The Right to Withdraw from RE

Reviewed by:	SLT and Headteacher
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The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Heathfield Community College we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as History or PSHEe.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Heathfield Community College. This allows the College to explain the aims, content, and objective nature of our RE curriculum so that families can make an informed decision.

The guidance below is based on the legal requirements as found in Section 71(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and advice and guidance from the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. This policy should be read in conjunction with the safeguarding policy.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- Requests to withdraw should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The request must specify whether the withdrawal is from the whole RE curriculum or specific modules/topics.
- The College will share the RE curriculum intent and syllabus with parents to demonstrate that RE is delivered in an educational, non-devotional, and objective manner that respects all personal beliefs.
- Parents do not need to provide a reason for their decision, and the College will not exert undue pressure.
- The college may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents. The review does not cause an existing withdrawal to lapse or require parents to re-apply.
- Where a student is withdrawn, the College retains a duty to supervise them. However, the College is not required to provide additional teaching, deliver alternative national curriculum work, or incur extra financial costs. Students will usually remain on school premises in a supervised area
- Where parents request that their child receives alternative RE of a specific faith or belief:
- This may be accommodated on school premises if practical and without extra cost to the College.
- If alternative provision cannot be made on-site, pupils may be granted leave of absence for a reasonable period to attend external RE provision, provided no financial burden falls on the College. External attendance depends on the **local authority being satisfied** that the statutory conditions are met, including that school attendance is affected only at the beginning or end of a school session.