



## Powys County Council

# Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics Based on the Curriculum for Wales Guidance (July 2022)

### Introduction

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) is the name the Welsh Government has given to Religious Education in the Curriculum for Wales. RVE is mandatory for all learners aged 3 to 16.

RVE sits within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE), along with Geography, History, Business Studies and Social Studies. RVE is still locally determined and therefore, as well as having regard to the Curriculum for Wales Framework Guidance on Hwb, all schools in Powys must have regard to the Powys Agreed Syllabus for RVE when designing their school curriculum.

It is the local authority's responsibility to monitor the statutory provision of RVE, and they are supported in doing this by the Powys Standing Advisory Council on Religion, Values and Ethics (SACRE).

Every local authority is legally required to establish and support an Agreed Syllabus Conference which must prepare a syllabus of RVE to be adopted by a local education authority. The Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics Statutory Guidance on Hwb was adopted as the new Powys Agreed Syllabus for RVE in spring 2022, following a formal recommendation to the LA by the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 8 March 2022.

The LA has a legal duty to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years.

The RVE statutory guidance can be accessed via Welsh Government's Hwb website:

[Hwb: Religion, Value and Ethics Guidance](#)

This Agreed Syllabus is not intended to be a scheme of work. Rather, it provides a framework within which each school can best design its own local curriculum which includes RVE within the Humanities AoLE.

### Aims of RVE

RVE makes an important and distinctive contribution to supporting the four purposes by giving learners opportunities to:

- engage with and explore ultimate and philosophical questions about the meaning, significance and purpose of life, and about the nature of human thought and of the universe, and the connections between them;



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- undertake enquiries and engage with sources of wisdom and philosophies that encourage them to explore the challenges, opportunities and responses of human beings in the context of their cynefin, locally, in Wales and the wider world, as well as support them in evaluating their own perspectives and those of others;
- develop and express their own informed viewpoints, which prepares them for lifelong learning in a pluralistic and diverse world;
- use their knowledge and understanding of both institutional and personal religious and non-religious beliefs and practices to think critically about their own values and about how they might make important social and personal decisions;
- explore the ways in which religion and non-religious philosophical convictions have influenced human experience throughout history, so that they can make sense of their place in the world, imagine possible futures and create responsible solutions that take in to account the diverse needs and rights of all people;
- evaluate and use evidence from a range of religious and non-religious sources to engage with ethical and moral issues, past and contemporary, that challenge their knowledge and values. This enables learners to develop an understanding of religion and belief, culture, community, their cynefin, Wales and the wider world now and in the past, which can help to nurture a sense of place and belonging;
- respond sensitively to religion and non-religious philosophical convictions and explore the beliefs and practices of people in their community, Wales and the wider world, and how these might impact their actions and choices;
- develop secure values and establish their ethical beliefs and spirituality through the exploration of religion and non-religious philosophical convictions on a range of issues, which can in turn enable them to form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect;
- discuss and reflect on their own perspectives and those of others on a range of issues, which help them to build their mental, emotional and spiritual well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy.

## Audience

The RVE guidance in the Humanities AoLE has been written to be accessible to all those responsible for designing a curriculum. Those persons who must have regard to the guidance when designing a curriculum are:

- the headteacher of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school;
- the governing body of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school;
- a provider of funded non-maintained nursery education;
- the teacher in charge of a pupil referral unit;
- the management committee for a pupil referral unit;



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- a person who provides teaching and learning for a child, otherwise than at a maintained school, maintained nursery school or pupil referral unit, by virtue of arrangements made under section 19A of the Education Act 1996 (c. 56);
- a local authority in Wales.

In addition, the guidance may also be useful to practitioners, regional consortia, awarding bodies, Estyn, teacher unions, religious organisations, non-religious organisations, parents and carers and other bodies in Wales with an interest in RVE. These bodies do not have to have regard to the guidance, but it may be useful and informative for them to refer to it to better understand the content of a given setting's curriculum.

In accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 the Agreed Syllabus reflects that:

- the religious traditions in Wales are in the main Christian (57.6% -2011 Census) whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales;
- the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales;
- the reference to philosophical convictions is to philosophical convictions within the meaning of Article 2 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights;
- it should be noted that for the provision of religion it still must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales;
- where 'religion' is referred to it should be noted that we refer to principal religions;
- where the term non- religious is used, we refer to 'non-religious philosophical convictions'.

More information can be found in the legal summary section on Hwb:

[Hwb: Religion, Value and Ethics - Legal Status of the RVE Guidance](#)

### **Curriculum Time**

At each progression step, sufficient time and resources are required to provide an effective and coherent course of study. As a mandatory element of the Curriculum for Wales, RVE should have equity with other disciplines within the Humanities AoLE.

### **Curriculum Design**

The Curriculum for Wales requires all schools to offer a broad and balanced education, which enables learners to make links between the different disciplines and areas of learning and experience. Therefore, curriculum design should draw together different disciplines, including RVE, to provide learners with a coherent and holistic learning experience, which incorporates the following:



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- the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence;
- the skills integral to the four purposes;
- consideration of the cross-cutting themes.

More about the role of disciplines in learning is available here:

[Hwb: The Role of Disciplines in Learning](#)

When planning and preparing your RVE curriculum you should take note of the following areas. Please see below links which will take you to the relevant sections of the guidance on the Hwb website:

[Hwb: Religion, Value and Ethics](#)

As learners progress, they should have greater opportunities to engage with different disciplines and to specialise within them, particularly when they reach the later progression steps. The Curriculum for Wales guidance tells us that this process should be supported by discipline-specialist teaching, which, along with the multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design, should prepare learners who seek to specialise further during learning post-16. This will require specialists to teach RVE and specialists to have input in designing RVE within the humanities.

Whilst learners should have opportunities to specialise, the curriculum must remain broad and balanced, and each learner should continue to draw on learning from each AoLE throughout their time in compulsory education, which includes the mandatory element of RVE. Schools will be expected to enable all learners to access a range of courses of study and to gain suitable qualifications at the end of compulsory education.

### **Post-16 RVE in the Curriculum for Wales**

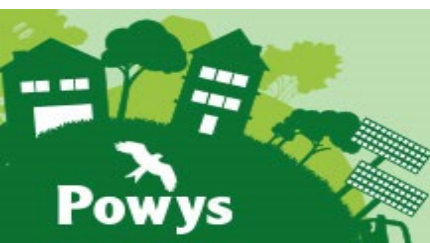
The mandatory status of RVE has been removed for Sixth Forms in maintained schools. Therefore, RVE is now optional for these learners. However, this does not prevent individual schools with Sixth Forms from timetabling RVE for all students, if they wish to. Sixth Formers have the right to 'opt in' to RVE and the school would legally have to provide RVE for those learners upon request.

More information on Post-16 RVE can be found here:

[Hwb: Religion, Value and Ethics - Legal Status of the RVE Guidance](#)

### **The right to withdraw in the Curriculum for Wales**

From September 2022, there will be no parental right to withdraw from RVE as the new Curriculum for Wales is implemented in their year group. The parental right to withdraw will remain in place until their year group becomes subject to the Curriculum for Wales. More information on the right to withdraw can be found in the legal summary on Hwb



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[Hwb: Religion, Value and Ethics - Legal Status of the RVE Guidance](#)

Collective Worship Collective Worship is distinctive from, and additional to, curriculum time given to RVE. Collective worship sits outside the curriculum and has its own legal standing and requirements. Parents may still request that their children are withdrawn from collective worship if they wish.



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