

Comparative Table: Faith-Based Private Schools

List of abbreviations		Notes
Ahmadis	Ah	
Alawites	Al	
Baha'is	B	
Catholics	Ca	
Copts	Co	
Jehovah's Witnesses	JW	
Jews	J	
Muslims	M	This category includes both Sunni and Shia Muslims.
Orthodox Christians	OC	
Protestants	P	
Religious education	RE	
Religious minority	RM	
Religious organization	RO	
Shia Muslims	ShM	
Syriac Christians	SC	This category includes both Catholics and Orthodox.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
1. Can RMs open faith-based private schools?	Yes (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.1. If the answer to question 1 is yes, can the following RMs open faith-based private schools?	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, OC)	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RMS (JW, J, M, OC, P) (2)	Yes, all RMS (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no (3)	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (3)

(1) General rules concerning all private schools apply. There are no particular rules for faith-based private schools.

(2) The general rules concerning all private schools apply to faith-based ones. However, RMs that have entered into a bilateral agreement with the State (including Jews, Orthodox Christians and Protestants) have been recognized the specific right to open faith-based private schools, whereas Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses may only open a faith-based private school under the general legislation on private schools.

(3) Only recognized RMs can open a faith-based private school.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
2. Can faith-based private schools of RMs give their students diplomas that are recognized by the state?	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes (5)	Yes	Yes (6)	Yes
2.1 If the answer to question 2 is yes, can the schools of the following RMs give their students these diplomas?	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, OC)	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RMs (JW, J, M, OC, P) (7)	Yes, all RMs (JW, J, M, OC, P) (7)	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: yes ShM: N/A	Ah: N/A Al: yes JW: N/A SC: yes

(4) Yes, provided that they teach the same syllabus as public schools. Extra courses may be added.

(5) Yes, provided that the school is recognized by the state ('scuola paritaria').

(6) Yes, provided that they have obtained prior approval from the Ministry of Education, which grants them official recognition.

(7) Yes, in principle. All RMs have the right, but not all have exercised it.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
3. Are teachers chosen by A) the state, B) the RM/school without any state intervention (provided that the rules on the academic qualifications of teachers are met), C) through a procedure that involves both the state and the RM/school?	B)	B)	B)	B)	B) (8)	B) (9)

(8) The RM, which has obtained the approval by the Egyptian Government to open a school, chooses the school director and his/her assistants, who in turn choose the school's staff.

(9) In most cases, the RM owns the school. Thus, it is involved in choosing the teachers and the school administration as a whole.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
3.1. Provided that the rules on the academic qualifications of teachers are met, are faith-based private schools of the following RMs free to choose and appoint their teachers without any state intervention?	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, OC)	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RMs (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Yes, all RMs (JW, J, M, OC, P) (10)	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: yes ShM: N/A (11)	Ah: N/A Al: yes JW: N/A SC: yes

(10) Compliance with some constitutional and European Union principles is required.

(11) RMs have the right to choose staff members of the schools they own. These officials then select teachers and educational staff, but are required to notify them to the Ministry of Education. The latter has no authority over the teacher selection, but the Ministry of Labor has to ensure that the rights of workers are respected.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
4. Can teachers be dismissed if they do not conform their behavior to the principles of the faith-based private school?	Yes (12)	No	Yes	Yes (13)	Yes (14)	Yes (15)

(12) Yes, if the dismissal is necessary and proportional to the role of the teacher, which means that the headmaster can be dismissed, but the math teacher most probably not.

(13) It depends on how serious the infringement of religious principles is. Privacy of the teacher must be respected.

(14) Schools can dismiss teachers who violate work regulations set by the school administration, in accordance with the procedures specified in the Labor Law.

(15) Faith-based private schools can hire teachers of different religious affiliations. All teachers are encouraged to conform their behavior to the social, ethical and religious principles of the schools.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
5. Are faith-based private schools free to reject the admission of students (for example on the ground of the different religion they profess)?	Yes (16)	Yes	No (17)	Only some types of faith-based private schools (18)	No (19)	Yes (20)

(16) Yes, but this is much debated.

(17) No, if it is a school recognized by the state ('scuola paritaria').

(18) It depends on the agreement they may or may not have with the state. Refusal of admission must be well grounded.

(19) Legally they do not have the right to set rules that prevent the enrolment of students from different religious backgrounds, but in practice this prohibition is circumvented.

(20) They self-set a quota in relation to the percentage (or number) of students they accept from other ROs in the school. Once the quota is reached, they reject the admissions of students belonging to other ROs.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
6. Are faith-based private schools free to choose the syllabus and the textbooks?	Yes (21)	No (22)	Yes	Yes (23)	Yes (24)	Yes

(21) Yes, as long as they comply with the criteria of respecting democracy, the rule of law, equality and human rights.

(22) They have to follow the national curriculum and course timetable developed by the Institute for Educational Policy, with deviations allowed in terms of extra-curricular activities and timetable once the regional authority checks the validity of the curriculum and pedagogical content (which must comply with certain conditions).

(23) Yes, provided that they comply with basic academic requirements. Autonomy is not absolute.

(24) Yes, provided that the basic curricula are respected, such as the teaching of the Arabic language and RE, which are among the compulsory subjects that students in all types of education - public, private and international - must attend. However, private and international schools are granted freedom to add additional subjects, or to teach the syllabus in a language other than Arabic.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
7. Do the state or public institutions financially support faith-based private schools of the following RMs?	Yes, all RMs (Ca, JW, J, M, OC) (25)	Ca: no JW: no J: no M: no P: no (26)	Only some types of faith-based private schools (27)	Only some types of faith-based private schools (28)	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: no ShM: N/A	Ah: N/A Al: yes JW: N/A SC: yes (29)

(25) The state covers 75% of the costs.

(26) No, although private schools established as non-profit-making entities may be entitled to grants from the state, according to the Law 682/1977 on Private Schools of General Education and Boarding Schools (as amended in 2020).

(27) Only private schools recognized by the state ('scuola paritaria'). It should be noted that these are funded like any other private school, and not because of their religious orientation.

(28) Only the private schools that have signed an agreement with the state in areas where the public school system is deemed insufficient.

(29) Since they are not recognized by the state as religious minorities, Ahmadis and Jehovah's Witnesses cannot open their own faith-based private schools, and no financial aid is granted to them. The state financially supports recognized RMs on an annual basis. This includes aid for educational institutions, and other specific areas such as elderly care facilities, hospitals, etc. The state does not specify which faith-based private schools are granted the financial support, leaving this matter to the leaders of each RM. Other types of financial support are granted to specific faith-based private schools by the Ministry of Education when the Ministry itself receives donations from local and/or international funders.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
8. Are teachers paid by the state or the RM/school?	The state (30)	The school	The school	The state	The school	The school
8.1. Are the teachers of the following RMs paid by the state or the RM/school?	Ca: the state JW: the state J: the state M: the state O: the state (31)	Ca: the school JW: the school J: the school M: the school P: the school	JW: N/A J: the school M: N/A O: the school P: the school (32)	JW: the state J: the state M: the state O: the state P: the state	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: the school ShM: N/A	Ah: N/A Al: the school JW: N/A SC: the school

(30) The state covers 75% of the costs, which can include teachers' salaries.

(31) See note 28.

(32) Currently there exist no faith-based private schools of JW and M.

The following set of issues has been examined only for Egypt and Lebanon. The religion-based personal law system existing in these countries has made it necessary a more detailed investigation of some questions concerning faith-based private schools, which are either legally non regulated or practically irrelevant in European countries.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
9. In your country, is religion taught in faith-based private schools?	Yes	Yes
10. In your country, what is the existing system of teaching religion in faith-based private schools?	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject (33)
11. Can the religion of the following RMs be taught in faith-based private schools?	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes
11.1. Is it taught within or outside the school timetable?	Within	Within

(33) Religious (Islamic/Christian) education is a subject in itself that is taught to all students, but sometimes curricula such as Arabic and social studies include Islamic religious texts.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
11.2. Is it taught for how many hours per week?	1.5 hours (34)	1-3 hours (35)
11.3. Who has the right to choose the textbooks?	The Ministry of Education	The school administration
11.4. Who has the right to define the syllabus content?	The Ministry of Education (36)	The school administration

(34) The Ministry of Education allocates two lessons per week for RE+A22, each session lasting for about 45 minutes – with an average of 1.5 hours/week.

(35) In weeks that include religious festivities linked to the private schools' religious identity, religious rites are practiced in schools, which may increase the number of educational hours to up to six hours per week.

(36) The religious education curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education, and it is the same as the one used for public schools. The Ministry is responsible for selecting experts who develop and review the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and the Christian Religious Education curriculum.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
12. Do students have the right to opt out from the teaching of religion?	No (37)	It depends on the school. (38)
12.1. If students opt out from the teaching of religion, are they obliged to attend another course?	N/A	No (39)
12.2. Do students who are members of the following RMs have the right to opt out from the teaching of religion?	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: N/A ShM: N/A	See note 35.

(37) Religious education is a compulsory subject. Students cannot be promoted without obtaining a 'pass' mark in this class.

(38) There are no laws or regulations on this issue, which is regulated in a different way between one school and another, and even among different directors of the same school. In most cases, schools do not allow students to opt out from the teaching of religion unless parents demand that their children be exempted. In any case, optin out is not a "right" that is always/naturally granted.

(39) They are not obliged but encouraged to do so.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
13. Do faith-based private schools offer education on citizenship and living together?	Yes (40)	Yes (41)

(40) The Ministry of Education has announced a plan to develop a book on values and ethics within the curriculum for the third grade, based on Islamic and Christian religious values, but not as a substitute for the religious education subject that is compulsory for all school students.

(41) They teach a curriculum of Civil Education which includes education on citizenship and living together. Although some curricula are considered outdated, teaching Civil Education is mandatory in all schools. Some schools have extra-curricular activities that teach about diversity and living together. These extra-curricular activities depend on the decision of schools' directors. Private schools usually have more resources than public schools and are more dedicated to implement programs related to citizenship and living together.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
14. Can teachers wear religious symbols when giving classes?	Yes (42)	Yes (43)
14.1. Can teachers who are members of the following RMs wear the symbols of their religion when giving classes?	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (44)

(42) Wearing religious symbols is allowed; however, it is difficult for a teacher to wear a niqab in a school owned by a Christian minority.

(43) In many cases, they are encouraged to do so.

(44) Since Ahmadis and Jehovah's Witnesses are non-recognized RMs, any display of their religious symbols is illegal. Nevertheless, in practice, their members often wear or show their religious symbols without facing any problem.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
15. Can students wear religious symbols at school?	Yes	Yes
15.1. Can students who are members of the following RMs wear the symbols of their religion at school?	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no (45)	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (46)
16. Do faith-based private schools officially display religious symbols?	Yes	Yes
16.1. Can the symbols of the following RMs be officially displayed in faith-based private schools?	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes

(45) Students have the right to wear visible religious symbols, provided that they comply with the rules of the uniform set by the school, which may prohibit female students from wearing some accessories or may ban the niqab in primary school classes.

(46) Since Ahmadis and Jehovah's Witnesses are non-recognized RMs, any display of their religious symbols is illegal. Nevertheless, in practice, their members often wear or show their religious symbols without facing any problem.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
17. Can teachers refrain from giving classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	No (47)	No (48)
17.1. Can teachers who are members of the following RMs refrain from giving classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: N/A ShM: N/A (49)	Ah: N/A Al: N/A JW: N/A SC: N/A

(47) No, although there are exceptions based on the school/situation. There are also public holidays on a number of occasions, when all schools are closed. These include holidays such as Christmas (as per the Eastern tradition) on 7 January; holidays granted to Christian students only (when the school operates normally) such as Epiphany, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Faith-based private schools also have the right to suspend their activities on some special occasions, such as the beginning of the new year, Christmas, or other national and religious occasions.

(48) No, if they are members of a religion different from that of the school.

(49) However, as noted above, there may be exceptions. Sometimes in private schools based on the Christian faith, teachers (and students) are given time off on a holiday that only concerns Christians.

Questions	Egypt	Lebanon
18. Can students refrain from attending classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	Yes	No
18.1. Can students who are members of the following RMs refrain from attending classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	N/A
19. Do students have the right to obtain food that is not forbidden by their religion's dietary rules?	Yes	Yes
19.1. Do students who are members of the following RMs have the right to obtain food that is not forbidden by their religion's dietary rules?	Ah: yes B: yes Co: yes ShM: yes (50)	Ah: yes Al: yes JW: yes SC: yes

(50) There are no specific rules on food prescribed by faith-based private schools. In most cases, they do not distribute food at all. Students can bring their own food from home or buy it from the school canteen, which provides for a number of different choices.