

BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Religious Education

**Right of
Withdrawal**

1. Introduction and Rationale

Borden Grammar School is proud of its inclusive community. Religious Education (RE) is a statutory part of the core curriculum for all pupils, fostering critical thinking, mutual respect, and a deep understanding of the diverse beliefs and cultures that shape our world.

This policy clarifies the legal standing of RE, the school's approach to the subject, and the specific procedure for parents/legal guardians who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from RE lessons.

2. The Legal Status of Religious Education

As outlined in the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998:

- **Statutory Requirement:** All maintained schools in England must provide Religious Education for all registered pupils.
- **Locally Agreed Syllabus:** The content of RE is not determined nationally. It is determined by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), which ensures the curriculum reflects the principal religious traditions in Great Britain, primarily Christianity, while also exploring other principal religions, worldviews, and non-religious perspectives.
- **Right of Withdrawal:** Parents/legal guardians have the legal right to withdraw their child from RE lessons, or any part of the RE curriculum, without giving a reason.

3. The Value of Religious Education at Borden Grammar School

We believe that high-quality Religious Education provides a vital contribution to the academic and personal development of every student. Our RE curriculum is designed to be challenging, engaging, and relevant.

The benefits for students include:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Developing a comprehensive understanding of diverse religions, beliefs, and non-religious worldviews.
- **Critical Thinking:** Providing a safe space to explore, question, and articulate their own views on ultimate questions, ethics, and morality.
- **Community Cohesion:** Fostering respect, empathy, and understanding for people with different beliefs and backgrounds, promoting the values of modern Britain.
- **Personal Development:** Supporting students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development.
- **Careers:** Students who have gained qualifications in Religious Education at Borden Grammar School have gone into many diverse fields including law, armed forces, police, journalism, education, finance and sports.

4. Procedure for Requesting Withdrawal

To ensure parents/guardians make a fully informed decision, the following procedure is in place:

1. **Written Request:** A parent/legal guardian wishing to exercise their right of withdrawal must first submit a written request to the Head of Religious Education clearly stating their intention.
2. **Face-to-Face Meeting:** Upon receiving the request, the school will invite the parent/guardian to a face-to-face meeting with the Head of Religious Education. This meeting may also be attended by another member of staff (e.g., a Head of Year or a member of the Leadership Group).
3. **Purpose of the Meeting:** This meeting is a crucial part of the process. Its purpose is **not** to challenge the parent's right to withdraw, but to:
 - Ensure the parent/guardian is fully aware of the legal framework and their right
 - Provide clarity on the specific content and aims of the RE curriculum at Borden Grammar School.
 - Discuss any concerns the parent/guardian may have about the curriculum.
 - Explain the benefits of RE that the student will miss by being withdrawn.
 - Outline the practical arrangements and parental responsibilities if the withdrawal proceeds.

5. Arrangements Following Withdrawal

Should a parent/guardian decide to proceed with the withdrawal after the meeting, the following arrangements will apply:

- **School's Responsibility:** The school is legally responsible for the supervision of the student during the timetabled RE lessons.
- **Supervision:** The student will be supervised in a safe, quiet location (such as the school library or another designated study area).
- **Parental/Guardian Responsibility for Alternative Work:** Borden Grammar School is **not** legally required to provide alternative work or teaching for a student withdrawn from RE.
 - It is the **responsibility of the parent/guardian** to provide appropriate alternative educational work for their child to complete during these periods.
 - This work must be suitable for a school environment and must be undertaken quietly and independently by the student.
 - The school will facilitate the supervision of this work but will not be responsible for its content, delivery, or assessment.