

Government to approve first Jedi faith school

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The government is set to announce that a Jedi academy will be among a series of new schools which it plans to open in England.

The secondary school in Bedfordshire, the UK's first state-funded Jedi school, will be one of a wave of new free schools announced by the Department for Education on Monday.

The government said it had decided to open the school "to meet demand from the Jedi community". In the 2011 census [176,632 people](#) said they were Jedis.

The National Secular Society, which advocates for inclusive, secular schooling, has criticised the plans.

Prospective headteacher Ezra Bridger said that the school's religious ethos would "permeate all aspects of the curriculum".

"It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the school together."

Some local parents have raised concerns that their children will be [assigned to the school against their wishes](#).

One parent, Han, told the NSS: "I want my children to go to school with kids from all different backgrounds, to learn together and to be free to form their own beliefs. If we fund Jedi schools, then local Sith parents and Pastafarian families will be demanding their own separate schools.

"I don't want my children being brought up in hokey religions."

Aayla, a local Jedi, also expressed doubts, saying: "Faith based schools go against my Jedi [values](#) of non-discrimination and freedom of conscience. My message to parents is that these aren't the schools you're looking for."

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans said: "This decision is a path to the dark side of faith schools."

The school will be allowed to prioritise children from Jedi families in their admissions and will teach [religious education](#) from a faith perspective. It will hold a daily act of "broadly Jedi" [worship](#) and make robes a [mandatory](#) part of its uniform.

Pupils will be expected to carry small ceremonial lightsabres, requiring an [exemption](#) from health and safety legislation.

The decision comes after the government [outlined plans](#) to fund 14 new religiously-selective faith schools last week. The DfE also announced plans to fund [36 new faith based free schools](#) last year.

The Jedi school, which will be known as Luke's Academy and based at the former RAF Cardington site, is expected to open on May the fourth.

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