

## Legal Position and Requirements of the Hackney Agreed Syllabus

In the 1988 Education Reform Act it is stated that 'Every maintained school is required by law to provide a basic curriculum, which is 'broad and balanced', consisting of: a] religious education and b] the National Curriculum. The curriculum provided must 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental, and physical development of pupils' and 'prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.

Each Local Authority with responsibility for education must convene an Agreed Syllabus conference to produce a syllabus, which, once adopted by the LEA, should be reviewed every 5 years. The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education must monitor and evaluate the implementation of the syllabus and its impact.

The Education Act 1996 states that the Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking into account the teachings and practices of the other principal religions and worldviews represented in Great Britain.

An Agreed Syllabus, and Religious Education taught according to it, must not be designed to promote any particular religion or worldview on pupils. Further, while exploring responses to ultimate questions, non-religious worldviews- such as secular Humanism- should also be considered (as per section 10 of the Equality Act 2010). Schools are further advised to include in their pupils' learning the additional religions and worldviews that have adherents in the school community.

It is a statutory requirement that Religious Education must be taught according to this syllabus to all registered pupils in maintained schools (other than voluntary aided schools of a religious character) from Reception and including sixth form, except when withdrawn by their parents (see below). Religious Education remains a legal requirement for pupils in KS4 and KS5. It is the duty of the Head teacher to secure the provision of Religious Education for their pupils. Academies (including free schools) are required by their funding agreements to follow a syllabus prepared on the same lines, and if not specifically stated otherwise in their funding agreements, should adopt their local Agreed Syllabus.

By law RE is to be taught in all years from Reception to Year 13, and this syllabus is based on the expectation that RE will have a minimum of 5% of annual curriculum time, broadly equivalent to: 36 hours at Key Stage 1; 45 hours at Key Stage 2; 45 hours at Key Stage 3, and 40-48 hours at Key Stage 4 and 5. At Post 16, there should be a minimum of 15 hours a year of RE.

Collective Worship is a separate statutory requirement. Time used for this **SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ALLOCATION**, and whilst Religious Education can support and contribute towards Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) or citizenship education, curriculum time should not be confused or conflated with PSHE or citizenship education.

Schools are also expected to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, standards and provision of the RE Syllabus and are required to report to parents on pupils' progress in Religious Education annually and in accordance with the structure in this syllabus.

Under the School and Standards and Framework Act 1988, section 71, parents of pupils may request that their child be excused from Religious Education and/or attendance at collective worship. This right, in respect of collective worship, transfers to pupils themselves in KS5. The school remains responsible for the health and safety of pupils who have been excused, but is not obliged to provide alternative tuition. Teachers have broadly equivalent rights (SSFA sections 59-60).