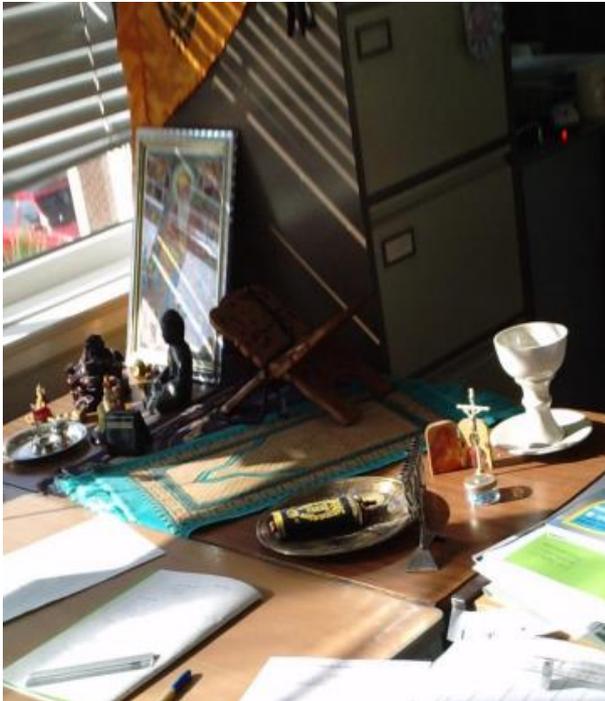




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# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

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School and subject leaders' experience,  
understanding and perspectives on the parental  
right to withdraw children from Religious Education  
and Collective Worship in schools in England

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## SUMMARY

The right of parents to withdraw their students from Religious Education and Collective Worship was established in the 1944 Education Act, at a time when Christian “Religious Instruction” was of a confessional character in community schools. The right of withdrawal protected the rights of parents from non-religious and non-Christian minorities to raise their children according to their own beliefs. Religious Education today takes “account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”<sup>1</sup> as well as helping prepare young people for life in modern Britain by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures<sup>2</sup>. Given this fundamental change in the subject’s aims and purpose, questions have recently been raised by a number of reports<sup>3,4</sup> as to the continued appropriateness of the parental right to withdraw.

This survey, which captures the experience and understanding of school leaders (Headteachers, senior leaders or Religious Education co-ordinators) across England, represents the first systematic attempt to understand the prevalence of parental withdrawal from RE and CW, the reasons behind it, and the way these requests are handled in practice. An online survey was emailed to 25,193 schools across the country. It generated 312 responses from senior leaders from across England<sup>5</sup>. These included strong representation from the primary (51.1%) secondary (44.1) and all age (4.8%) sectors; these ranged in size from very large schools of over 1500 students (7.4%), to schools with fewer than 200 students (17.9%). Local authority (30.2%), academy (25.4%), Church of England (22.5%), Catholic (10.3%) and independent (11.3%) schools were well represented, though only 1 faith school other than Catholic or Church of England participated.

Key findings of this survey:

- a) A majority (65.8%) of participants support the abolition of the parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education.
- b) Confusion exists as to the operation of this right of withdrawal, with a significant minority (36.5%) of participants believing parents had to demonstrate either a specific religious exemption or make arrangements for alternative provision. There is further confusion as to whether parents can withdraw their child from RE selectively, and even from National Curriculum subjects.
- c) In the vast majority of participants’ schools (94.1%) few or no children are currently withdrawn from Religious Education or Collective Worship.
- d) A significant minority of participants (38.1%) have experienced parents request to withdraw their child selectively from part of the Religious Education curriculum. Largely, this seems to relate to the teaching of Islam, with many participants reporting concerns about racism or Islamophobia as a motivating factor for parents seeking to exercise the right to withdraw. In 8 cases, participants reported making a referral to the school’s safeguarding lead following a request for a child to be withdrawn from some element of the curriculum.
- e) In some cases (7.2%) children appear to have been withdrawn from Religious Education to provide extra tuition time for other academic subjects, or special educational needs support.

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<sup>1</sup> Education (Reform) Act 1988 Sec.8.3

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education (2014) *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools* [London: HMSO]. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, C & Woodhead, L (2015) *A New Settlement: Religion and belief in schools* [Westminster Faith Debates]. <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Dinham, A & Shaw, M (2015) *RE for Real: The future of teaching and learning about religion and belief* [Culham St Gabriel’s Trust] <https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/documents-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-units/faiths-and-civil-society/REforREal-web-b.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Greater London (23.3%), Midlands (19.9%), South East (17.5%), North West (16.2%), East of England (8.4%) South West (8.4%) and North East (6.2%)

## Recommendations:

- a) Legal clarification is needed on three important matters:
  - (i.) The right of parents to withdraw selectively from part (but not all) of Religious Education
  - (ii.) Whether parents seeking to withdraw their children from Religious Education are responsible for providing an appropriate alternative curriculum
  - (iii.) Whether children withdrawn from Religious Education can access other curriculum subjects or SEN support during RE time
- b) Legislators should reconsider the appropriateness of the legal right of withdrawal, in the light of the recommendations of the Commission on Religious Education<sup>6</sup>, the Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life<sup>7</sup>, and the requirement for all schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people, including the promotion of fundamental British values of mutual respect and tolerance for those of other faiths and beliefs.

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## 1. THE LAW

The current legal settlement on parental right of withdrawal from religious education and collective worship is taken from the 1944 Education Act, which states:

"If the parent of any pupil in attendance at any county school or any voluntary school requests that he be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school, or from attendance at religious instruction in the school, or from attendance at both religious worship and religious instruction in the school, then, until the request is withdrawn, the pupil shall be excused from such attendance accordingly."

On the final page of the survey, after being shown the current law, school leaders were asked: "are you happy with the current legal right for parents to withdraw their children from Religious Education and Collective Worship, or would you like to see it removed?"

The parental right of withdrawal is no longer needed: 65.8%

The parental right of withdrawal should be retained: 34.2%

Prior to this, school leaders were asked:

- 1.d What is your understanding of the legal status of such a request?

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<sup>6</sup> Commission on Religious Education (2017) *Interim Report: Religious Education for All* [London: RE Council]. <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Butler-Sloss, E. (2015) *Living with Difference: community, diversity and the common good* [Cambridge: Woolf Institute]. <https://corablivingwithdifference.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/living-with-difference-online.pdf>

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship for any reason: 51.6%

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education, but must provide an alternative syllabus for their children to follow: 24.7%

Parents only have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education or Collective Worship for specific religious exemptions: 11.8%

All children must follow the core curriculum, including Religious Education: 5.3%

Not sure: 4.6%

Other response: 2%

There appears to be a significant minority of school leaders who believe that there is a requirement for parents to provide their children with an alternative syllabus. This may stem from an interpretation of Section 71(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, given in the non-statutory guidance on Religious Education<sup>8</sup>:

“Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient. If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.”

Confusion about the legal settlement may be more pronounced in the general population of school leaders than in the self-selecting sample of participants who opted to complete the survey. The persistence of confusion even among those with the motivation to complete the survey suggests that this area requires clarification.

Further analysis was undertaken of whether school leaders’ understandings of the legal settlement influenced their practice in handling withdrawal requests:

	N responses	N pupils withdrawn [%]	Response to request to withdraw	Retain/Abolish
Parents may opt out for any reason	158	0 (87) [55%] 1-3 (59) 4-10 (9) 11-25 (2) >25 (1)	Invited parents to discuss (112) Accepted (28) Referred to LA/MAT/Diocese (4) Safeguarding referral (3) Denied (2) Teacher discretion (1)	Abolish (95) Retain (60)
Parents must demonstrate specific religious exemption	37	0 (21) [57%] 1-3 (14) 4-10 (2)	Invited parents to discuss (18) Accepted (13) Denied (3) Referred to LA/MAT/Diocese (2)	Abolish (22) Retain (15)

<sup>8</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) *Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* [London: HMSO]. p.28

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf)

Parents must provide an alternative curriculum	75	0 (45) [60%] 1-3 (27) 4-10 (3)	Invited parents to discuss (59) Accepted (10) Referred to LA/MAT/Diocese (2)	Abolish (59) Retain (15)
All must follow core curriculum incl. RE	16	0 (14) [88%] 1-3 (2)	Invited parents to discuss (11) Accepted (1) Denied (1)	Abolish (11) Retain (4)
Not sure	14	0 (11) [79%] 1-3 (2) 4-10 (1)	Invited parents to discuss (11) Accepted (2) Safeguarding referral (1)	Abolish (8) Retain (6)
Different arrangement (faith/independent)	4	0 (3) [75%] 1-3 (1)	Invited parents to discuss (3) Denied (1)	Abolish (2) Retain (2)

Inviting parents to discuss their concerns is the modal response for all legal understandings. This is in accordance with the non-statutory guidance (DfE 2010)

In all legal understandings, 0 children withdrawn from RE is the modal response, though this is only the case in 55% of schools where leaders believe the parental right of withdrawal to be for any reason, rises to 60% where leaders believe parents must provide an alternative curriculum, and to 88% where leaders believe all children must follow the core curriculum including RE.

Majorities among leaders with all legal understandings agree that the right of withdrawal should be abolished.

Some qualitative comments also sought a change in the language or legal obligations relating to Collective Worship in schools without a religious character:

“‘collective worship’ infers belief and understandably leads to confusion over its purpose and value in schools that have no religious affiliation. It is outdated as a term and not reflective of what actually happens in any of the state schools in which I have taught.”

“in many schools, assemblies are not religious... I have been teaching for over 20 years and the religious content of assemblies has reduced especially if this is of a kind that involves worship”

“The legal obligation to have an act of collective worship is outdated and against the rights of the child, it is used as a vehicle to proselytise to children”

## 2. CURRENT PRACTICE

School leaders were asked:

1.a Have you ever received a request from a parent/guardian for their child to be exempt from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship?

Yes: 71.2%, No: 28.8%

1.e How many children in your school are currently exempt from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship?

0: 61.9%, 1-3: 32.2%, 4-10: 4.8% 11-25: 0.7%, >25: 0.3%

In the following analysis, it must be borne in mind that at 94.1% of participants’ schools, fewer than 4 students are currently withdrawn from Religious Education or Collective Worship, and at 99% of schools, fewer than 11 students are currently withdrawn.

1.b How did you/would you handle such a request?

Invited parents to discuss their request: 72.4%, Accepted request: 17.1%, Denied request: 2.4%, Other responses: 9.1%

Taking account of only those respondents who had experienced a parental request to withdraw (N=222), school leaders were asked to report the reasons, in their experience, for these requests:

The result of parents' conservative religious views: 109 (49%)  
The result of parents' non-religious or secular beliefs: 45 (20.3%)  
The result of a misunderstanding about the aims of Religious Education: 42 (18.9%)  
To make time for SEN/other subject tuition: 16 (7.2%)  
Racism/Islamophobia/The result of a political campaign: 6 (2.7%)  
(no response: 4)

The most frequent response (but not a majority) related to parents requesting withdrawal due to conservative religious beliefs. Further qualitative details often mentioned the Jehovah's Witness faith, and/or the Exclusive Brethren:

"We had a considerable number of pupils from the Exclusive Brethren... and they wanted their religious beliefs to be accommodated, e.g. not touching a computer, not listening to music, not eating in public. Through discussion we found ways to compromise and still give the children rich experiences."

"Parents sometimes aren't clear on their reasons for withdrawal, just say 'the Kingdom Hall leader told us he shouldn't do RE'"

"when I worked in an area that had Plymouth Brethren and Jehovah's Witnesses they would always be withdrawn from RS in its entirety and would set their own curriculum."

"I teach a number of Jehovah Witness background children for RE, none have had issues, twice people have asked to see the syllabus and once seen had no problem."

"Other than with Jehovah Witness, all concerns have been solved with a discussion about what the school is teaching/offering and sometimes some reasonable adjustments made."

"we have 2 children who are Jehovah's Witnesses who attend most assemblies but did not attend Christmas or Easter assemblies."

"the family were Jehovah Witnesses. They provided work for their children while RE lessons were going on and this was mainly copying from their bible."

"only two occasions where [withdrawal] has happened were down to conservative religious views (Jehovah Witness – although we have had other students who are Jehovah Witnesses study RE)"

"it has been almost exclusively Muslim or Jewish parents who have asked their children to be withdrawn. This has gone as far as in one case a parent asking [that] a child not be exposed to the Greek myths."

"The children withdrawn are Muslim and the father objects to the mainly Christian aspect of collective worship and... anything to do with Christmas and Easter in school."

"Only requests to withdraw relate to African origin Christians not wanting their child to visit other places of worship"

The finding that parents were withdrawing their children from Religious Education in order to make time for SEN, EAL or other subject support was surprising, comprising a number of open-text comments from school leaders, as it had not been included as one of the original options. Further qualitative details were provided by some leaders:

“if a child was allowed to spend the time working on other subjects this... could lead to other parents making requests to withdraw their child.”

“Our school has been withdrawing pupils for pupil premium support, and additional English support which in turn has escalated the number of withdrawals from RE.”

“Parents often believe it is also their right (entitlement) for their child to... access other areas of the curriculum during the time the RE lessons are taking place”

“We did have one parent a few years ago pulling their son out of RS GCSE, but that was simply as they couldn’t see the point in it and they wanted their son to spend more time on English and Maths.”

“Where a few students drop the subject as they need to drop an option for SEN or EAL support, none have ever dropped RS purely for religious reasons to my knowledge”

Another important finding arising from open-text comments was the inclusion of racism or Islamophobia as a reason for withdrawal. This is more pronounced in the responses to question 2, which concerns parents requesting the right to withdraw from only part of Religious Education, for example the teaching of one religion. Further qualitative details are reported below:

“I have been very shocked by parents refusing to allow their children to visit a mosque. I found it difficult to understand that the parents thought that this would irrevocably harm their child... In the end I couldn’t take the children to the mosque as parents refused to sign the permission slip, but they had to remain in school and learn about mosques from the internet which included a virtual tour of a mosque. The children were sad that they were unable to go with their friends.”

“The students that have been removed are the ones that need to understand different cultures the most.”

“We have encountered incidents of Islamophobia, but no other religion”

“Only withdrawal is one pupil whose parent refuses to allow child to study Islam. Referred to [senior leadership team] who did not know how to deal with this and as a result the child does not do Islam against my protests.”

“[we have recently had] withdrawal based on erroneous ‘facts’ or media hype... parents refusing to send their children on an education visit to a mosque”

“Over the years we have had a number of parents, often from our white, disadvantaged community, who have been reluctant for their children to visit different places of worship”

“As a Catholic faith school we teach other religions too and this has begun to cause difficulty for us in that a minority of parents have indicated that they are not willing for their children to learn about a particular faith.”

“We study Islam as a world religion[,] this is what parents have an issue with pupils learning about.”

“I am really concerned about the children of white, British parents who are basing their decision to withdraw on racism.”

“recently we have had a complaint/withdrawal by a parent. This is being followed up with relevant agencies as part of the school safeguarding procedures as concerns have come to light in addition to parental requests of withdrawal from religious activities and other school activities that are a legal entitlement”

“Objections tend to be ad hoc and anti-Islam, relatively rare, and quite easily handled.”

“at my child’s school when they organised a trip to a mosque for the year 4, half of the class did not go as their parents withdrew them. This was not the case for any trip to a synagogue or church.”

“Some specific requests stem from hate related reasons solely”

“More withdrawals around the religion of Islam”

“After the murder of Lee Rigby, which is just down the road from us, I met with representatives of the Muslim community and discussed how we would deal with this. After a long discussion, it was agreed that all children take part in RE as a preventative step towards radicalisation.”

### 3. PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL

School leaders were asked:

- 2.a Have you ever received a request from a parent/guardian for their child to be exempt from only specific parts of the Religious Education syllabus, e.g. just the teaching of Islam?

Yes: 38.1% No: 61.9%

Leaving aside any claims as to the representative nature of the survey's sample, I suggest that even if these positive responses (N=118) represented the only schools in the country where this request had been made (an unlikely interpretation), that would still represent a problem.

Taking account of only those participants who had experienced a request to withdraw from part of the RE syllabus, the following responses were received to follow up questions:

	Experiencing partial opt-out (N=118)	Not experiencing (N=192)
School Leaders' response to request	83 Invited to discuss, 12 Accepted, 11 Denied, 5 Referred up, 3 Referred safeguarding, 2 Removed from all RE, 1 left to teacher discretion	N/A
School Leaders' reported reasons for parental request	50 Conservative religious beliefs, 30 Misunderstanding of aims of RE, 11 Secular beliefs, 10 Racism/Islamophobia, 6 The result of a political campaign	N/A
School leaders' view of retaining the legal right of parents to opt out	29 Retain (25%)/87 Abolish (75%)	76 Retain (40%)/113 Abolish (60%)

Respondents who had experienced parents requesting to opt out of part of RE were more opposed to retaining the opt out (25/75 against 40/60 for those not experiencing this).

There is an increased incidence of participants citing racism or Islamophobia, again, an open-text response, as a reason for selective opt-out. The reference to a political campaign likely relates to campaigns by the BNP in 2004 and EDL in recent years, urging parents to withdraw their children from all teaching about Islam. Qualitative comments reported on p.5-6 above highlighted participants' concerns about media hype, potential impacts on mutual respect and tolerance, and at times safeguarding concerns relating to racist attitudes in the home.

Participants were also asked:

- 3.a Have you ever received a request from a parent/guardian for their child to be exempt from other curriculum subjects for religious reasons, e.g. the teaching of evolution, musical instrument tuition?

Yes: 22.4% No: 77.6%

While this was a much smaller number than had requested withdrawal from all or part of the Religious Education curriculum, it represents a significant group; while 4 of these requests related to Sex and Relationships Education, which parents also have a legal right to withdraw from, the remainder (N=66) have

requested something which contravenes the school's duty to provide the full National Curriculum entitlement:

“the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, 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 citizenship”.<sup>9</sup>

School leaders were also asked how they responded to the request to withdraw from National Curriculum subjects. Taking account of only those school leaders who had received such a request, not related to SRE (N=66), the following responses were received:

- Invited parents to discuss their request (41)
- Denied request (11)
- Accepted request (9)
- Referred to Local Authority/Diocese/Academy Trust for advice (4)
- Left to teacher's discretion (1)

In a majority of cases (N=47) parents' conservative religious beliefs were cited as the reason for such requests.

With regard to the legal status of these two peculiar uses of the parental right of withdrawal, there was further confusion. We asked participants their understanding of the legal status of a request to withdraw selectively from part of Religious Education:

- Parents have the right to withdraw from any part of Religious Education for any reason: 45.5%
- Parents can opt out of Religious Education as a whole, but not selectively from parts of it: 31.5%
- Not sure: 13.6%
- All children must follow the core curriculum, including Religious Education: 9.1%
- Other response: 0.3%

We also asked their understanding of the legal status of a request to withdraw from a National Curriculum subject on religious grounds:

- Parents only have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education or Collective Worship, not from other curriculum subjects: 45.5%
- It is up to the school how to manage requests like this, if there are genuine religious reasons for the parents' request: 16.6%
- Not sure: 15.5%
- All children must follow the core curriculum, including Religious Education: 10.1%
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from any part of the core curriculum for religious reasons: 8.7%
- Parents may also opt out of Sex and Relationships Education: 3.6%

It is concerning that 25.3% of participating school leaders believe parents either have this right, or that this is at schools' discretion, while a further 15.5 are uncertain. The idiosyncratic status of policy determination in

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<sup>9</sup>Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) *Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* [London: HMSO]. p.28  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf)

Religious Education, which has no parallel in the rest of the Core Curriculum, has the capacity to cause confusion among school leaders, and it appears that further legal clarification is needed.

#### 4. FAITH SCHOOLS

##### Faith School Responses

	Church of England (N=70)	Roman Catholic (N=32)	Other Faith (N=1)
N withdrawn from RE/CW	0 (50) 1-3 (16) 4-10 (4)	0 (30) 1-3 (2)	0 (1)
Parents' reasons for withdrawal	Parents conservative religious beliefs (22) NA/Never had such a request (19) A misunderstanding about aims of RE (12) Parents non-religious or secular beliefs (9) SEN/Other subject support (1) Political campaign (1)	SEN/Other subject support (9) NA/Never had such a request (8) Parents conservative religious beliefs (5) Parents non-religious or secular beliefs (3) A misunderstanding about aims of RE (2)	N/A
School leaders' legal understanding of right of withdrawal	Parents may withdraw for any reason (41) Parents must provide an alternative syllabus (12) All students must follow core curriculum (8) Parents may withdraw for specific religious exemptions (5) Not sure (2)	Parents may withdraw for any reason (12) Parents must provide an alternative syllabus (11) Parents may withdraw for specific religious exemptions (3) Not sure (3) All students must follow core curriculum (1) Different arrangement for faith schools (1)	Parents can withdraw for specific religious reasons (1)
Retain/Abolish right of withdrawal	Abolish (40) Retain (28)	Abolish (21) Retain (11)	Retain (1)

The profile of responses in church schools is broadly similar to that in schools without a religious character. The prevalence of students being withdrawn from RE for other subject support in Catholic schools may reflect the larger amount of curriculum time devoted to the subject, but is an area the Catholic Education Service may wish to clarify with its schools. Across both denominations of church schools, a majority of participants were in favour of abolishing the right of withdrawal.

In qualitative comments, a number of faith school leaders commented on the relationship between school ethos, community relations and parental withdrawal. These comments included an emphasis on the respect for all faiths which came from a faith ethos, including examples from religiously diverse church schools. On collective worship, views were more mixed, with some leaders expressing the view that parents have consented to the school's ethos and liturgical life by choosing a faith school, while others voiced concerns that schools may lose positive community relations should they pursue a 'stronger' confessional ethos:

"The children who attend our school do so because their parents want them to have every experience that our church school offers them. By choosing a church school, they know that their child/ren will

attend collective worship and take part in RE, learning about all religions, cultures and communities and showing understanding and respect for all.”

“Since academisation... the diocese has begun to exert far more influence over the VC schools and parents are VERY unhappy about this. As a result of a more ‘Christian’ and ‘religious’ focus... this is causing [parents] to ask for children to be withdrawn from collective worship.”

“This has occurred since the recent SIAMS inspection... and the more fundamental and direct approaches of the diocese in the school.”

“I work in a church school... I still see regular examples of children in primary school doing ‘Sunday school’ activities that are not good examples of what the subject should be about. Sometimes this is linked to major publishers [...] and [...] resource[s].”

“In a Catholic school it is very difficult if one parent requests exemption from RE as this can have a domino impact on others in the school”

“As a school with a strong Christian foundation, we do have a number of Muslim families who choose us for their children. They actually like the Christian foundation, as they know we will respect the place of religion in the curriculum and school life.”

“We make it clear in published material parents have a right of withdrawal but also make clear to prospective parents the ethos and foundation of the school as a Church of England (aided) school.”

“We make every effort to ensure that the collective worship we enjoy in our school community is understood by the parents before they join”

“We are an independent school. All students – whatever their faith – are expected to attend liturgies and Mass and be supportive of the ethos of the school. This is made clear before they begin.”

“[We are] a Catholic boys college in South London with 40% Muslim and 50% Catholic/Christians. All boys attend Chapel and we are a cohesive faith community.”

“Being a Catholic school makes our situation different. 20% of students are Muslim and the only request I have received in ten years was for a student to not attend Music lessons”

“We are an independent fee-paying Muslim faith school... Our curriculum is geared towards the main consensus of Islamic teachings and we make this clear in the admission interview... Therefore we teach children about all religious beliefs and religions, along with shared British and Islamic values... we have not had any request for children to be removed from any assembly or RE lesson as our parents support our inclusive ethos.”

“We are a Catholic school and parents know this when they choose the school for their children. We would find any such requests very odd as we make it very clear what our expectations are from the start.”

“I work in a church school where approximately 80% of children are from an Islamic faith background. A number of parents have said they prefer their children to attend a school with a faith, than no faith.”