

Withdrawing pupils from Religious Studies at Ringwood School

Context:

Parental right to withdrawal from RS was first granted in 1944 when it was called 'Religious Instruction' and came with connotations of induction into the Christian faith.

Today, RS is multi-faith and recognises the place of Christianity and the other principle religions in the UK. Non-religious worldviews are also included. RS is taught as an academic subject. In their future lives all of our pupils will need to live and work alongside people from other religions and so it is essential that they know enough about these religions to do this successfully. It is absolutely a parent's right to bring their child up following their religious tradition, but this religious nurture happens at home, not in RS lessons.

At Ringwood School we cover Christianity, as well as a broad range of other world religions and non-religious world views. Students also explore themes such as 'identity', 'belonging' and 'community'.

English legislation:

- Every pupil has a legal entitlement to RS
- Religious Studies is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.
- The 'basic' school curriculum includes the National Curriculum, RS and relationships and sex education.

If a parent wishes to withdraw:

In the UK, parents can withdraw their child on the grounds that they wish to provide their own Religious Studies work. The provision will be the parent's responsibility. The school is not allowed to provide alternative work, and students cannot do work for another subject. They are allowed to read.

If a parent contacts the school wishing to withdraw their child, a meeting will be arranged with the Subject Lead for Religious Studies and their line manager or member of SLT. The pupil will not be removed from the lesson until the meeting has taken place (unless for exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head Teacher).

At the meeting the following will be discussed:

- To avoid misunderstanding, we will try to establish the religious issues or content that the parent objects to their child being taught.
- We will work together to establish whether there are solutions to the concerns.
- The curriculum map will be shared with the parents and a discussion about what is learnt; this will include the importance of understanding the multi-faith and multi-cultural world we live in, ability to work with others, tolerance, respect etc.
- We will stress that RS is an opportunity for pupils to learn about other religious and non-religious beliefs and world views. There is no intention to convert pupils or promote any religion.
- Inform parents of what will happen if they decide to withdraw. Ensure parents are aware that it will be their responsibility to provide alternative RS work. Pupils cannot use the time to do

home learning, another subject etc. The only requirement is that a member of staff is there with them; not to teach them.

Following the meeting, the pupil will either return to the lesson, or the following will happen:

- The parents will need to write to the Head Teacher formally withdrawing their child from RS
- The pupil will be allocated a room for the RS lesson. The only requirement is that a member of staff is there to register the pupil and oversee. This might be the library or at the back of another classroom (where a teacher can be teaching any year group).
- No work is to be provided and home learning is not to be done during this time. Pupils may not use this time for other curriculum areas.
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide alternative Religious Studies work that they feel is appropriate.
- At the end of the academic year, parents will be contacted again to discuss whether they will return the following academic year.
- If relevant, the parents will be reported to PREVENT.
- The Subject Lead for Religious Studies and the Line Manager or SLT will add to arbor and inform the relevant staff.