

RE Policy Change Log July 2026

Section	Original Policy	Updated Policy	Key Change
Context and status	Introduced the Trust context and referred generally to statutory requirements and SIAMS.	Clarifies that RE is a statutory entitlement within the basic curriculum and is governed by legislation, funding agreements, trust deeds and denominational foundations. Names the January 2026 Statement of Entitlement and its September 2026 implementation date.	Updates the policy's statutory and denominational foundation and establishes the new Statement as a key SIAMS reference.
Purpose	Focused on high-quality RE, inclusivity, the Trust vision and pupils' understanding and reflection.	Adds RE's status as an academically rigorous subject; objective, critical and pluralistic teaching; non-religious worldviews; religious literacy; personal worldviews; and a clear distinction from collective worship.	Reflects the strengthened aims and language of the 2026 Statement of Entitlement.
Scope	Applied to Anglican, Methodist and community schools.	Retains Trust-wide application but distinguishes expectations for Church of England, Methodist and community schools.	Avoids applying Church of England-specific requirements indiscriminately across all Trust schools.
Trust alignment	Linked RE to the Trust's five pledges.	Retains the five-pledge structure while sharpening references to pupil voice, worldviews, professional development, local context and curriculum impact.	Maintains strategic alignment while reflecting the revised curriculum emphasis.
Related policies and guidance	Cross-referenced Collective Worship, Safeguarding, Equality and Curriculum policies.	Adds the January 2026 Statement of Entitlement, National Content Standard, applicable locally agreed syllabus, individual funding agreements/trust deeds and Trust withdrawal guidance.	Provides a clearer framework of the documents schools must use when implementing the policy.
Vision and aims	Emphasised Christianity, religions and worldviews, critical thinking and the Trust vision.	Adds Christianity as a diverse global living faith; the multi-religious and multi-secular context; disciplinary and personal knowledge; religious literacy; meaning and purpose; and informed dialogue.	Aligns the educational and theological aims with the 2026 entitlement.
Legal and designation requirements	Set out general statutory duties, SIAMS expectations, Methodist provision and funding agreement requirements.	Differentiates community/former VC, VA/former VA, Methodist and other academy requirements. Requires each school to follow its designation, trust deed, funding agreement and applicable syllabus.	Gives leaders more accurate designation-specific guidance.
Academic status and separation	RE was described as high quality but its academic status and separation from collective worship were not explicit.	States that RE is a high-profile academic subject and must be taught objectively, critically and pluralistically. Confirms that it is non-confessional and entirely separate from collective worship.	Meets a central expectation of the January 2026 Statement and responds to updated human-rights considerations.
Curriculum, religions and worldviews	Christianity was central and other religions and worldviews were included.	Requires a balanced, ambitious and sequenced curriculum covering Christianity and a carefully selected range of religious and non-religious worldviews, including diversity, continuity and change within and between them.	Strengthens breadth, depth, accuracy and protection against stereotypical representation.
Disciplinary and personal knowledge	Not explicitly included.	Introduces theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences as disciplinary lenses. Recognises pupils' personal knowledge and supports them to examine and articulate their own worldviews.	Major addition from the 2026 Statement of Entitlement and National Content Standard.
Inclusion and entitlement	Inclusivity was identified as a general aim.	Creates a dedicated section requiring high ambition for all pupils, including those with SEND or experiencing disadvantage. Adaptations must preserve curriculum entitlement rather than narrow it.	Makes inclusion expectations explicit and evaluable.
Time allocation	Required 36 hours at KS1 and 45 hours at KS2; referred to close to 10% and no less than 5%; Christianity at least 50% in Church schools.	Clarifies that the 5–10% expectation applies to dedicated RE objectives in Church of England schools and excludes collective worship. Christianity must be the main worldview studied in each year group or phase and account for at least 50% of RE time.	Provides greater precision and aligns with the January 2026 Statement.

Curriculum resources and local syllabus	Referred to Understanding Christianity and locally agreed syllabuses.	Requires resources and schemes to be adapted critically to the school's designation, pupils, locality and curriculum intent. References the current applicable syllabus, including the new Somerset Agreed Syllabus where relevant.	Reflects the SACRE Summer 2026 update and the move towards a Religion and Worldviews approach.
Assessment	Used Emerging, Developing, Secure and Greater Depth descriptors, principally focused on recall, understanding and application.	Retains the Trust descriptors but revises them to assess substantive and disciplinary knowledge, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning and informed response. Removes the suggestion that SIAMS sets pupil assessment standards.	Makes assessment more curriculum-aligned, accurate, inclusive and useful for future teaching.
Visits and visitors	Required compliance with safeguarding, Prevent and health and safety procedures and prior dialogue with visitors.	Retains these safeguards and adds that contributions must be accurate, inclusive and educational. Visitors must not evangelise, proselytise or present one worldview as uniquely correct.	Strengthens curriculum integrity and the non-confessional nature of RE.
Wider curriculum contribution	Linked RE to SMSC, British Values, diversity, community cohesion and citizenship.	Adds freedom of religion and belief, the challenging of prejudice, stereotyping and religious hatred, and informed engagement with justice and responsibility.	Reflects the contemporary context and the SACRE emphasis on combating anti-religious hate.
Right to withdraw	Confirmed the parental right to withdraw, discussion with parents, safety and wellbeing, and no requirement to provide alternative teaching.	Provides a fuller procedure: requests may be whole or partial; no reasons are required; discussion must not delay or burden the request; safe and practical alternative arrangements must be agreed; pupils must not be stigmatised; pupil voice should be considered; and RE withdrawal is distinguished from collective worship withdrawal.	Responds to updated withdrawal guidance and the November 2025 Supreme Court judgment on undue burden and stigmatisation.
Headteacher and RE leader responsibilities	Defined the roles of the school RE Lead, Trust RE Network Lead and Trust Leaders.	Adds specific senior leadership duties and strengthens the RE Lead's responsibility for curriculum sequencing, staff subject knowledge, inclusive assessment, impact evidence and ongoing self-evaluation.	Creates clearer school-level ownership and accountability.
Governance	Governance was addressed mainly through Trust Board review and Trust leadership oversight.	Creates a dedicated governance role: understand RE's legal basis and purpose; ensure priority and resources; monitor standards and inclusion; and check Statement of Entitlement and funding agreement compliance in Church schools.	Directly reflects the stakeholder expectations in the 2026 Statement.
Trust monitoring and professional development	Trust leaders coordinated CPD, hub meetings and oversight.	Strengthens Trust responsibility for standards, statutory compliance, subject leadership, professional development, national/diocesan/SACRE updates and reporting to Trustees.	Provides a more systematic quality-assurance framework.
Policy information and review	Recorded version 2, previous approval in November 2024 and review by November 2026, with some fields incomplete.	Identifies the document as draft version 3, proposes implementation from September 2026, sets annual review, broadens the target audience and updates document history.	Improves document control and aligns implementation with the new Statement of Entitlement.

The revised policy remains aligned with the Trust vision while bringing expectations into line with the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, January 2026, for implementation from September 2026.

Updated RE Policy – 2026 Review

Purpose of the Update

The policy has been revised to ensure:

Principal Changes

Impact for the Trust

- implementation of the January 2026 Statement of Entitlement in Church of England schools from September 2026;
- clear designation-specific expectations for Church of England, Methodist, community and former VC/VA academies;
- RE's recognition as a high-profile, academically rigorous subject, entirely separate from collective worship;
- an ambitious Religion and Worldviews curriculum that includes religious and non-religious worldviews;
- stronger disciplinary knowledge, inclusion, assessment, leadership and governance expectations; and
- a clear, respectful and legally informed procedure for parental withdrawal.
- New Statement of Entitlement: explicit reference to the January 2026 document, its September implementation date and its role in SIAMS.
- Academic status: RE is defined as objective, critical, pluralistic and non-confessional, with curriculum time clearly separate from collective worship.
- Curriculum knowledge: stronger expectations for religious and non-religious worldviews, disciplinary lenses and pupils' personal worldviews.
- Inclusion: a dedicated entitlement for pupils with SEND, those experiencing disadvantage and pupils of all backgrounds and beliefs.
- Designation and syllabus: clearer legal expectations, including use of the new Somerset Agreed Syllabus where applicable.
- Assessment: descriptors revised around substantive and disciplinary knowledge and the intelligent use of that knowledge.
- Withdrawal: expanded procedures designed to avoid undue burden or stigma and to distinguish withdrawal from RE from withdrawal from collective worship.
- Leadership and governance: clearer duties for senior leaders, RE leaders, governors, Trust leaders and Trustees.
- Consistency with appropriate differentiation: common Trust expectations without overlooking individual school designations.
- Compliance: closer alignment with funding agreements, locally agreed syllabuses, denominational expectations and SIAMS.
- Curriculum quality: a clearer framework for ambitious, accurate, inclusive and well-sequenced RE.
- Quality assurance: stronger assessment, monitoring, governance and reporting arrangements.
- Professional development: increased emphasis on knowledgeable subject leadership and secure teacher subject knowledge.
- Respect and inclusion: clearer safeguards for freedom of religion and belief, non-confessional teaching and pupils exercising withdrawal arrangements.