



*Aspiring to learn, care and grow together*



Dear Parents,

You may or may not know that due to the ruling of the UK Supreme Court judgment last year there have been some legal changes / recommendations to the provision of Collective Worship & Religious Education in all schools in Northern Ireland.

A summary of this is, as follows:

- All schools should ensure that there is at least one non-religious school gathering each month.
- All schools should continue with Christian collective worship in Assembly.
- Schools can continue to have visiting Ministers in Assembly but should explore having other visitors as well.
- Nativity Plays & Carol Services are still permitted.
- All schools should include learning about other world religions or the incorporation of comparative material that supports pupils to develop a wider understanding of global religions and philosophical traditions.
- All schools should communicate their RE & Collective Worship policy to parents (available after published guidance from EA/DENI).
- All schools should teach RE as an academic subject.
- All schools should communicate the right to withdraw their child / children to parents on entry to the school, whether that is at the start of Primary 1 or joining the school throughout the year.

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*Keep in Touch*

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*On the Web*

Website: <https://www.carrickmodelps.co.uk>  
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- Parents do not need to state their reasons for withdrawal but may do so if they wish on the form.
- All schools should ensure that staff are briefed in this matter.

### What do we currently do at the Model?

- Whilst our school aims and values are built on Christian Principles, being Caring, Mannerly, Prepared & Safe are values that can underpin any religious or cultural belief so are therefore suitable for all children.
- Every Friday we have a celebration assembly which is non-religious and inclusive of everyone. We have worked hard to achieve this. Certificates are awarded for a theme of the week, sometimes Accelerated Reader or Mathematics certificates, pupil of the month, pupil of the term, players of the match, instrument grading certificates and anything else we wish to celebrate. We also have our 'thank crunchie it's Friday boxes and our mystery Friday treat and general announcements / reminders.
- Once a week children also take part in Key Stage assemblies (P1 - P4 / P5 - P7). The following things are covered in these assemblies:
  1. Christian Worship (consisting mostly of action songs that the children can help choose).
  2. Learning songs for Christmas performances / school plays etc
  3. Bible stories
  4. Visiting Ministers / Local Church involvement
  5. Scripture Union visits
  6. PSNI Visits
  7. NSPCC visits and Child Protection Assemblies
  8. Anti-Bullying Week, Children's Mental Health Week, Safer Internet Day
  9. Firework safety, Water Safety, Road Safety, Sun Safety etc
  10. School Rules, values, Model Learning Powers
  11. Special Days such as World Book Day, Dress-up days
  12. Remembrance Assembly / Easter Story / Christmas Story
  13. PATHS Linked assemblies
  14. Unplanned topics that are taught as a response to current events inside and outside of school / community.
  15. Specific groups of children leading assembly such as a prefects, school council, anti-bullying ambassadors, digital leaders etc.

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**We feel that our key stage assemblies cover a huge range of topics as we already navigate the preventative curriculum to keep children safe and give pupils the tools to keep themselves safe.**

**As a school we are also proud of the various religious cultures within our school community and we have never had any difficulty in working with families in the area of Collective Worship & Religious Education.**

**Any children that do currently opt out of assembly are supervised in classrooms but if a significant number of children do opt out following this new UK Supreme Court ruling this will have logistical implications for school which will need to be addressed.**

**Some of our Religious Education curriculum detail is not yet available because a new scheme has not been written yet by EA / DENI. Some parents may want to hold off on their decision until the details of an updated curriculum has been released. The Collective Worship and RE Curriculum remains an opt out rather than an opt in so for most parents no further action will be required.**

**I understand that this communication will be met with various reactions from parents as we all have a different religious standpoint. I am very happy to discuss any concerns or questions you might have.**

**If you wish to fully withdraw or partially withdraw your child from RE and / or Collective Worship please complete the online form available via ParentMail as soon as possible (required for each child please). Otherwise no further action is required. Any requests will remain in place until a parent submits a written request to end or amend it. Any parents who are no longer together must agree on the approach they want taken with their child / children as school cannot be expected to navigate this between separated parents.**

**Hopefully this communication provides enough information for parents to make an informed decision. Do get in touch if you require anything further as I am more than happy to discuss this if deemed helpful.**

**Best wishes,  
Mrs Miller**

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