
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1986 No. 594

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986

PART III

PROVISION OF EDUCATION

Religious education in schools

Religious education in controlled and voluntary schools other than nursery and special schools

21.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Article, religious^[F1] education] shall be given in every^[F1] grant#aided] school other than a nursery^{F2} . . . school and the school day in every such school shall also include collective worship whether in one or more than one assembly on the part of the ^[F3]registered pupils] at the school.

(2) In a controlled school^[F1], other than a controlled integrated school,] the religious^[F1] education] required by paragraph (1) shall be undenominational religious^[F1] education], that is to say,^[F1] education] based upon the Holy Scriptures according to some authoritative version or versions thereof but excluding^[F1] education] as to any tenet distinctive of any particular religious denomination and the collective worship required by paragraph (1) in any such school shall not be distinctive of any particular religious denomination.

^[F4](3) Subject to paragraph (3A), in—

- (a) a controlled integrated school;
- (b) a grant#maintained integrated school; and
- (c) a voluntary school,

the religious education and collective worship required by paragraph (1) shall be under the control of the Board of Governors of the school and that religious education shall be subject to such arrangements for inspection and examination as the Board of Governors thinks fit.]

^[F5](3A) In a grant-aided school the religious education required by paragraph (1) shall include religious education in accordance with any core syllabus specified under Article 11 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.]

(4) Religious^[F1] education] and collective worship required by paragraph (1) shall be so arranged that—

- (a) the school shall be open to pupils of all religious denominations for^[F1] education] other than religious^[F1] education];
- (b) no pupil shall be excluded directly or indirectly from the other advantages which the school affords.

(5) If the parent of any pupil requests that the pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious^[F1] education] or collective worship or from both, then, until the request is withdrawn, the pupil shall be excused from such attendance in accordance with the request.

Changes to legislation: *The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, Section 21 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 27 May 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

(6) No payment from public funds in respect of a pupil shall be varied by reason of his attendance or non-attendance at religious^{F1} education] or collective worship.

(7) Ministers of religion and other suitable persons, including teachers of the school, to whom the parents do not object shall, subject to paragraph (8), be granted reasonable access at convenient times to pupils in any^{F1} grant#aided] school other than a nursery^{F2}. . . school for the purpose of giving religious^{F1} education], whether as to tenets distinctive of a particular religious denomination or otherwise, or of inspecting and examining the religious^{F1} education] given in the school and^{F1} education] given by virtue of this paragraph may be in addition to that provided under paragraph (1).

(8) Paragraph (7) shall not, without the consent of the managers of the school, apply to a voluntary school in existence immediately before 1st October 1973 which was not at that date required to give such access as is referred to in that paragraph and where a pupil has been wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious^{F1} education] in any voluntary school to which such access is not granted, such pupil may be withdrawn from the school during such periods as are reasonably necessary for the purpose of enabling him to receive religious^{F1} education] of which his parents approve.

(9) The Department shall make such regulations as it considers necessary for securing that the provisions of this Article relating to religious education are complied with in all^{F1} grant#aided] schools other than nursery^{F2}. . . schools, and in particular such regulations may contain provisions with respect to—

- (a) the times during which any religious observance may be practised or any religious^{F1} education] may be given;
- (b) the times during which pupils may be withdrawn from the school so that they may receive religious^{F1} education] in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (8);
- (c) the making of arrangements for religious^{F1} education] in schools;
- (d) the amount of time which may be allotted in the time-tables of schools to religious^{F1} education].

F1 1989 NI 20

F2 1996 NI 1

F3 Words in art. 21(1) substituted (23.3.2007) by [Education \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1915 \(N.I. 11\)\)](#), arts. 1(4)(c), 44(1), **Sch. 2 para. 24**, SR 2007/197, {art. 2(a)}

F4 1993 NI 12

F5 Art. 21(3A) substituted (1.8.2006) by [Education \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1915 \(N.I. 11\)\)](#), arts. 1(2), 44(1), **Sch. 2 para. 4**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Art. 21 amendment continued (1.8.2006) by [Education \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1915 \(N.I. 11\)\)](#), arts. 1(2), 44(1), **Sch. 2 para. 3**

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Order associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Order (including any effects on those provisions):

- Sch. 18 repealed in part by [S.I. 2003/435 \(N.I.\) art. 49\(2\)Sch. 2](#)
- [art.77\(3\)](#) revoked by [S.I. 1996/2967 reg.11\(7\)](#)