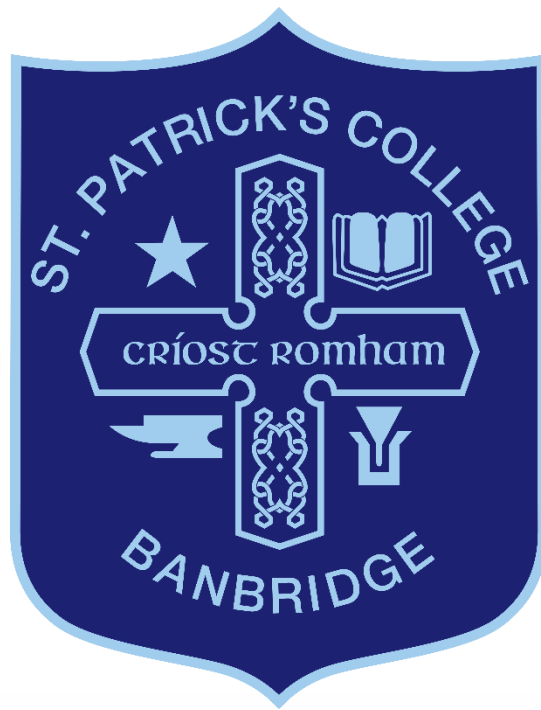




ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE BANBRIDGE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND JOINT WORSHIP
WITHDRAWAL PRO FORMA

Catholic Maintained Schools

1.1 As required by law (Education & Libraries (NI) Order 1986) and DE Circular 2026/09, Saint Patrick's College provides Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. Parents may withdraw their child, fully or partially, from RE and/or collective worship. The Department's standard withdrawal form (Annex A to Circular 2026/09) is available from the school to exercise this right.

1.2 At Saint Patrick's College we respect parental choice. Parents have a statutory right to withdraw a pupil from Religious Education and/or collective worship. If you wish to do so, please complete the attached standard withdrawal form (appendix A), indicating which elements (e.g. full RE programme or certain prayers/assemblies) you wish to withdraw from. *No reason needs to be given.*

*Return the form to Principal, Mrs Roisin Woods, info@stpatricks.banbridge.ni.sch.uk
We will process your request promptly and confirm in writing within 5 school days.*

1.3 Pupils withdrawn from RE or worship will remain on-site, supervised in a suitable activity. For example, they may engage in quiet independent work, reading, or study under the supervision of a staff member. These arrangements will be made discreetly so the pupil is not singled out or stigmatized. The alternative programme will respect the pupil's dignity and cover the time they would have been in RE/collective worship in order to ensure that your child is appropriately supervised, it may be the case that your child will remain within a classroom setting undertaking their alternative activities.

1.4 A Withdrawal Register (confidential) for all requests will be maintained in school. Each entry should record pupil name and class/year; parent name; date of request; whether withdrawal is full or partial (and specify units/elements, if partial); requested start date (immediate or future date); details of alternative arrangements provided; date of acknowledgement sent; and name of staff member handling the request. Mark the date the request is logged and ensure the register is kept securely in the pupil's records (retained per usual school records policy).

1.5 FAQs for Parents

Q: *Can I withdraw my child from RE or collective worship?*

A: Yes. Every grant-aided school must provide RE and worship, but parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE and/or collective worship. This is a statutory right and there is no requirement to provide reasons for doing so.

Q: *How do I make the request?*

A: Complete the standard withdrawal form (Appendix A) and return it to Mrs R Woods (Principal). Indicate on the form what you are withdrawing from (e.g. "all RE" or "prayers in assembly").

Q: Does my child have to give a reason or attend a meeting?

A: No. You do not have to explain your decision, and no meeting or approval process is required. The form will be granted immediately.

Q: What will my child do during RE/collective worship time?

A: The child will stay on the premises under supervision and engage in a suitable quiet activity (e.g. independent study or reading). This is to ensure the child has meaningful, alternative work to do, without being isolated or labeled.

Q: Can I choose only part of RE/collective worship?

A: Yes. The form allows partial withdrawal (e.g. specific topics or parts of collective worship). Please specify exactly what you want to withdraw from on the form.

Q: Who can I contact for help or more information?

A: Please contact **Mrs R Woods. Principal at 02840662309/ info@stpatricks.banbridge.ni.sch.uk**. You can also find the standard form and circular details on the school website or at the school office.

1.6 Implementation Checklist

- ✓ Inform parents (on admission and annually) of the right to withdraw and the school's arrangements.
- ✓ Include a neutral statement and the link or reference to the standard form.
- ✓ Include the DE standard withdrawal form (Annex A) on your website/admissions pack or provide a hard copy.
- ✓ Establish a simple process: accept withdrawal requests via the form (online or paper) and acknowledge receipt the same day.
- ✓ Grant any request immediately and confirm implementation in writing within 5 school days.
- ✓ Permit partial withdrawals as indicated.
- ✓ Provide supervised alternative arrangements (quiet work, reading, etc.) for withdrawn pupils ensuring activities are meaningful but do not single out the pupil.
- ✓ Do not offer extra tuition or rewards to induce withdrawals.
- ✓ Maintain a confidential register of requests (as described above).
- ✓ Brief all staff and governors on the new procedures.
- ✓ Ensure no staff inadvertently pressure parents about withdrawal.
- ✓ Arrange at least one non-religious/alternative whole-school gathering per term (so communication is not exclusively via worship).

Implementation by end of Spring Term 2026, as per DE guidance.

"Under the Education (NI) Order 1986 and DE Circular 2026/09, parents may withdraw their child (fully or partially) from Religious Education and/or collective worship. The school's prospectus and website explain this right and provide the Department's standard withdrawal form (Annex A). Withdrawn pupils will be supervised in a suitable quiet activity (e.g. reading) while in school. Please contact Mrs R Woods, contact: 028406 62309/ info@stpatricks.banbridge.ni.sch.uk for more information."

Catholic Maintained Schools**Item****1. School publications statement**

As required by law (Education & Libraries (NI) Order 1986) and DE Circular 2026/09, Saint Patrick's College provides Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. Parents may withdraw their child, fully or partially, from RE and/or collective worship. The Department's standard withdrawal form (Annex A to Circular 2026/09) is available from the school to exercise this right.

2. Parent information paragraph

At Saint Patrick's College we respect parental choice. Parents have a statutory right to withdraw a pupil from Religious Education and/or collective worship. If you wish to do so, please complete the attached standard withdrawal form (**DE Annex A**), indicating which elements (e.g. full RE programme or certain prayers/assemblies) you wish to withdraw from.

No reason needs to be given.

Return the form to Principal, Mrs Roisin Woods, info@ We will process your request promptly and confirm in writing within 5 school days.

3. Alternative arrangements wording

Pupils withdrawn from RE or worship will remain on-site, supervised in a suitable activity. For example, they may engage in quiet independent work, reading, or study under the supervision of a staff member. These arrangements will be made discreetly so the pupil is not singled out or stigmatized. The alternative programme will respect the pupil's dignity and cover the time they would have been in RE/collective worship in order to ensure that your child is appropriately supervised, it may be the case that your child will remain within a classroom setting undertaking their alternative activities.

4. School record-keeping wording

Maintain a Withdrawal Register (confidential) for all requests. Each entry should record- pupil name and class/year; parent name; date of request; whether withdrawal is full or partial (and specify units/elements, if partial); requested start date (immediate or future date); details of alternative arrangements provided; date of acknowledgement sent; and name of staff member handling the request. Mark the date the request is logged and ensure the register is kept securely in the pupil's records (retained per usual school records policy).

Item

5. Short FAQ (for parents)

Q: Can I withdraw my child from RE or collective worship?

A: Yes. Every grant-aided school must provide RE and worship, but parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE and/or collective worship. This is a statutory right and there is no requirement to provide reasons for doing so.

Q: How do I make the request?

A: Complete the standard withdrawal form (Annex A of Circular 2026/09) and return it to **[Insert Name/Office]**. Indicate on the form what you are withdrawing from (e.g. “all RE” or “prayers in assembly”)

Q: Does my child have to give a reason or attend a meeting?

A: No. You do not have to explain your decision, and no meeting or approval process is required. The form will be granted immediately.

Q: What will my child do during RE/collective worship time?

A: The child will stay on the premises under supervision and engage in a suitable quiet activity (e.g. independent study or reading). This is to ensure the child has meaningful, alternative work to do, without being isolated or labeled.

Q: Can I choose only part of RE/collective worship?

A: Yes. The form allows partial withdrawal (e.g. specific topics or parts of collective worship). Please specify exactly what you want to withdraw from on the form.

Q: Who can I contact for help or more information?

A: Please contact **[Name/Title, e.g. Principal or RE Coordinator]** at **[School Email/Phone]**. You can also find the standard form and circular details on the school website or at the school office.

6. Implementation checklist (for schools/BoG)

Inform parents (on admission and annually) of the right to withdraw and the school's arrangements.

Include a neutral statement and the link or reference to the standard form.

Include the **DE standard withdrawal form (Annex A)** on your website/admissions pack or provide a hard copy.

Item

Establish a simple process: accept withdrawal requests via the form (online or paper) and acknowledge receipt the same day.

Grant any request immediately and confirm implementation in writing within 5 school days.

Permit partial withdrawals as indicated.

Provide supervised alternative arrangements (quiet work, reading, etc.) for withdrawn pupils ensuring activities are meaningful but do not single out the pupil.

Do not offer extra tuition or rewards to induce withdrawals.

Maintain a confidential register of requests (as described above).

Brief all staff and governors on the new procedures.

Ensure no staff inadvertently pressure parents about withdrawal.

Arrange at least one non-religious/alternative whole-school gathering per term (so communication is not exclusively via worship).

Implementation by end of Spring Term 2026, as per DE guidance.

7. Newsletter blurb

“Under the Education (NI) Order 1986 and DE Circular 2026/09, parents may withdraw their child (fully or partially) from Religious Education and/or collective worship. The school’s prospectus and website explain this right and provide the Department’s standard withdrawal form (Annex A). Withdrawn pupils will be supervised in a suitable quiet activity (e.g. reading) while in school. Please contact [Name/Title] at [Email/Phone] for more information.”

Each step above reflects Circular 2026/09 requirements. The parent is given clear information, uses the standard form, and the school then processes the request promptly (no reasons needed), arranges for the pupil’s supervision in a respectful way, and confirms in writing.

Standard Withdrawal Proforma

Annex A

Section 1:

Pupil Details

Name of Pupil: _____

Year Group: _____ Class: _____

Section 2:

Parent/Carer Details Name of parent/carers submitting this request:

Relationship to Pupil: _____

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

or

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: _____