



BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE

Religious Education & Collective Worship Policy *(including withdrawal procedures)*

SEPTEMBER 2026

1. Rationale & Ethos

Blessed Trinity College is a Catholic school, inspired by Gospel values. Our ethos is person-centred, inclusive, and rooted in the belief that every young person is valued and respected.

Religious Education and collective worship are central to the life of the school, however are delivered in a way that is respectful of all beliefs, including those with no religious affiliation.

This policy reflects both our statutory responsibilities and our distinctive Catholic ethos, which permeates all aspects of school life.

2. Policy Aims

- To outline the school's approach to delivering RE and collective worship
- To ensure provision is inclusive, respectful and aligned with our school ethos
- To clarify the rights of parents/carers regarding withdrawal
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements

3. Legal & Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- **Education & Libraries (NI) Order 1986 (Article 21)**
 - RE and collective worship are mandatory in all grant-aided schools
- **Education (NI) Order 2006 (Article 11)**
 - Schools must deliver the statutory core syllabus for RE
- **Department of Education Circular 2026/09**
 - Clarifies arrangements for withdrawal from RE and collective worship
 - Requires schools to have clear, accessible procedures
- **Supreme Court Judgment (2026)**
 - RE must include objective, critical and pluralistic content, alongside the core syllabus

4. Provision of Religious Education

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is a central part of the curriculum. RE aims to:

- Develop students' understanding of religious beliefs and worldviews
- Encourage reflection on values, identity and belonging
- Promote respect for diversity and difference
- Support the personal and moral development of all students

RE is:

- Delivered in an engaging and age-appropriate way
- Inclusive of students of all faiths and those with no religious belief
- Designed to reflect the diversity of the school community
- In line with the Core Syllabus for RE

At Key Stage 3, parents receive a Year Ahead overview outlining themes and learning experiences. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum follows CCEA and/or OCN specifications, alongside a preventative curriculum aligned with school values.

5. Collective Worship

The school provides regular opportunities for collective worship which:

- Support reflection, celebration and community
- Are invitational and respectful of individual beliefs
- Contribute to the ethos and lived experience of the school

The requirement for collective worship remains statutory.

6. Parental Rights & Withdrawal

In line with statutory requirements:

- Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from:
 - Some or all Religious Education
 - Collective worship

Withdrawal Procedure

- A formal request must be submitted using the school's withdrawal form (See Annex A)
- Forms are available from the school office or website
- The school will acknowledge and process requests promptly

Provision for Withdrawn Students

Where a student is withdrawn:

- Appropriate supervision will be provided within the class setting, in line with safeguarding procedures

Communication with Parents & Carers

The school will:

- Provide clear annual information to parents on RE and collective worship
- Issue a neutral statement of the right to withdraw
- Provide access to the standard DE withdrawal form (Annex A)

Process:

1. Parent submits the standard withdrawal form
2. Request is acknowledged promptly
3. Request is approved immediately (no meeting required)
4. Written confirmation issued within 5 school days

The process will be:

- Simple
- Confidential
- Free from barriers or delay

Partial Withdrawal

Parents may request:

- Full withdrawal
- Partial withdrawal (e.g. specific elements such as prayers or assemblies)

The school will facilitate both options fully.

7. Alternative Arrangements

For students withdrawn from RE or collective worship:

- Students will remain in class and supervised, in line with safeguarding procedures
- Activities may include:
 - Independent study
 - Reading
 - Quiet work

Arrangements will be:

- Appropriate
- Non-stigmatising
- Not incentivising withdrawal

8. School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Maintain a confidential Withdrawal Register
- Ensure all staff understand procedures
- Avoid placing any pressure on parents/carers regarding withdrawal
- Ensure all arrangements are implemented promptly and sensitively
- Provide at least one non-religious whole-school gathering per term

9. Communication with Parents/Carers

The school will:

- Provide information:
 - On admission
 - Annually thereafter
- Make all documentation available on / via:
 - The school website
 - Admissions materials
- Offer opportunities for discussion, where requested

10. Monitoring & Review

This policy will:

- Be reviewed annually or in line with legislative updates
- Be monitored by Senior Leadership and Governors
- Be updated in line with the forthcoming RE syllabus review (expected implementation 2027)

11. Key Principle

While parents have a right to withdraw from RE and collective worship, this does not extend to the Catholic ethos of the school, which remains integral to daily school life.

Annex A

Standard Withdrawal Proforma

Section 1: Student Details

Name of student: _____

Year group/class: _____

Section 2: Parent/Carer Details

Name of parent/carers submitting this request: _____

Relationship to : _____

Preferred contact email: _____

Preferred contact phone number: _____

Section 3: Request for Withdrawal

(Please tick all that apply)

I request that my child be withdrawn
from: Religious Education

- ☐ All RE
- ☐ Specific RE topics/units (please specify):

Collective Worship

- ☐ All collective worship
- ☐ Specific elements of collective worship (please specify e.g. prayers, hymns, liturgical acts, assembly, particular speakers):

Section 4: Start Date

I request that withdrawal arrangements begin:

☐ Immediately

From (date): ____/____/____

Section 5: Confirmation

By signing below, I confirm that I am exercising my statutory right to withdraw my child from Religious Education and/or collective worship (delete as appropriate) understand that:

- I do not need to give reasons for this request;
- The school must implement this request promptly and without negotiation;
- This request will remain in place until I submit a written request to end or amend it.

Signature of parent/carer:

Date: ____/____/____

Section 6: School Use Only (to be completed by the school)

Date received: ____/____/____

Acknowledgement issued:

☐ Yes – date: ____/____/____

Arrangements begin: ____/____/____

Alternative arrangements provided:

Recorded in confidential register:

☐ Yes – date: ____/____/____

Name of staff member processing request: _____



BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE

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Insert Month & Year

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin a new school year, I wanted to take a moment to outline our school's approach to Religious Education and collective worship.

At BTC, we strive to create a community where every young person feels valued, respected, and supported. This commitment extends to students of all faiths and to those with no religious belief.

As part of our curriculum as a Catholic school, we provide both Religious Education and opportunities for collective worship. These experiences are intended to encourage reflection, deepen understanding of different beliefs and worldviews, and promote a sense of belonging and shared values.

Our approach is grounded in our Catholic school ethos and our Core Values of care and inclusion. We work to ensure that RE lessons are engaging, age-appropriate, and reflective of our diverse school community. Collective worship is designed to offer moments of reflection and celebration that enrich school life. In line with our mission "*Be Here, Be You, Belong*" these occasions are always invitational, respectful, and mindful of the individual beliefs and practices of all students.

Keeping Families Informed

Each year, at Key Stage 3, we provide parents and carers with an overview of the themes and learning experiences planned for all subjects, inclusive of RE and Personal Development via our Year Ahead document. This helps ensure that families are well informed and can see how these elements support the overall development and wellbeing of our young people.

At Key Stage 4, we follow the NI CCEA curriculum and/or the OCN Applied Specification for RE and also deliver a preventative curriculum that reflects our school's ethos and values. You have already contributed to the development of our RSE policy, and we are grateful for the feedback received. At all times, decisions are made with the needs of the child at the centre, and all

activities and external partnerships align with our ethos and are clearly communicated to parents.

During our Induction and Parent Information sessions, we highlight that parents and carers are welcome to contact the school at any time if they would like further information about our curriculum, our approach, or upcoming activities.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Statutory Information

The Department of Education requires all schools to share the following information with families:

Parents and carers have a legal right to withdraw their child from some or all of Religious Education and/or collective worship. A standard form for this is available from the school office or can be downloaded from our website.

If a parent or carer chooses to exercise this right, the school will put appropriate supervision in place, for their child.

We are always happy to answer questions and provide clarification, should you wish to discuss how RE and collective worship are delivered in our school.

Yours sincerely,



Ms B Lyttle

Principal

