

Religion and Worldviews in schools

A resource pack
for Parents

The
Faith
& Belief
Forum



inform



The Open
University

What should be taught in RE classes

Many parents are confused about what might be – and what should be – covered in a Religious Education class and how. Ofsted recently published a report outlining what it currently expects for Religious Education provision [here](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education).

The proposed **National Entitlement to an education in Religion and Worldviews** would ensure that all pupils in all schools are entitled to high-quality education in the subject and that the curriculum is structured so that it is fit for purpose and relevant for today's pupils and their lives in a modern and multi-religious and multi-secular world.

According to this proposal, pupils are **entitled** to be taught by **well qualified** and **resourced teachers**, so that they gain knowledge and understanding about:

- **What religion is** and worldviews are, and how they are studied.
- The **impact** of religious and non-religious worldviews on individuals, communities and societies.
- The **diversity** of religious and non-religious worldviews in society.
- The **concepts**, language and ways of knowing that help us organise and make sense of our knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- The **human quest** for meaning, so that they are prepared for life in a diverse world and have space to recognise, reflect on and take responsibility for the development of their own personal worldview.

The full proposal from the Commission on Religious Education can be found [here](http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re) (www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re)

The purpose of the National Entitlement for Religious Education is not to convert your child to any faith or undermine your religious or non-religious position as a family.

If you have any concerns about what is being taught to your child, the first port of call should be to ask more questions about the approach and resources given to Religious Education in your child's school.



Get involved with your local school:

In our research we found that many parents wanted:

- To know more about what their child was being taught in Religious Education.
- To have the opportunity to share their family's traditions, encompassing both religious and non-religious worldviews.
- To have opportunities to attend local places of worship with their children on school trips.

Many teachers do welcome parental interest and involvement in their subjects, but they can be pressed for time. Don't be afraid to find out who is in charge of teaching Religious Education at your child's school and ask to have a chat with the person.

You could offer to:

- Share with the school any religious festivals your family celebrates (particularly in primary school).
- Share about why your religious and / or non-religious beliefs and practices are important to your life as an adult.
- Tell them why you think high-quality Religious Education is important and ask how you can help with community resources and connections.

You can copy in your school administrator and head to ensure that they know you're interested and engaged with Religious Education as a subject of study.

Support wider campaigns to improve RE in schools:

The Religious Education Council is campaigning to improve the standards of RE in schools. Take a look at their 2022 report card [here](http://www.rethinkre.org/re-report-card) (www.rethinkre.org/re-report-card), a five year state of RE report, grading the performance of schools, government and the subject itself.

You can write to your local MP to ask them to support Religious Education in Parliament. You can find your MP and their contact details by entering your postcode [here](http://www.theyworkforyou.com) (www.theyworkforyou.com).

The Faith & Belief forum have provided an easy online interface and a [sample letter to your MP](#) to adjust:

Ask your MP to support Religio x +

faithbelieforum.org/ask-your-mp-to-support-religious-edu

You can write to your local MP to ask them to support Religious Education in Parliament. Please copy this message and contact your MP directly by entering your postcode in the box below the message.

Sample letter to your MP to adjust:

My name is [insert name] and I [am one of your constituents]/[have children that go to school] in [insert name of constituency]. I am concerned about the lack of government investment and oversight in ensuring high-quality education in religion and worldviews for my children. Did you know that:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of the UK adult population think that an education in religion and worldviews (or RE) is an important part of the school curriculum today
- A further 65% agree that the subject has an impact on people's ability to understand each other in wider society.

Despite this clear expression of value by the UK public:

1. No government money has been spent on projects specifically designed to support RE in the last five years.
2. The Department of Education has missed its recruitment target for secondary RE teachers in 9 of the last 10 years.
3. In 2020-21 the Department of Education has failed to include RE in the list of subjects attracting Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Bursaries giving trainee teachers for RE no financial support.

I would appreciate your attention in Parliament to supporting efforts to ensure the provision of high-quality, specialist teaching in this important area which facilitates tolerance, critical reflection and social cohesion in our society.

Find and email your MP using this form:

Contact Your Politician

Enter your Postcode below:

Thank you for your support!

Do more research:

You could look into getting more involved in how Religious Education is taught and organised in your local area. This might mean:

Getting in touch with your local **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** to find out more about what they do and the relationship with your local school. Every local authority area has a SACRE in order to ensure that what is taught best reflects the local community and works to improve the teaching of RE and collective worship in a local area. Your SACRE consists of people from the local community, representatives of different local faith groups, as well as non-religious groups and local teachers. You can find the contact details of your local SACRE listed by local authority area [here](http://www.nasacre.org.uk/database) (www.nasacre.org.uk/database).

You could look into what local organisations promote community spirit in your local area and enquire about their efforts at improving the quality of understanding of religion and worldviews. One national organisation is the **Faith & Belief Forum** (www.faithbeliefforum.org/join), but there are likely to be many others in your local area.

You might also be interested in finding out more about non-religious opinions on best practice in teaching Religious Education. For example, the **Humanists** (www.humanists.uk/campaigns/schools-and-education/school-curriculum/religious-education) campaign on the importance of understanding non-religion and atheism in this subject and have school-level resources you could encourage your child's teachers to consider.

However, it is important to remember that Humanist views do not represent all non-religious people. *Your* family's history, ethics and worldviews are relevant and important to high-quality teaching of religion and worldviews in schools.

You might consider training as a Religious Education teacher! The government website **Get Into Teaching** (www.getintoteaching.education.gov.uk) is a good place to start.