of identity, meaning and purpose in life from their study of religion and belief. This develops their understanding of human values and mutual understanding.

At Bensham Manor School, we believe the RE curriculum fulfils these criteria.

The approach we adopt is one of genuine open enquiry which respects the beliefs of all children. Despite its importance in the basic curriculum for all schools, the law gives parents the right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective acts of religious worship and/or Religious Education lessons.

At Bensham Manor School we respect that right.

Policy objectives

1. To ensure that parents are aware they have the right to withdraw students from Religious Education classes and/or ‘religious’ assembly.
2. To ensure that when parents make a decision to withdraw students from either Religious Education classes and/or ‘religious’ assembly, they do so on the basis of an informed decision.
3. To ensure students receive a well-rounded education enabling them to progress and achieve

their potential.

Parental right to withdraw children from RE

Parents have the right to choose whether to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost; suitable work relating to the child's religious education should be provided by the parents. Pupils will usually remain on school premises, unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere.

Whilst Bensham Manor School respects the rights of the parent to withdraw their child(ren) from RE, these rights do not apply to a parent's request to withdraw their child from a non-RE subject that may teach about religion or religious beliefs, e.g. History or English.

Withdrawal procedure

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from RE, they need to inform the school of their request for their child(ren) to be withdrawn from RE and/or 'religious assembly' and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child(ren). This should be either in person or in writing to the Headteacher. Verbal communication (e.g. on the telephone or through the student) or a note in the student's diary/planner are not adequate methods.

Parents will be invited to meet with the Head of Humanities (Aisha Khan) and possibly a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to establish with the school their concerns about RE and to discuss the practical implications of withdrawal. At the meeting, the Croydon SACRE agreed Syllabus, School RE Programme of Study and Schemes of Work will be made available for the parents to read and ask questions about, should they choose to. It is not envisaged that establishing the reason for withdrawal and practicalities of withdrawal from RE be either lengthy or a means to change parents' minds, but a meeting with the relevant staff is necessary to ensure parents have all relevant and adequate information to make an informed decision.

Parents do not have to disclose their reason(s) for withdrawing their child from RE, but it is helpful for the school and subject leader to understand the reasons for the withdrawal so they may seek to improve religious education provision at the school.

The responsibility for what goes on when the pupil is withdrawn and under the supervision of the school lies ultimately with the parents. Parents of withdrawn children will be asked to provide suitable alternative work for their child/children which has clear outcomes and is connected to the faith/philosophy of the parents, to be completed at the time of the RE lesson. It will not be the responsibility of the teacher either to set or mark alternative work. The time when the pupil is withdrawn is intended for the delivery of the basic curriculum for RE and not the National Curriculum or other aspects of the curriculum.

Students who have been withdrawn will be allocated a safe place to work

These arrangements may need to change from week to week.

If a student is withdrawn from assembly, the Form Tutor will also be informed to ensure adequate supervision during the assembly.

In addition to the above, parents also have the right to opt out of any visits to places of worship. Prior notification will be necessary to ensure adequate supervision is organised for the student.

Review of a request to withdraw:

The school may wish to review a request each year, in discussion with the parents.