

Update / Diweddariad

Agreed Syllabus Conferences 2022  
Cynadleddau Meusydd Ilafur Cytun  
2022



# Legislation Summary – Aims of the agreed syllabus

- The agreed syllabus is **not designed to be a scheme of work**, but rather a **helpful guide and legal reference point** for schools to support them in designing an appropriate and relevant curriculum for their learners which includes RVE within the Humanities Area. The approach of the Curriculum for Wales Framework is based on the principle of subsidiarity and, as such, each agreed syllabus should **recognise and reflect the autonomy of each school and setting in realising its own curriculum**. One of the intentions of this statutory RVE guidance is **to provide the right balance between the central steer of the Curriculum for Wales Framework and the requirements of local determination for RVE**, as set out in agreed syllabi across Wales. Therefore, the **statutory RVE guidance has been written as the basis for the agreed syllabus**. Should a local authority wish to adopt or adapt this guidance as their agreed syllabus they may do so. **It will ultimately be the responsibility of the provider to ensure that non-denominational RVE is provided pluralistically.**
- Agreed syllabuses **should recognise that while the principal religions and their traditions in Wales should be taught in all schools, other beliefs (including non-religious philosophical convictions such as humanism and atheism)** are now a recognised part of life within local areas in Wales and beyond. This is reflected in the Act which states that the agreed syllabus:
  - must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are in the main Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales
  - must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales

# The agreed syllabus and the Curriculum for Wales Framework

Establishing the relationship between the agreed syllabus and the Curriculum for Wales Framework is the **legal duty of Agreed Syllabus Conferences**. Local authorities, Standing Advisory Councils and Agreed Syllabus Conferences **must have regard** to the Curriculum for Wales Framework, which includes statutory RVE guidance, when developing and adopting an agreed syllabus. The agreed syllabus is the **first point of reference for RVE provision in schools and settings**, therefore it is essential for the agreed syllabus to **recognise and reflect the approach of the Curriculum for Wales Framework and the principles set out in the statutory RVE guidance** in order to create balance and maintain coherence across the Curriculum for Wales. The statutory RVE guidance enables Agreed Syllabus Conferences to establish, with confidence, this relationship between the locally agreed syllabus and the Curriculum for Wales Framework for learners aged 3 to 16. This includes guidance to support schools and settings in ensuring that there is **appropriate breadth and depth in RVE while recognising the principle of subsidiarity**.

# Local Determination

- RVE is locally determined
- Local Authorities have the decision on their own agreed syllabus
- It is the LA that convenes an ASC
- It is the decision of the LA to accept, or not, the proposed agreed syllabus prepared by the ASC.
- Subject specialist adviser's and ASC only advise the LA
- It would be good practice to involve the Director of Education or the LA representative within the ASC discussions to assist with clarity of understanding.
- Legislation included within the guidance has been written and agreed by Welsh Government and its Legal Services, not by the wider team involved in the drafting of the RVE guidance. All ASC's must have regard to the CfW Framework which includes the legal summaries. It is therefore important that the legislation regarding RVE is not changed to reflect local concerns. If an agreed syllabus includes amendments to the legislation, or local interpretations of it, the LA could leave itself open to legal challenges and may not be eligible for support from the WG.

# Key messages when constructing an agreed syllabus

- The RVE statutory guidance is considered and informed by practitioners, providers of education and stakeholders. SACRE's have had a say throughout the construction process and all comments have been considered within the final guidance.
- The CfW Framework and RVE guidance will be supported by subject advisers and professional learning. If an ASC chose to go down an alternative route, will they have the capacity and expertise to provide professional learning to support their locally agreed syllabus?
- All schools in Wales have to 'have regard' to the RVE guidance on Hwb as part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. Therefore, any deviation from that wording within an agreed syllabus could cause unnecessary confusion and would significantly impact on workload.
- Consider the effects of significant deviation from the statutory guidance and the tension this would create for schools
- Consider the relevance of the agreed syllabus to different types of schools and the practitioners who will be designing their curriculum in line with CfW and RVE guidance.
- The agreed syllabus needs to be open to the different styles of delivery of RVE across schools in the local authority.
- It need to be accessible to a wide-ranging audience and consideration needs to be given to readability, length and duplication of other documentation.
- Why would an ASC wish to put additional constraints on local schools which have not been placed on other schools across Wales?

# Key messages when constructing an agreed syllabus

- If the agreed syllabus includes additional information, ask the question, 'Are these sections useful and appropriate? Do they move too far away from the CfW Framework and/or RVE guidance?'
- The agreed syllabus needs to ensure that it reflects the requirement for objective, critical and pluralistic RVE.
- It is not recommended that the LA adopts the RVE guidance on Hwb by simply providing a link to it on the council website.
- It is not recommended to lift the text from the RVE guidance on Hwb and place it within a PDF or hard copy, as this removes the embedded links within the guidance to other parts of the CfW Framework.
- It is not recommended to amend the text from the RVE guidance on Hwb, or the legal summary on RVE, as this can lead to confusion and be misleading, particularly for schools and practitioners.
- Any local issues or instructions that the ASC wants to raise or flag up to their schools would be better placed separately within the agreed syllabus.
- The rights of Children are reflected within the CfW Framework and the RVE guidance. Does the agreed syllabus reflect the rights of children too?

# WG responses to SACRE questions

1. For the interim period there is a need for two agreed syllabi which require two ASC's:
  1. Old curriculum – National Exemplar framework which has previously been adopted or adapted by the majority of SACRE's. If it has been accepted within the last 5 years there is no need for an ASC at this time.
  2. New Curriculum – locally determined agreed syllabus having 'regard to' the CfW Framework and the RVE guidance, recommended by a newly constituted SAC.
2. It is the Local Authority's decision as to whether the adoption of the recommended agreed syllabus is a delegated responsibility or should be presented to full Council for Cabinet decision.
3. Allocation of time for mandatory RVE within the CfW is a matter for the individual school. The SAC should assume sufficient time will be allowed.
4. The legislation on monitoring compliance in RVE has not changed is still rests within Estyn.

## Examples of how different settings/LA's have responded

- Libby Jones – Wrexham SACRE
- Elizabeth Thomas – Church in Wales



# Next Steps

1. Share the information with your SACRE's and within your ASC.
2. If questions arise from this information or during your ASC meetings, please email to myself or the secretary of WASACRE.
3. Take advantage of training opportunities:
  - 'A children's rights approach to Religion, Values and Ethics' by the Children's commissioner for Wales on Tuesday 26th of April

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cyfle-hyfforddi-sesiwn-saesneg-training-opportunity-english-session-tickets-310439000407>

- Policy insight event hosted by Welsh Government showcasing the national online Professional Learning resources for RVE being supported by WASACRE.

[https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=Ug4\\_TzS3ZEGUCRtgHRR5k-o3QlzEdh5Eu5nA5bErWa5UNzdUWU1BSDg5RUZaNOZETVFDNzY5QjRGMC4u](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=Ug4_TzS3ZEGUCRtgHRR5k-o3QlzEdh5Eu5nA5bErWa5UNzdUWU1BSDg5RUZaNOZETVFDNzY5QjRGMC4u)