

Holding independent faith schools accountable

Wherever they attend school – in the independent or state sectors pupils have the right to an education which prepares them to flourish as individuals and which opens rather than closes opportunities.

The National Secular Society works towards a secular education system – where all state schools are organised around an inclusive ethos and are free from religious discrimination, privilege or control. Outside of the state system, independent schools have great autonomy, but this autonomy must be balanced against children's independent rights.

See "[Why focus on state-funded faith schools?](#)" – an opinion piece from the No More Faith School campaign.

What's the problem?

There is a growing crisis in the independent faith school sector, where ideological objectives have in some cases taken priority over children's education and wellbeing. While many demonstrably comply with the independent school standards, many independent faith schools restrict children's knowledge and opportunities, seeking to mould them into narrow religious roles.

What are we doing?

This area of our work covers registered independent faith schools. [Click here](#) for our work on unregistered schools.

The National Secular Society works to improve independent school standards so that no child's education or development opportunities are restricted by religion, and to report on abuses within the sector.

- We regularly cover inspection reports which [demonstrate](#) the crisis in independent schools.
- We campaign to prevent extreme groups registering schools where there is a clear concern over pupils' rights/welfare [e.g.](#)
- We [campaign](#) for improved independent school standards.

What you can do:

Need advice or have information?

If you've been affected by these issues, or have information you would like to share, please get in touch.

- [Contact us](#)

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More information

- [Regulating independent schools](#)
DfE website: "How we regulate and intervene in independent schools, and details of when we take legal action against unregistered schools."
- [Weaponised unreasonableness: father claims school standards violate his rights](#)
After a father threatens the government with legal action over a requirement to teach about LGBT people in independent schools, Alastair Lichten argues the focus should remain on protecting pupils' rights.
- [New guidance on independent schools: analysis of hard-line opposition and DfE concessions](#)
The government has published new guidance on independent schools, amid systemic failings by independent faith schools. Alastair Lichten looks at what's changed and how the DfE has handled religious groups' demands.

Further examples.

This is not an exhaustive list mainly focuses on examples or stories that we don't report elsewhere. For our regular reporting on these issues, please visit our relevant [news](#) and [opinion](#) pages. A selection of further examples are below.

- [Beis Chinuch Lebonos Girls School \(June 2019\)](#)
Beis Chinuch Lebonos Girls School's extreme IT policy, shows how they seek to control and restrict the lives of pupils and their families. "Children may never hold any type of smartphone in their hands.", children must not have access to home computers and parents must clear any website or app they use with the school office. Pupils are not allowed to watch DVDs without parents and parents must have their DVDs approved by the school. It's this attitude which also leads to the school's "widespread" censorship of text books.