Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

SACRE

Date and Time

3.30 pm, TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2026

Location

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Contact Point

Jasmine Jones

01286 679667

jasminejones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 09/11/26)

SACRE

MEMBERSHIP (7)

Plaid Cymru (5)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Jina Gwyrfai
Meryl Roberts
Elin Walker Jones
Paul John Rowlinson

Independent (2)

Councillors

Anne Lloyd-Jones
John Pughe Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Christian and Other Religions and Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

Natham Abrams	Judaism
Jean Owen	Bahá'í Faith
Mr Mohamed Arabi	Islam
Empty Seat	Union of Welsh Baptists
Bethan Davies Jones	Union of Welsh Independents
Edward Parri-Jones	Eryri Humanists
Eirian Bradley Roberts	Catholic Church
Dr Sibani Roy	Hinduism
Rev. Nick Sissons	Methodist Church
Patrycja Bielak Smith	Buddhism
Gwawr Maelor Williams	Presbyterian Church of Wales
Joanna Thomas	The Church in Wales

Teachers

Miriam A. Amlyn	NAS/UWT
Vacant Seat	NEU
Emma Roberts	UCAC
Vacant Seat	NAHT

Co-Opted Members

Eleri Moss	Secondary Heads

Independent Consultant

Philip Lord

A G E N D A

1. ELECT CHAIR

To elect Chair for 2026 / 2027.

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

To elect Vice Chair for 2026 / 2027.

3. QUIET REFLECTION

4. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

6. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

7. MINUTES 5 - 9

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on the 11th February 2026 be signed as a true record.

8. MATTERS ARISING

To consider the matters arising from the minutes for the CYS meeting held on the 11th Feb 2026.

9. JUDAISM AND THE NORTH WALES CONTEXT

A presentation by Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Lecturer in Philosophy and Religion, School of Arts and Humanities, Bangor University.

10. ANNUAL REPORT 10 - 30

To receive Gwynedd SAC(RE)'s Annual Report for 2024-25.

11. GWYNEDD AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

To receive a presentation about how Gwynedd is organising school improvement.

12. GWYNEDD CYSCGM CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 31 - 34

- To discuss the current membership of CYS
- To consider the implications to the Gwynedd CYS Constitution

13. <u>WASACRE</u> 35 - 41

- To receive the minutes of the meeting held online 24th June 2026.
- To receive a verbal update of the WASACRE meeting – 10th November 2026.

14. <u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 2ND FEBRUARY 2027 - 3:30PM</u>

S.A.C.R.E.
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

11/02/2026

Attendance:

Councillors: Menna Baines, John Pughe Roberts, Paul Rowlinson, Anne Lloyd-Jones and Jina Gwyrfai.

Others:

Christian and Other Faiths and Non-religious Philosophical Convictions:
Edward Parri-Jones (Eryri Humanists), Rev. Nick Sissons (The Methodist Church).

Teachers: Miriam A Amlyn (NAS/UWT).

Officers: Buddug Mair Huws (Assistant Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk), Phil Lord (Independent Adviser) and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Luke Donnellan.

1. PRAYER OR QUIET REFLECTION

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Nick Sissons.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education)
- Councillor Elin Walker Jones
- Councillor Meryl Roberts
- Eurfryn Davies (The Baptist Union of Wales)
- Bethan Jones (Welsh Independents)
- Nathan Abrams (Judaism)
- Eleri Moss (Secondary Headteachers)

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

4. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18 November 2025 as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

It was confirmed that examples/templates of policies discussed at the previous meeting had been shared with schools on that day.

It was confirmed that examples of questions to evaluate RVE and Collective Worship had been written and translated, and would be shared with members soon.

7. HUMANISM - THE BENEFITS OF INCLUDING NON-RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS IN THE RVE CURRICULUM

The item was presented by Luke Donnellan, Director of Understanding Humanism, Humanists UK, on Humanism and the benefits of including non-religious philosophical convictions in the RVE curriculum. During the presentation, the following main points were discussed:

- It was noted that the Humanists UK education department supported teachers in schools across the UK with resources and services to teach Humanism as part of a broad and balanced RVE education.
- Background information was provided about RVE in Wales, emphasising that Wales' RVE curriculum noted the need to include non-religious philosophical convictions.
- It was noted that non-religious philosophical convictions meant "philosophical convictions which are based on a non-religious worldview as opposed to a religious worldview".
- It was emphasised that there were three main benefits of including non-religious philosophical convictions in the RVE curriculum, namely that it was knowledge-rich, that it supported mutual understanding and social cohesion, and that it encouraged personal development.
- It was noted that there were five main beliefs associated with Humanism, in addition to the fact that it was non-religious, namely that humans were part of nature, that a scientific understanding of the world was important, that everybody had only one life, that ethics were not dependent on religion, and that people had a responsibility to make the world a better place.
- It was noted that a higher proportion of the population of Wales identified themselves as non-religious (47%) than religious (44%) according to the census results, with around a third to half of the non-religious population having Humanist beliefs.
- It was noted that a number of historically renowned Welsh people were known to be humanists.
- Attention was drawn to the 'Humanists UK' website, understandinghumanism.org.uk, which included several resources available to support the teaching of the subject, with specific resources for teachers in Wales available bilingually.
- It was noted that the book 'My Humanist Family' was available to support teaching the subject to young children.

Thanks were expressed for the presentation.

A question was asked regarding the amount of time allocated to teaching Humanism in schools. In response, it was noted that the answer was not clear, but that evidence showed that there was insufficient time devoted to RVE in general, and therefore this affected the opportunity for pupils to learn about Humanism. It was noted that although the curriculum had changed, the time devoted to non-religious philosophical convictions remained low, possibly due to the transition period to the

new curriculum or due to opposition to its inclusion within some schools. It was emphasised that 'Humanists UK' was doing everything within its ability to communicate with schools in order to offer learning and training resources to help facilitate this period of transition. It was emphasised that things were improving in this regard, but there remained much work to be done.

It was asked whether Humanists regularly came together as a community. In response, it was noted that this varied from one Humanist to another. It was noted that Humanist organisations, such as 'Humanists UK', held annual events, and that local groups of Humanists held socialising events. It was emphasised that there were opportunities available, but that individuals were not obliged to participate. More work needed to be done at a social level to support people to feel a sense of belonging to a community.

A question was raised on how Humanists dealt with morality and sin within their philosophy. In response, it was noted that the world was not an ideal place, but that things had generally improved for people over the years in terms of standards of living, freedom and democracy. It was recognised that the world continued to face several challenges, and that there was no assurance that things would continue to improve over the years. It was emphasised that Humanism was not an ideal philosophy, but that it believed in trying to create a better world, not a perfect world, through human actions rather than through divine power. It was noted that Humanists believed in seeking justice in this life, rather than in life after death. It was emphasised that suffering was part of the world in which we lived, and that the aim was to try to reduce and alleviate it wherever possible.

A question was asked about whether the dissemination of Humanism was important in the same way as it was to Christianity. In response, it was noted that most Humanists were against evangelisation. It was further explained that Humanism had no goal of creating new Humanists or disseminating the philosophy. It was stressed that Humanists believed in freedom of belief, and supported the right of people to learn about a variety of religions and philosophies to enable them to make their own decisions.

A question was asked on how many Humanist SACRE members were there in other counties in Wales. In response, it was noted that all SACRE Committees in Wales had a Humanist representative, and that over 90% of SACREs in England had Humanist representation. This was noted to be a significant improvement, as only about 50% of SACREs had representation around five years ago.

A request was made to receive a presentation from all faith representations so that Committee members could receive more information in these areas. In response, it was noted that this was a good idea, and it was suggested that Nathan Abrams be invited to give a presentation on Judaism. It was also suggested that the presentations should be forwarded to schools for use as learning resources.

Edward Parry-Jones was thanked for applying to become a member of Gwynedd SACRE, and it was stressed that adding representation from non-Christian religions and non-religious beliefs had been a huge step forward for the SACRE Committee.

8. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025-26

The item was presented by Phil Lord, Independent Consultant, and the following key points were highlighted:

- The development plan could be used to explain, as part of the annual report, what had been achieved.
- There were three main priorities in the development plan, namely to develop the effectiveness of SACRE, to monitor and support the RE and Religion, Values and Ethics

provision in Local Authority schools, and to monitor and support the provision of collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the Authority's schools.
- The activities under priority one included ensuring that relevant information was included in the annual report, including relevant resources for schools.
- The activities under priority two included the provision of monitoring materials and exemplar policies, including the policy relating to the fact that parents were no longer entitled to withdraw their children from RVE lessons.
- The activities under priority three involved Councillors and SACRE members who were school governors trialling the questions and reporting back to SACRE.
- The plan was for the current year, and activities could be added to the plan for future years.

Thanks were expressed for the presentation. A view was expressed that there was a disconnect between what was happening within schools and what SACRE was aware of, and therefore the development plan and its priorities were welcomed to ensure that the Committee could positively influence schools.

A point was raised regarding the timetable, asking whether it was realistic that everything would be delivered by the summer term. In response, it was noted that the resources to be included in the annual report had already been created. It was also noted that the aspect involving Governors going to schools to trial questions was dependent on the support of members in order to meet the timetable.

A question was asked whether it was intended for non-Governor SACRE members to visit schools to trial the questions. In response, it was noted that it was intended for members who were Governors to initially trial the questions before extending the arrangement to other SACRE members. It was suggested that the Education Department should ask schools that were not affiliated with a member of SACRE to volunteer to receive a visit from a SACRE member so that they could ask the questions and observe collective worship within their schools.

9. MANAGING THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM RVE

The item was presented by Phil Lord, Independent Consultant, and the following key points were highlighted:

- RVE lessons had, historically, focused much more on local Christian beliefs, and therefore there was a feeling at the time that the right to withdraw was necessary.
- RVE lessons had changed significantly over the years to be multi-faith, but the right of withdrawal nevertheless continued until 2022, when the Welsh Government abolished the parental right to withdraw their children from RVE.
- Cases had arisen where parents wished to withdraw their children from RVE, even though they did not have the right to do so, and this could create problems within schools.
- The document had been produced in order to categorise parental concerns about RVE, and to provide information about the best actions to deal with those concerns.
- The document would be useful to schools to ensure that they were able to respond in an appropriate way should any cases or concerns arise in the future.

Thanks were expressed for the presentation. It was noted that the document was very useful, and that it was better to prepare proactively rather than wait for a case to arise before creating a document to provide support to schools.

A question was asked about whether it was intended to send a copy of the document to every school in the county. In response, it was suggested that the Education Department should make the document accessible on the education SharePoint so that teachers could access it if needed.

A question was raised on whether any such documents were already available. In response, it was noted that there were no documents available in Gwynedd for the county's schools.

It was enquired whether the right to withdraw children from RVE included collective worship. In response, it was noted that the right to withdraw from collective worship continued to exist.

Support was expressed for the document and for its aim of supporting schools to provide RVE. It was suggested to change the document's wording regarding the rejection of RVE for racial or prejudicial reasons.

10. WASACRE

The minutes of the Association's last meeting held on 2 July 2025 were accepted.

The meeting commenced at 3.40pm and concluded at 5:15pm.

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CHAIR

Standing Advisory Council (for Religious Education)

GWYNEDD
ANNUAL REPORT

September 2025 - August 2026

Head of the Education Department

Mr Gwern ap Rhisiart

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction by SAC(RE) Chairman: Councillor Menna Baines

SECTION 2: ADVICE TO GWYNEDD COUNCIL

2.1 SAC(RE)'s function in relation to Religious Education
2.2 The Locally Agreed Syllabus
2.3 How good are standards?
2.4 The response of Gwynedd Council
2.5 Religion, Values and Ethics and the Welsh Government
2.6 Religion, Values and Ethics and ESTYN
2.7 SAC(RE)'s function in relation to Collective Worship

SECTION 3: ANNEXES

3.1 General information about the composition of SAC(RE)
3.2 Membership of Gwynedd SAC(RE) 2023-24
3.3 SAC(RE) meetings 2024/25
3.4 RVE - Useful Links and Resources

SECTION 1:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SAC(RE)'s function in relation to Religion, Values and Ethics and Religious Education

The requirement for LAs as regards Standing Advisory Councils for Religion, Values and Ethics and Agreed Syllabus conferences are set out in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2022, Part 3 Section 9 (3.1A) and Part 3 Section 7(7) and Section 390 of the Education Reform Act 1996.

SAC(RE) advises the Education Authority on matters relating to the provision of Religious Education, Religion, Values and Ethics and collective worship, and is responsible for the establishment of an ad hoc body, the Agreed Syllabus Conference, to produce or consider amendments to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious, Values and Ethics.

1.1 Introduction by the Chair

SECTION 2: ADVICE to GWYNEDD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2.1 SAC(RE)'s function in relation to Religion, Values and Ethics

The requirement for LAs as regards Standing Advisory Councils (for Religion, Values and Ethics) and Agreed Syllabus conferences are set out in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2022, Part 3 Section 9 (3.1A) and Part 3 Section 7(7) and Section 390 of the Education Reform Act 1996.

SAC(RE) advises the Education Authority on matters relating to the provision of Religious Education, Religion, Values and Ethics and collective worship, and is responsible for the establishment of an ad hoc body, the Agreed Syllabus Conference, to produce or consider amendments to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

2.2 The Locally Agreed Syllabus

A SAC(RE)'s main function is *'...to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.'* (Education Reform Act 1988 s.11 (1) (a).

Gwynedd and Anglesey SAC(RE)s have previously adopted the 'National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3 to 19 year old learners' as the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Gwynedd and Anglesey (2008). Due to the phased role out of the Curriculum for Wales, This Syllabus was relevant for year 11 learners in during 2025-26.

Gwynedd County Council held their Agreed Syllabus Conference 1st February 2022 to review the syllabus and to recommend an appropriate syllabus to the Local Authority to adopt.

The Agreed Syllabus on Religion, Values and Ethics was adopted to reflect guidance written by practitioners and Religious Education experts. The purpose of the syllabus is to provide additional support on how Religion, Values and Ethics can be taught within the field of Humanities. Gwynedd Agreed Syllabus for Religion Values and Ethics is based on Welsh Governments Guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics. The guidance emphasises that Religion, Values and Ethics are an integral part of the Humanities area or learning and experience. It also outlines the subject's unique and specific contribution to the Curriculum for Wales.

The Guidance can be accessed below:

- https://hwb.llyw.cymru/cwricwlwm-i-gymru/meysydd-dysgu-a-phrofiad/y-dyniaethau/cynllunio-eich-cwricwlwm/#section-0-4
- https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/areas-of-learning-and experience/humanities/designing-your-curriculum/#section-0-4

During the academic year 2025-26, in accordance with the changes to the Curriculum for Wales 2022, Religion, Values and Ethics was taught to all primary school children and learners in year 7, 8, 9 and 10. In the academic year 2025-26, secondary schools continued to teach the pre 2022 curriculum (called Curriculum for Wales 2008), including the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, to pupils in year 11.

The Agreed Syllabus, conforming to the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022, relates the subject titled 'Religion, Values and Ethics'. The previous Agreed Syllabus, still applicable for secondary schools for the reasons described above, relates to the subject titled 'Religious Education'. This is an important distinction.

2.3 How good are standards?

In previous years Gwynedd SAC(RE) has monitored religious education and collective worship by: receiving a summary of a school's self-evaluation report in response to the key questions of ESTYN's Inspection Framework; analysing the Local Authority's teacher assessments and secondary examination results; reviewing ESTYN inspection reports for references to 'religious education' or 'collective worship'; inviting teachers and head teachers to share their good practices with members in the termly meetings, and by, accepting schools' invitations to attend a collective worship session.

2.3.1 Schools' self-evaluation reports

SAC(RE) members resolved at their meeting on 9 February 2011, to continue to receive copies of schools' self- evaluation of religious education and collective worship and asked head teachers to use a revised template.

No school self-evaluations have been received since the COVID-19 pandemic. Gwynedd schools have not been asked to provide self-evaluations for the Gwynedd SAC(RE).

2.3.2 Teacher assessment and external examination results in the secondary sector

Due to continued guidance from Welsh Government on the way data is presented and to avoid arbitrary comparison of schools, members were not presented with and were unable to discuss the comparative examination data for examinations awarded in 2025/26.

The table below gives an overview of trends in pupil numbers pursuing Religious Education in GCSE.

Ysgol	2022 (Short Course)		2022 (Full Course)		2023		2024		2025	
YSGOL BOTWNNOG		0.0%	1	1.4%	15	14.4%	10	10.9%	7	7.8%
YSGOL BRO IDRIS		0.0%	5	6.3%	6	14.0%	15	11.6%	11	28.9%
YSGOL BRYNREFAIL		0.0%	11	8.5%	9	6.7%	6	9.8%	7	5.4%
YSGOL DYFFRYN NANTLLE	1	1.4%	14	20.3%	8	11.4%	9	16.4%		0.0%
YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN		0.0%	10	11.9%	11	16.4%	10	14.5%	3	4.0%
YSGOL EIFIONYDD		0.0%	5	7.0%	4	5.6%	101	42.8%	9	11.3%
YSGOL FRIARS	84	35.4%	88	37.1%	127	56.7%	8	7.5%	79	35.9%
YSGOL GODRE'R BERWYN		0.0%	6	5.9%	10	11.0%	21	32.3%	16	25.8%
YSGOL TRYFAN		0.0%	43	27.0%	10	13.9%	14	18.4%	10	10.3%
YSGOL Y MOELWYN	1	1.4%	6	8.2%	34	22.4%	10	14.5%	10	16.7%

2.4 Response of Local Authority

Mair Huws, Assistant Education Resources Officer for Gwynedd Council ensures that any guidance or recommendations made by Gwynedd SAC(RE) is communicated directly to the primary and secondary head teachers.

Up until April 2018, Gwynedd Council commissioned GwE (School Effectiveness and Improvement Service)

to support Gwynedd SAC(RE) meetings and to represent Gwynedd SAC(RE) in regional and national meetings. In March 2018, the Gwynedd SAC(RE) clerk was notified that GwE would no longer be providing professional support to Gwynedd SAC(RE).

Both Primary and some Secondary schools implemented the Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 (and September 2023 in the case of some Secondary schools). Education is therefore in the midst of a period of great change, which made it difficult to monitor standards within Religious, Values and Ethics and Religious Education during subsequent years.

Following a further discussion with the Local Authority it was agreed that Phil Lord, an independent RVE consultant would start supporting Gwynedd SAC(RE) from summer 2025 term.

2.5 Religion, Values and Ethics and the Welsh Government

- The 'Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021' makes it explicit that any agreed syllabus for RVE must reflect both religious beliefs and also non-religious beliefs which are philosophical convictions. The inclusion of 'Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions' had already been included in the Gwynedd Agreed Syllabus. Gwynedd SAC(RE) constitution has been amended to include membership of the British humanists (BHA) as part of Committee A. A member of the BHA sits on Committee A.
- Phil Lord continues to be commissioned by the LA as a professional consultant to support the work of Gwynedd SAC(RE).
- SAC(RE) members welcomed Joanna Thomas, the new director of Education for the Bangor Church in Wales Diocese.
- SAC(RE) created a development plan to support its strategic support for RVE and Collective Worship. Its has three priorities:
    - Priority 1: To develop the effectiveness of SAC(RE)
    - Priority 2: Monitor and support the provision of RE, RVE, in the schools of the Local Authority.
    - Priority 3: Monitor and support the provision of collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the schools of the Local Authority.
- SAC(RE) members were informed of the European Forum of Teachers of RE (EFTRE) summer conference in Budapest.
- Luke Donnellan, director of Understanding Humanism provided a presentation about resources useful for schools.
- A range of materials to help schools managing the removal or the right to withdraw pupils from RVE have been created and made available to schools.
- Anna Silver provided a presentation about resources to help schools teaching about Judaism.

2.6 Religion, Values and Ethics and ESTYN

During the academic year, 13 schools' inspection reports were presented to SAC(RE) members. Schools were inspected between May '25 and January '26.

- Ysgol Santes Helen
- Ysgol Llanystumdwy
- Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn
- Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes
- Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn
- Ysgol Brynaerau
- Ysgol Llandygai
- Ysgol Eifion Wyn
- Ysgol Llanllyfni
- Ysgol Abercaseg
- Ysgol Pen-y-bryn

- Ysgol Y Gelli
- Ysgol Gynradd Bontnewydd

There are no subject judgments in the current Estyn inspection framework. Instead, members receive information from the reports relating to Estyn's comments of a schools' provision of SMSC.

There is no expectation for inspectors to report on whether a school meets the statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship, there would be an expectation of a comment in the report if a school were to be found in breach of its statutory duty.

As part of the process of monitoring, Estyn Inspection Reports are analysed for comments on collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). These are compiled and noted by SAC(RE).

2.7 SAC(RE)'s function in relation to collective worship

Welsh Office Circular 10/94 notes that the LEA should work with SAC(RE) to keep an eye on the daily collective worship provision, and should consider with it any steps which may be taken to improve such provision.

The collective worship must be "of a broadly Christian character". The "determination" procedure permits the suspension of these requirements in relation to some or all of the pupils in a school where they are deemed inappropriate.

SAC(RE) members and Gwynedd schools have previously received collective worship guidance documents:
Guidance on Collective Worship (WASACRE, June 2013)
Supplementary guidance: collective worship in non-denominational schools' (ESTYN, October 2017);

2.8 Determinations

There was no request from any school for a determination in relation to collective worship

SAC(RE)'s Recommendations to Gwynedd Council

Ensure that schools conform to the statutory requirement for collective worship and provide quality collective worship sessions;

Encourage schools to invite Gwynedd SAC(RE) Member to attend collective worship within schools

SECTION 3: ANNEXES

3.1 General information about the composition of SAC(RE)

a) SAC(RE) was established by **Gwynedd Education Committee in 1996 to**

include: Christians and Other Faiths, namely,

- The Methodist Church
- The Union of Welsh Baptists
- The Presbyterian Church of Wales
- The Church in Wales
- Union of Welsh Independents
- The Catholic Church

Teachers, namely;

- The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- National Union of Teachers in Wales (UCAC)
- National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Union of Teachers (NUT)
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
- National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)

Elected members

b) The Constitution of Gwynedd SAC(RE) was reviewed in April 2019 to include:

- **Christianity and other religions-** keep at 6 representatives, one from each of the following belief traditions, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and the Humanist beliefs
- **Representation of Teachers and Headteachers -** keep at 5
- **Elected Members -** keep at 7
- **Co-opted -** SAC(RE) Committee to retain the right to co-opt members
- there are 3 votes, namely 1 for each Group - the Co-opted members do not have a vote

c) The Constitution was further reviewed in September 2022 to amend the Teacher group as follows:

- Representation of Teachers and Headteachers – retain at 5

The seats to be allocated as follows:

3 seats to be shared between the recognised Teachers' Unions (NAS/UWT; UCAC; NEU; ASCL and NAHT) – to be decided by the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum.

1 seat to be filled by the Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA)

1 seat to be filled by the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU)

3.2 SAC(RE) membership of Gwynedd 2023-24

Christians and Other Religions

The Methodist Church	Rev Nick Sissons
Union of Welsh Baptists	Eurfryn Davies
Presbyterian Church of Wales	Gwawr Maelor Williams
Church in Wales	Joanna Wood
Union of Welsh Independents	Bethan Davies Jones
The Catholic Church	Eirian Bradley Roberts
Buddism	Patrycja Bielak Smith
Humanists	Edward Parri-Jones
Judaism	Nathan Abrams
Islam	Mr Mohamed Arabi
Hinduism	Dr Sibani Roy
Baha'i Faith	Jean Owen

Teachers' representatives

UCAC	Emma Roberts (Ysgol Botwnnog)
NASUWT	Miriam Amlyn (Ysgol Eifionydd)
NEU	Heledd Owen (Ysgol Friars)
NAHT	Vacancy
Secondary Headteachers group (GSCU)	Eleri Moss (Ysgol y Moelwyn)

Local Members

Councillor Paul Rowlinson	Plaid Cymru
Councillor Meryl Roberts	Plaid Cymru
Councillor Elin Walker Jones	Plaid Cymru
Councillor Menna Baines	Plaid Cymru
Councillor Jina Gwyrfai	Plaid Cymru
Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones	Independent
Councillor John Pughe Roberts	Independent

Co-opted members (non voting)

Officers

Gwern ap Rhisiart	Head of Education Department
Mair Huws	Assistant education resources officer and SAC(RE) clerk
Rhodri Jones	Democratic Services officer

3.3 SAC(RE) meetings 2025-26

Dates of meetings may be obtained by visting Gwynedd CySAG . During 2025-2026 Gwynedd SAC(RE) met three times through Zoom:

18th November 2025
11th February 2026
30th June 2026 – Not Quorate

The following matters were discussed and further details are provided in the minutes and the main body of the report:

a) 18th November 2025

- Phil Lord (Independent Adviser) presented the Welsh Government RVE playlist, explaining that the resources had been commissioned through WASACRE to support schools' transition to the new curriculum and clarify the differences between Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) and Religious Education. The playlist comprises six modules for Early Years, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Headteachers and Governors, with the new sixth module specifically supporting governors. Each module includes practical elements and strong examples of classroom use. The headteachers' module outlines the implications of curriculum changes, including the removal of parents' right to withdraw children from RVE and teachers' right to withdraw from teaching it, with associated staffing implications.

- Phil Lord (Independent Adviser) presented exemplar RVE and collective worship policies to support schools in discussions with parents. The basic RVE policy explains the subject's aims of fostering understanding and tolerance of Wales' diverse religions, the benefits of the new curriculum and the removal of parents' right to withdraw children, offering support and protection to schools facing concerns. The more comprehensive collective worship policy, tailored to Gwynedd schools, provides a basis for dialogue and defines worship as time for the school community to reflect on important values, drawing on, but not solely on, the Christian tradition; optional evaluation questions could be appended.

- Phil Lord (Independent Adviser) reported on the EFTRE Conference 2025 in Hungary, attended by 60 delegates from across Europe. He noted that Religious Education was generally confessional in most European countries, with a strong church presence in Germany depending on the region, while Scandinavian provision was closer to Wales but placed greater emphasis on knowledge than discussion. The presentations he attended explored encouraging questioning in lessons, concerns that children lacked vocabulary to discuss real-world issues such as war and the pandemic as these questions were raised less often in society, and the relationship between Judaism and Islam. He also reported that a bid had been submitted to host the EFTRE Conference 2026 in Cardiff.

b) 11th February 2026

- Luke Donnellan, Director of Understanding Humanism at Humanists UK, outlined the benefits of including non-religious philosophical convictions in Wales' RVE curriculum: enriching knowledge, promoting mutual understanding and social cohesion, and supporting personal development. He described Humanism as a non-religious worldview emphasising humanity's place in nature, scientific understanding, one life, ethics independent of religion and responsibility for improving the world. He highlighted teachers' resources and training, bilingual materials for Wales and the book 'My Humanist Family' for young children.

- Phil Lord (Independent Consultant) presented guidance on managing parental requests to withdraw children from RVE, outlining the historical shift from predominantly local Christian teaching to multi-faith provision and the removal of the parental right of withdrawal from RVE in 2022. The document categorises parental concerns and suggests appropriate responses to support schools when requests arise despite the absence of a right to withdraw. Members thanked him and welcomed the guidance as a proactive resource, noting that no equivalent document was available for Gwynedd schools. It was suggested that the Education Department make it accessible to teachers through the education SharePoint.

c) 30th June 2026 – Not Quorate

Gwynedd SAC(RE) has affiliated with the Wales Association of SAC(RE)s and its members regularly attend meetings held by WASACRE.

3.3.1 The following provide SAC(RE) with professional support:

Gwern ap Rhisiart	Head of Education Department
Mair Huws	Assistant education improvement officer and SAC(RE) clerk
Rhodri Jones	Democratic Services Officer
Phil Lord	Independent RVE Consultant

Enquiries should be sent to the SAC(RE) Clerk at the Education Department, Gwynedd Council, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1SH

3.3.2 The SAC(RE) report was sent to the following organisations:

Electronic copies of the annual report are to be distributed to the following:

- Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government
- Head of Gwynedd's Education Department
- Gwynedd Council Leader
- Wales Association of SAC(RE)s
- Gwynedd schools

A copy was distributed to:

- Members of Gwynedd SAC(RE)

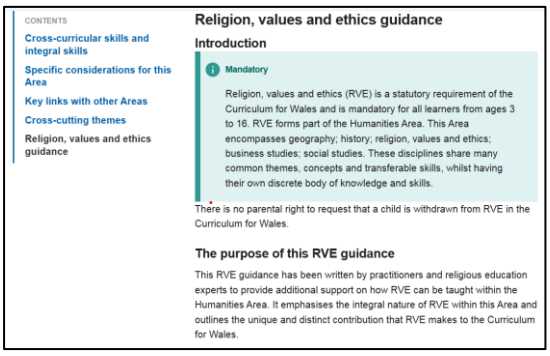
Appendix 3.3.4 RVE - Useful Links and Resources

1) Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics (Curriculum for Wales 2022)
2) Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Curriculum for Wales 2008)
3) Estyn
4) Example RVE Policy
5) Curriculum for Wales 2022 (training video – Denbighshire LA)
6) Religion, Values and Ethics – Supporting Guidance (Conwy LA)
7) Unpacking the Humanities AOLE (Secondary) (GwE training)
8) Comprehensive Guide to RE and RE in the Foundation Phase
9) Religious Education Quality Mark
10) North Wales RE Hwb Network
11) RE:Online
12) AGORED Cymru level 2 award in exploring worldviews
13) WJEC GCSE Religious Studies - Teaching from 2025
14) Diversity and anti-racism professional learning (DARPL)
15) National Association for Teachers of Religious Education
16) RE Today Services
17) Post 16 Challenging Religious Issues (E-Journal)
18) European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education
19) Welsh Government Professional Learning Modules for RVE
20) Conwy Agreed Syllabus Professional Learning
21) RE HUBS
22) National Centre of RE for Wales (Bangor)
23) St Giles Centre (Wrexham)

1) Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics (Curriculum for Wales 2022)
Gwynedd Local Authority Published its Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics during the summer of 2023. The Agreed Syllabus is based on Welsh Governments' Religion, Values and Ethics Guidance.

During the academic year 2024-25, in accordance with the changes to the curriculum for Wales 2022, Religion, Values and Ethics was taught to all primary school children and learners in year 7, 8 and 9.

In the academic year 2024-25, secondary schools continued to teach the pre 2022 curriculum (called Curriculum for Wales 2008), including the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, to pupils from years 10 to 11.


CONTENTS

Cross-curricular skills and integral skills

Specific considerations for this Area

Key links with other Areas

Cross-cutting themes

Religion, values and ethics guidance

Religion, values and ethics guidance

Introduction

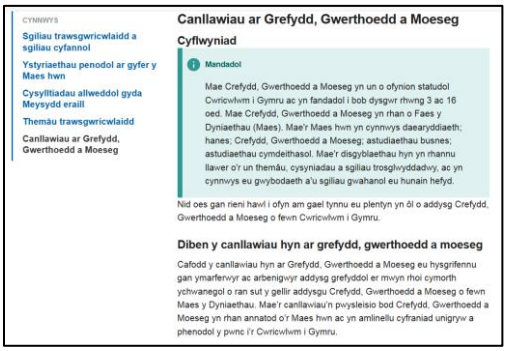
Mandatory

Religion, values and ethics (RVE) is a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RVE forms part of the Humanities Area. This Area encompasses geography; history; religion, values and ethics; business studies; social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, whilst having their own discrete body of knowledge and skills.

There is no parental right to request that a child is withdrawn from RVE in the Curriculum for Wales.

The purpose of this RVE guidance

This RVE guidance has been written by practitioners and religious education experts to provide additional support on how RVE can be taught within the Humanities Area. It emphasises the integral nature of RVE within this Area and outlines the unique and distinct contribution that RVE makes to the Curriculum for Wales.


CYNNWYS

Sgiliau trawsgwricwlaidd a sgiliau cyfannol

Ystyriaethau penodol ar gyfer y Maes hwn

Cysylltiadau allweddol gyda Meysydd eraill

Themâu trawsgwricwlaidd

Canllawiau ar Grefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg

Canllawiau ar Grefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg

Cyflwyniad

Mandadol

Mae Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg yn un o ofynion statudol Cwricwlwm i Gymru ac yn fandadol i bob dysgwr rhwng 3 ac 16 oed. Mae Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg yn rhan o Faes y Dyniaethau (Maes). Mae'r Maes hwn yn cynnwys daearyddiaeth; hanes; Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg; astudiaethau busnes; astudiaethau cymdeithasol. Mae'r disgyblaethau hyn yn rhannu llawer o'r un themâu, cysyniadau a sgiliau trosglwyddadwy, ac yn cynnwys eu gwybodaeth a'u sgiliau gwahanol eu hunain hefyd.

Nid oes gan rieni hawl i ofyn am gael tynnu eu plentyn yn ôl o addysg Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg o fewn Cwricwlwm i Gymru.

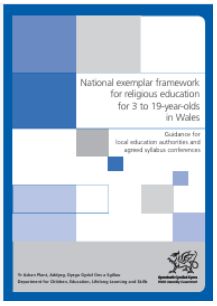
Diben y canllawiau hyn ar grefydd, gwerthoedd a moeseg

Cafodd y canllawiau hyn ar Grefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg eu hysgrifennu gan ymarferwyr ac arbenigwyr addysg grefyddol er mwyn rhoi cymorth ychwanegol o ran sut y gellir addysgu Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg o fewn Maes y Dyniaethau. Mae'r canllawiau'n pwysleisio bod Crefydd, Gwerthoedd a Moeseg yn rhan annatod o'r Maes hwn ac yn amlinellu cyfraniad unigryw a phenodol y pwnc i'r Cwricwlwm i Gymru.

2) Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Curriculum for Wales 2008)

The new Agreed Syllabus, conforming to the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022, relates the subject titled 'Religion, Values and Ethics. The previous Agreed Syllabus, still applicable for secondary schools for the reasons described above, relates to the subject titled 'Religious Education'. This is an important distinction.

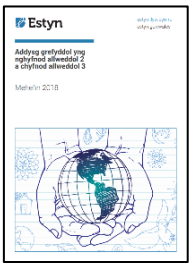


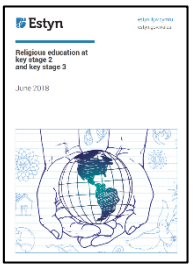


Gwynedd adopted the 'National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3-19 year olds' as the Locally Agreed Syllabus for 'Religious Education' in 2008. To download a copy of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education please click on the images above.

3) Estyn

Estyn conducted a thematic review of Religious Education at key stage 2 and key stage 3. Estyn published its findings June 2018. The report provided recommendations as a result of its findings. Click image to see report:





Estyn provide **Supplementary Guidance** to help inspectors to consider specific aspects of education and training. In 2021, Estyn published guidance on '*Equity, human rights and English as an additional language'.* Many of the aspects Inspectors *should consider* when inspecting this area can be supported by effective RE or RVE teaching.

Estyn also publish **Effective Practice** case studies. The following highlight good practice in RVE or RE.

- Provision to develop pupils' understanding of histories, stories and contributions of black, Asian and minority ethnic people (May 2025)
- Sgwrs Podcast: Towards an Anti-Racist Wales (Feb 2025)
- Promoting pupils' multicultural and moral development. (May 2024)
- How the school uses the wider outdoor environment and community (Cynefin) to enhance pupils' learning experience. (July 2023)

4) Example RVE Policy

- SAC(RE) have developed an example policy for RVE – It is important to note that it is not a requirement for schools to have a RVE policy. However, this policy may help to clarify how RVE should be designed and delivered in your school.
- RVE Policy – English
- Polisi CGMoeseg – Cymraeg

5) Curriculum for Wales 2022

For information about the Curriculum for Wales 2022 please watch this 35 minute training session organised by Denbighshire Local Authority.

6) Religion, Values and Ethics – Supporting Guidance

Supporting Guidance has been created to support the understanding and planning of RVE within context of the curriculum for Wales 2022. The guidance contains information about:

- RVE concepts
- Concepts cross-referenced with the Humanities AOLE Statements of What Matters and Descriptions of Learning
- RVE Lenses
- RVE Journeys
- Points to consider for schools and settings.



Download a copy using the links below:
English
Welsh

7) Unpacking the Humanities AOLE (Secondary)

During the summer term, GwE provided two training sessions for secondary school humanities teachers providing key messages regarding this AOLE.
The first session focus:

- An understanding of the mandatory elements of the Curriculum for Wales framework in relation to the Humanities
- The principles of planning and key considerations for the Humanities
- The pedagogical considerations within the 'Designing your curriculum' section outlined in the AoLE guidance

Presentation English
Presentation Welsh
Video English
Video Welsh

The second session focus:

- Developing a shared understanding of the learning continuum
- Considering approaches to planning and assessment
- Exploring effective pedagogical approaches within and beyond the AoLE

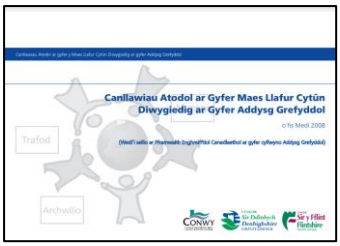
Presentation English
Presentation Welsh
Video English
Video Welsh

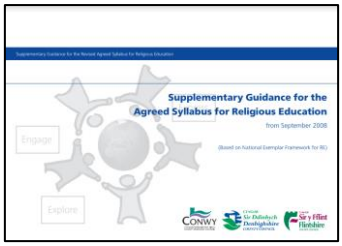
8) Comprehensive Guide to RE and RE in the Foundation Phase

The SAC(RE) and the LA have previously provided comprehensive documents and materials in support of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, and these contain advice on methods of teaching and delivery of RE.

The planning documents, 'Comprehensive Guide to RE' and 'RE in the Foundation Phase', which complement the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, continue to be accessed and used by schools. These resources may be adapted for the delivery of RVE in the primary sector and will continue to be relevant to year groups being taught Religious Education. The resources are available on a Hwb Network - North Wales Religious Education Network. To download a copy of these resources please go to:

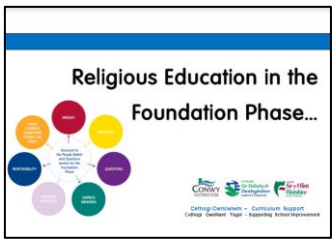
Comprehensive Guide to RE
English
Welsh





RE in the Foundation Phase
English
Welsh





9) Religious Education Quality Mark

Self-evaluation materials continue to be promoted and are available on the REQM website. The RE Quality Mark recognises, celebrates and publicises outstanding religious education in all primary and secondary schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland through its three levels of award, bronze, silver and gold. More information about the quality mark can be found on https://www.reqm.org/

Self Evaluation Materials:
RE-Quality-Mark-Criteria-2024.docx
Meini-Prawf-MAAG-2024.docx

10) North Wales RE Hwb Network

Teaching and research materials are available for teachers accessible through Hwb's - North Wales RE network - https://hwb.gov.wales/go/d8tfh3. Only those with a Hwb account will be able to access the materials on this network. The network contains teaching resources and research material relevant to Religious Education. Key research material available is:

- Big Ideas for Religious Education – Edited by Barbara Wintersgill (English only)
- Signposts – Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views (English only)
- A pedagogy of embrace: a theology of hospitality as a pedagogical framework for religious education in Church schools (English only)
- How well does a cross curricular Humanities Scheme of Work reflect the four purposes of the new Wales Curriculum 2022?

11) RE:Online

RE:Online is a website developed by Culham St Gabriel's to equip and resource teachers and educational professionals to support high Quality religion and worldviews education.

12) AGORED Cymru level 2 award in exploring worldviews

AGORED's 'Exploring World views' is a suite of level 1 and 2 qualifications supporting an understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews. The qualification meets the three core skills set out in the exemplar framework (current curriculum), and it provides opportunities for exploring the concepts for RVE through the statements of what matters in the Humanities area of learning and experience in the Curriculum for Wales (new curriculum). It is not designed to replace the current Religious Studies GCSE, however, it will provide an accessible recognised qualification whilst allowing a school to meet its statutory obligation at Key Stage 4. It will not be offered from September 2027. More details can be found by visiting
English - https://www.agored.cymru/Units-and-Qualifications/Learning-Core/Exploring-Worldviews
Welsh - https://www.agored.cymru/Unedau-a-Chymwysterau/Craidd-Dysgu/Archwilio-Bydolygon

13) WJEC GCSE Religious Studies - Teaching from 2025

Specification for the GCSEs and 'A' level courses can be accessed here.

- GCSE
- A Level

The following Link includes dates for the publication of the specification, assessment materials and guidance for teaching.

14) Diversity and anti-racism professional learning (DARPL)

DARPL's website contains a range of training material to support this important aspect of the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
English - https://darpl.org/
Welsh - https://darpl.cymru/

15) National Association for Teachers of Religious Education

Schools have been informed of anti-racist resources made available by NATRE. Unfortunately, these resources are only available in the English language. They can be accessed here… https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/

16) RE Today Services

RE today provides resources to support teachers as they engage with the Curriculum for Wales.

17) Post 16 Challenging Religious Issues (E-Journal)



Challenging Religious Issues is a journal for students and teachers of AS and A-level Religious Studies. It is also a useful resource for anyone who wants to develop or refresh their subject knowledge. Over 65 open access journal articles have been published in the journal so far including articles written by leading scholars and practitioners. The articles are linked to Religious Studies A-level specifications. The articles are interactive through the use of 'discussion points' and live links to relevant external websites. All issues are available in English and Welsh. The St Giles' Centre has funded and managed the Welsh language version from issue 14 onwards. Please click the link below to access the Challenging Religious Issues from the St Giles website.
English - https://stgilescentre.org/16-2/
Welsh - https://stgilescentre.org/cy/16-2/



18) European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education
Teaching of RE differs greatly across Europe. For a greater insight into RE in neighbouring countries visit www.eftre.net

19) Welsh Government Professional Learning Modules for RVE

These resources are intended to support practitioners with the changes to RVE (formerly Religious Education), within the Curriculum for Wales. The modules are specifically tailored and aim to support practitioners. They help with the transition to a new way of thinking, planning and delivering an RVE curriculum that is purposeful for learners in Wales. There are currently five modules:

The modules can be accessed here:
English - Repository - Hwb (gov.wales)
Welsh - Repository - Hwb (gov.wales)

20) Conwy Agreed Syllabus Professional Learning
Conwy teachers were provided with professional learning on the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. SAC(RE) members received a summary of the training provided for teachers.
A video and the PowerPoint presentation of this summary can be accessed below:
Video
Presentation

21) RE HUBS
A resource bringing together information to support the teaching of Religion Values and Ethics including details of visiting speakers, places of interest and links to a broad range of training materials and resource.

22) National Centre of RE for Wales

Teachers across the LA can access professional support from the Welsh National Centre for RE. The centre provides A level and GCSE revision materials and classes and Professional Learning for secondary teachers a range of religions and worldviews.

For more information check out their Facebook Page

23) St Giles Centre (Wrexham)

a. Exploring Our World **(ages 3-7)**
b. Exploring Why **(ages 5-7)**
c. Randalph the Wise – Stories about a spiritual quest and search for meaning **(ages 8-11)**
d. World Faith Series **(ages 8-11)**

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	**September 2022**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Beca Brown**
Contact Officer:	**Buddug Mair Huws**
Contact Telephone Number:	**34319**
Title of Item:	**REVIEW OF THE GWYNEDD STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) CONSTITUTION**

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

(i) The Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendation of the Education Department and the Gwynedd SACRE Committee to change the membership of Group B, as noted:

- **Group A - Christianity and other Beliefs**

- **Group B - representation of Teachers and Headteachers – retain at 5**

  The seats will be allocated as follows:
  3 seats to be shared between the recognised Teachers' Unions (NAS/UWT; UCAC; NEU; ASCL and NAHT) – to be decided by the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum.
  1 seat to be filled by the Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA)
  1 seat to be filled by the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU)

- **Group C - Elected Members - retain at 7**

- **Co-opted - SACRE Committee to retain the right to co-opt members**

- **(there are 3 votes, which is 1 for each Group. The Co-opted members do not have a vote)**

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The Council has not considered the constitution since 2019, and as a result the existing constitution notes that teacher representatives come from the Teachers' Unions that are active within the Authority:

ASCL (1)
NAS/UWT (1)
UCAC (1)

NUT (1)
ATL (1)

However, the NUT and ATL Unions merged in 2017 to create the NEU Union, and the NAHT Union is also recognised by Gwynedd Council.

The Education Department and SACRE are of the opinion that there is a need to strengthen the teachers' representation on the Committee to add value to the Committee's meetings and actions.

The Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA) is a group that meets monthly and includes one Primary Headteacher from every catchment area in Gwynedd and the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU) also meets monthly and includes every Secondary Headteacher in Gwynedd. It is believed that it would be appropriate to ask for a nomination from both these groups to ensure representation of one primary and secondary headteacher/teacher on the SACRE committee.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Background
The Education Act 1996 places a duty on the local authority to establish a standing council to advise it on religious education.

SACRE Functions

In accordance with the Constitution, the functions of SACRE are as follows:

- Advise the Local Authority on worship in schools and religious education to be provided in accordance with the agreed syllabus, including teaching methods, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers;

- Consider whether it should be recommended that the Local Authority's current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by calling an Agreed Syllabus Conference [ASC];

- Consider requests from schools to come to a decision (to be excluded from the requirement that religious worship should be "Christian"):

- Report back to the Local Authority and the Welsh Government on its activities annually.

SACRE Membership
The Act notes that SACRE should include representatives from among the following:

- A group of persons to represent the Christian denominations and other religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area ('Group A')

- A group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area (Group B)

- A group of persons to represent the authority (Group C)

Only the above representative groups have the right to vote, and each group will have one vote.

SACRE itself could also co-opt members (but they would not have a vote)

Circular 10/94
In addition to the statutory provision, in 1994 the former Welsh Office published guidance on Religious Education and Collective Worship in the form of Circular 10/94, which includes provisions involving the implementation of SACRE.

Gwynedd Council SACRE
The SACRE membership was reviewed by Gwynedd Council's Cabinet in April 2019, and the current membership is as follows:

Christians and Other Faiths (Group A)
The Methodist Church
Union of Welsh Baptists
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Church in Wales
Congregationalist Union
The Catholic Church
one representative from the following beliefs: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and the Humanists

Teachers representing the following Unions
ASCL (1)
NAS/UWT (1)
UCAC (1)
NUT (1)
ATL (1)

Elected Members Membership (7)
(Based on political balance)
(Ex-officio Members, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Council)

The SACRE constitution has not been reviewed since then.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1 Submit the Cabinet's decision to the SACRE Committee on the 29th of November 2022.
4.2 Act on the change to the Constitution in accordance with the Cabinet's decision.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

5.1 **The Gwynedd SACRE Committee's opinion on adapting the way teachers' representatives are invited -** It would be an opportunity for Gwynedd SACRE to be more representational and will enable them to increase the key teachers' representation on the Committee

5.2 **The view of the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum -** The constitution needs to be amended to reflect the current situation in terms of teachers' unions.

5.3 **Views of the Statutory Officers:**

i. The Monitoring Officer: The report has been the subject of advice by the Legal Services. No observations to add in relation to propriety.

ii. Head of Finance: Nothing to add from the perspective of financial propriety

CCYSAGauC
Cymdeithas Cynghorau Ymgynghorol Sefydlog ar Addysg Grefyddol Cymru
WASACRE
Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education

WASACRE Summer Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 24 June 2026
9.30 – 12:30
Hosted by Conwy SAC, virtual via Zoom
Chaired by Edward Evans
35 participants including special guest, Anna Silver, and SAC representatives across Wales

Attendance

Ynys Môn / *Anglesey* Phil Lord (PL) **Blaenau Gwent** Kathy Riddick (KR) **Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / *Bridgend*** Edward Evans (EE) Alice Parry (AP) **Caerffili/ *Caerphilly*)** Eifion ap Llwyd Dafydd (ELD) **Caerdydd / *Cardiff*** Corinne Hainsworth (CH) **Sir Gaerfyrddin / *Carmarthenshire*** Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR) **Ceredigion** Anne Uruska (AU) Rhianydd James (RJ) **Conwy** Phil Lord (PL) Dr Lowry Brown (LB) Roger Boon (RB) Josh Andrews (JA)	**Sir Ddinbych / *Denbighshire*** Phil Lord (PL) Jennie Downes (JD) **Sir y Fflint / *Flintshire*** Lyn Oakes (LO) **Gwynedd /** **Merthyr Tudful / *Merthyr Tydfil*** Donna Graves (DG) **Sir Fynwy / *Monmouthshire*** Louise Brown (LB) Rachel Buckler (RB) Clare Werrett (CW) **Castell-nedd Port Talbot /*Neath and Port Talbot*** Rachel Samuel (RS) **Casnewydd / *Newport*** **Powys** John Mitson (JM) Caroline Davies (CD)	**Rhondda Cynon Taf** Donna Graves (DG) Alison Lee **Torfaen** Hayley Jones (HJ) **Bro Morgannwg / *Vale of Glamorgan*** Kathy Riddick (KR) **Wrecsam / *Wrexham*** Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ) **CSC** Donna Graves (DG) **EAS** Hayley Jones (HJ) **NAPfRVE** Phil Lord (PL) Donna Graves *(DG)* **EFTRE** Phil Lord (PL) **REC** Kathy Riddick (KR)	***Observers*** **WJEC** Chris Owens (CO) **ESTYN** Michelle Gosney (MG) **Church in Wales** Lisa Taylor (LT) **Catholic Education Service** **WLGA** Elin Stock (ES) **Qualification Wales (QW)** Oliver Stacey (OS) **Special guests:** Anna Silver (AS) - Board of Deputies of British Jews **Translator:** Sioned Jones (SJ) Rhys Evans Sarah McErlaine Cllr Sue Shotter Maddie Saraireh

Minutes of the meeting

1. **Introduction and Welcome**

The Chair, Edward Evans, opened the meeting and introduced Dr. Lowri Brown, Chief Education Officer, who welcomed attendees, emphasised the importance of high-quality RVE across Wales and highlighted the collaborative work on implementing the agreed syllabi for RVE across Wales. Roger Boon, the outgoing Chair of Conwy SACRE, reflected on his time in the role and highlighted a range of issues from the lack of qualified RVE specialist teachers in Wales to the perceived lack of explicit RVE content in the new syllabus offer. The meeting included a moment of quiet reflection led by Edward Evans.

2. **Quiet Reflection**

Edward Evans offered reflections on making positive changes in the world and the importance of individual action. He also shared a Universal Statement for Peace.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Vicky Barlow and Councillor Nia Jenkins.

4. **Minutes of the Last Meeting (19 March 2026)**

The minutes from the March 19th meeting were accepted after being prepared using AI by RS and LJ.

Decision: Minutes approved following amendments.

ACTION: EE to sign minutes and LJ to file

5. **Matters Arising**

No separate matters arising beyond those addressed within agenda items.

6. **NAPfRVE Presentation**

Presenter: Anna Silver - The Board of Deputies of British Jews

AS presented new Welsh-language resources for teaching Judaism, including an updated Jewish Living Experience Exhibition with 18 banners and 8 artifact boxes now available in Welsh, and a Welsh version of the Jewish Living Online website. The exhibition can be transported around Wales and is currently stored at Cardiff United Synagogue, while the online resource will be fully functional by September. AS also offered to share a comprehensive resource list and invited teachers to join monthly Q&A sessions for support with Judaism education.

The presentation received positive feedback from attendees including RS who praised the quality of the Welsh language content. Several participants requested to be added to AS's mailing list and expressed interest in school visits, with AL offering to coordinate school visits across Wales including upcoming visits to Cardiff, Newport, and Neath/Port Talbot areas. The group discussed promoting Jewish representation on SACRE committees and potential future events, including AL's plans to organise a teacher visit day at the synagogue.

ACTION:

- AS to send her presentation to Libby for onward distribution.
- LJ to circulate presentation link and related resources to all SACRE clerks and, including contact details for follow-up.
- AL to continue to coordinate and offer school visits using the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition and inform interested parties of future events for teachers.

7. Welsh Government Matters

Welsh Government updates were provided by LJ covering the recent meeting on 17-6-26

Persons present:

- WASACRE – Edward Evans, Rachel Samuel, Tania ap Sion and Libby Jones
- Welsh Government –Claire Habberfield and Angharad Thomas-Richards

Angharad has an overarching role in WG - Interim Head of Humanities and ex History teacher with RE as second subject. Sam Clutton has now left the Humanities team.

Discussion points included:

- Parents' and Carers' Guidance on RVE – update
- The Collective Worship Guidance Review – update
- Findings from Estyn's Cross-Cutting Theme Report on Humanities
- RVE / Humanities recruitment and retention crisis and related issues
- Teacher workload relating to the new GCSE
- SACRE Annual Reports review
- The Teacher Voice project

Decisions included: WG colleagues to keep WASACRE Officers updated on all discussion points and arrange future meetings dates in advance as well as extending the offer of ad hoc meetings when necessary.

ACTION:

- LJ to keep in regular contact with CH (WG) for further updates

8. Estyn Annual Report – Humanities Cross-cutting theme

Presentation by Michelle Gosney from Estyn on the Annual Report Humanities Cross-Cutting Theme.

MG presented findings from the curriculum review highlighting weaknesses in humanities education, particularly in planning, subject balance, and development of specific skills across different educational phases. The review showed that while primary schools generally recognise cross-curricular value, they often lack progression in disciplinary skills, and history tends to dominate at the expense of geography and RVE. In secondary schools, the integrated approach to humanities sometimes lacks coherence, and there's an increasing trend of staff teaching outside their subject specialism due to recruitment issues and curriculum models. Key concerns included insufficient professional learning for teachers, limited curriculum time for RVE, and underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups in curriculum

content. Effective leadership was identified as a decisive factor in strong humanities provision, with leaders needing to ensure sufficient curriculum planning time, invest in staff professional learning, and use firsthand evidence to evaluate impact. The discussion revealed that while schools have flexibility to choose between humanities or subject-specific teaching approaches, the current findings reflect expected outcomes of the curriculum redesign, particularly regarding the challenges of non-specialist teaching and subject knowledge development.

ACTION:
- MG to send the Estyn Humanities Thematic Report presentation to LJ for distribution to SACREs and relevant parties.

9. Teacher Voice Project (WASACRE-supported Research)

TaS provided an update on the Teacher Voice Project report, explaining that while the full report was delayed due to the time-consuming process of analysing qualitative data, a shorter PowerPoint presentation was already available through local SACREs. TaS referred to the WASACRE webinar (25 March 2026) presenting initial findings from the survey ahead of the final report.

ACTION:
- Send the shorter Teacher Voice Project voiceover PowerPoint directly to LB (and any other relevant parties) for use prior to upcoming meetings.

10. AULRE and WASACRE Joint Conference Day in Cardiff

Rachel reported on plans for AULRE and WASACRE to hold a joint Conference Day in Cardiff in early September. However, she was still awaiting confirmation of the location from Mark Bryant.

ACTION:
- RS to chase Mark Bryant for confirmation of the location for the joint AULRE / WASACRE conference day and update members via SACREs when information is received.

11. Qualifications

OS provided updates on qualifications relevant to RVE, including the Skills for Life and Work qualifications in Wave Three, which are being developed by five awarding bodies with specifications to be published in September. He discussed feedback from the GCSE religious studies practitioner group regarding content challenges, assessment issues, and potential quick wins such as extending NEA submission deadlines and making briefs valid for two years. The group also addressed concerns about the lack of qualifications for high-achieving students and the absence of a short course option, with OS agreeing to feed these back to the executive team.

ACTIONS:
- OS to check and confirm whether schools can mix and match units from different awarding bodies for the new Skills for Life and Work qualifications, and report back to LJ.
- OS to take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the impact of new qualifications on schools without specialist teachers.

- OS to take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the capping of the new Level 2 Skills for Life qualifications and the lack of provision for higher-attaining students in absence of a short course GCSE in Religious Studies

12. Report of Executive Committee (13 May 2026)

The meeting covered several updates and discussions. Most of the items on the agenda are on this agenda, including WG meetings and usual updates. Correspondence shared in item 14.

EE announced that SACREs will no longer exist from September 2026, and after discussion at the Executive meeting, the decision was made to retain the name WASACRE. Rachel Buckler and others endorsed the decision after a thorough discussion.

13. Updates

Updates from NAPfRVE, WJEC, REC, EFTRE, and Local matters / enquiries were presented in written form for the first time, with participants generally agreeing this approach was beneficial. Additional information included:

- NAPfRVE:

The recent meeting discussed several key topics related to RVE and current issues. PL presented materials created by NAPfRE members using Estyn resources from the Humanities Cross-Cutting Theme report relating to Self-evaluation and school improvement. These resources had been rewritten from an RVE perspective and shared with All RVE Advisers for use with local schools. PL invited SACREs to contact him with any questions or comments.

14. Correspondence

- Cultivating Deeper Inter-Disciplinary Dialogue – Cardiff Metropolitan University and Christchurch Canterbury University

Tania updated the group on the "Cultivating Deeper Interdisciplinary Dialogue" project, explaining that it had been modified to include recorded webinars rather than in-person teacher engagement, and that she had personally contributed a webinar titled "Being Shaped by Place, Prayer, Living with Nature and the Sacred."

- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests affecting schools in Wales

TaS reported on correspondence with Bangor University regarding their FOI request, which caused disruption to schools, and recommended concluding the correspondence with a thank-you response.

Libby presented guidance that WASACRE created to help SACRE advisors address FOI requests from the National Secular Society, which included clarification on questions about religious education and visitor policies.

The group agreed to send a final thank-you letter to Bangor University to close that correspondence and discussed the possibility of engaging with Welsh Government regarding governing bodies' role in FOI responses.

ACTION:

- TaS to draft and send a final response to Bangor University, thanking them for their response and making observations, to close correspondence regarding the FOI request.
- Resend the FOI guidance document to RB (Conwy) and Corinne Hainsworth (Cardiff).
- Write to Welsh Government (or coordinate with WASACRE officers) to ensure that the review of governing bodies includes explicit reference to governors' statutory duty regarding RVE and consideration of FOI responsibilities.

15. Any Other Business

No other business

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for November 10th, hosted by Ceredigion (online).

Summary of Key Actions

Actions	**Person**
Sign minutes and file	EE (WE) and LJ (WE)
• Send presentation to for onward distribution. • Circulate presentation link and related resources to all SACRE clerks and, including contact details for follow-up. • continue to coordinate and offer school visits using the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition and inform interested parties of future events for teachers.	AS(BoDBJ) LJ (WE) AL (RCT)
Keep in regular contact with CH (WG) for further updates	LJ (WE)
Send the Estyn Humanities Thematic Report presentation for distribution to SACREs and relevant parties.	MG (E) and LJ (WE)
Send the shorter Teacher Voice Project voiceover PowerPoint directly to LB (and any other relevant parties) for use prior to upcoming meetings.	LJ (WE)
Chase Mark Bryant for confirmation of the location for the joint AULRE / WASACRE conference day and update members via SACREs when information is received.	RS (WE)
• Check and confirm whether schools can mix and match units from different awarding bodies for the new Skills for Life and Work qualifications, and report back to LJ. • Take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the impact of new qualifications on schools without specialist teachers. • Take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the capping of the new Level 2 Skills for Life qualifications and the lack of provision for higher-attaining students in absence of a short course GCSE in Religious Studies	OS (QW) OS (QW) OS (QW)
• Draft and send a final response to Bangor University, thanking them for their response and making observations, to close correspondence regarding the FOI request.	TaS (WE)

• Resend the FOI guidance document to RB (Conwy) and Corinne Hainsworth (Cardiff). • Write to Welsh Government (or coordinate with WASACRE officers) to ensure that the review of governing bodies includes explicit reference to governors' statutory duty regarding RVE and consideration of FOI responsibilities.	LJ (WE) KR (WE)

WASACRE Executive (WE)