

**Introduction**

“All pupils are entitled to receive RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum at school which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*, but the law gives parents the right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective acts of worship and/or Religious Education lessons, in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act. At Jesmond Park Academy we respect that right.

**Parental right to withdraw**

Parents have the right to choose whether to withdraw their child(ren) from the RE provision offered at Jesmond Park Academy and make ‘arrangements for RE to be ‘of the kind the parents want for the pupil’ *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*. However, schools should ensure parents or carers are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus as part of a child(ren)’s entitlement to the basic curriculum. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost; suitable work relating to the child(ren)’s religious education should be provided by the parents. Pupils will not be able to receive instruction in any other subject during the time of withdrawal as this time is given over to a particular aspect of the school’s basic curriculum namely RE.

**Withdrawal Procedure**

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child(ren) 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- Inform the school of their request for their child(ren) to be withdrawn from RE and/or ‘religious assembly’ and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child(ren).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 either be in person or in writing to the Headteacher; verbal communication (e.g. on the telephone, through the student or a note in the planner) is not an adequate method.
- Parents will be invited to meet with the Head of RE to discuss the practical implication of withdrawal without influence from the school.
  - The meeting will include an explanation that the parent is withdrawing their child(ren) from RE as it appears on the basic curriculum for Jesmond Park Academy and the RE schemes of work will be made available for parents to read and ask questions about, should they choose to.
  - The options available for the duration of their timetabled RE lesson (RE either provided by the school, RE at another school, RE provided by a faith community or alternative RE work provided by the parent) and whether withdrawal will be from the whole RE curriculum for that year or just certain aspects.
  - It is not envisaged that the 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 choice.
- Parents of withdrawn children will be asked to provide suitable alternative work of a religious nature (one particular faith, Humanism, atheism, social and moral issues) for their child(ren) to be completed at the time of the RE lesson. It will not be the responsibility of a teacher either to set or mark alternative work. Students who have been withdrawn will be allocated to different classroom on an independent basis in order to ensure suitable supervision. These arrangements may need to change from week to week.
- Withdrawal students without suitable alternative religious work will be expected to return to the basic curriculum and the RE provision / lesson provided at Jesmond Park Academy.

- Contact will be made at the start of each year so that parents can make an informed decision on the RE for that academic year.