

RE in Northern Ireland: An overview

Religious Education in Northern Ireland is compulsory from the Foundation Stage to KS4. A common Core Syllabus is in place, structured around three 'Learning Objectives' across the key stages: The Revelation of God, The Christian Church, and Christian Ethics. An additional Learning Objective, World Religions, is introduced at Key Stage 3.

A new draft syllabus was published in June 2026 and a consultation on the proposals ended on 30 September. This revision was prompted by a Supreme Court judgment in November 2025, which found the existing syllabus to be indoctrinatory. The Department of Education has stated that the new syllabus must be 'objective, critical and pluralistic', ensuring that it meets the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights in relation to publicly funded compulsory Religious Education. The draft frames religious education as 'the study of religious and non-religious worldviews' and includes the study of a range of religions and beliefs across all key stages. The curriculum is organised into three categories from Foundation Stage to KS4: beliefs, teachings and sources; practices, traditions, lived religion and experiences; identity, meaning, values and ethics. While the subject remains compulsory, parents may choose to withdraw pupils from the subject. As part of current reforms, new guidelines have been issued on the process of withdrawal of pupils from the subject.

Useful Links

[Religion and worldviews for everyone report](#)

[Closed consultation on the RE Core syllabus including a proposed core syllabus](#)

[Supreme court ruling](#)