

Cheshire West and Chester

The Legal Framework for Religious Education

Since 1944, all maintained schools have been required to teach RE to all registered pupils. The National Curriculum (2013) reiterates that all state schools must teach Religious Education and publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.

(National Curriculum Framework Sept.2013 Pg. 4)

Religious Education must *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'* (1).

RE and the Right of Withdrawal

Parents may withdraw their children from RE lessons with the exception pupils of 18 years of age can withdraw themselves. Schools have a duty of care to supervise withdrawn pupils, but the law does say alternative arrangements can be made for RE based on the kind of Religious Education the parents want the pupil to receive. All schools should have an approach to provision and withdrawal stated in the school's RE policy.

Additional useful guidance written by NATRE and NAHT on the Right of Withdrawal can be found at https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/18-15676_NAHT%20RE%20withdrawal%20document_final.pdf

What does the local authority have to do?

Local Authorities (LA) must ensure that the agreed syllabus for their area is consistent with the Education Act of 1996 in order to produce a syllabus. **The statutory document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the LA which will have been written by the local SACRE agreed syllabus conference.**

What do schools have to do?

Church Schools

Religious Education in Church of England Voluntary Aided schools

Religious Education in Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character will be determined by governors in accordance with their trust deed and will reflect the religious foundation of the school. NB This applies to all church school-aided academies.

Religious Education in Church of England Voluntary Controlled schools

Religious Education in Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character should be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. NB This applies to all church school controlled academies.

NB Religious Education in both aided and controlled church schools will be inspected by the SIAMS, (School Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools) framework. In Cheshire West and Chester, the local Chester Diocesan agreed syllabus provides a concrete resource for church schools to draw upon to enable teachers to meet expected SIAMS standards.

Academies & Free Schools

Academies and free schools must provide Religious Education in accordance with their Funding Agreements. Academies that do not have a religious designation must arrange for religious education to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements laid out for agreed syllabuses. Academies may decide to adopt the locally agreed syllabus.

(1) Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) & School Standards & Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5

The major world religions referred to in this syllabus are Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism and Sikhism and the worldview of Humanism. Some study of additional secular worldviews and a religious community with a significant local presence may also be appropriate.