

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting: 27 September 2022
Cabinet Member: Councillor Beca Brown
Contact Officer: Buddug Mair Huws
Contact Telephone Number: 34319
Title of Item: **TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE GWYNEDD COUNCIL AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS**

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is requested to approve and adopt the Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics in accordance with the recommendation of the Education Department, the Gwynedd Statutory Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) and Agreed Syllabus Conference and the Welsh Government's Guidance

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Every local authority has a legal duty to hold an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the syllabus and recommend an appropriate syllabus for adoption by the local authority. Whenever the local authority is of the view (based on the observations made to it or otherwise) that the agreed syllabus for religion, values and ethics should be reconsidered, the local authority will be responsible for convening the Agreed Syllabus Conference for this purpose. The agreed syllabus for religion, values and ethics should be reconsidered every five years. As a result of the emergence of the Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2021 and the establishment of the Curriculum for Wales, the Agreed Syllabus Conference was held for Gwynedd SACRE on 15 February 2022. The unanimous decision of the Conference was to adopt the Welsh Government's Guidelines on Religion, Values and Ethics.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Background

The Education Act 1996 places a duty on the local authority to adopt a local Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics.

The Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2021 established the Curriculum for Wales under the law, replacing the Basic Curriculum (that includes, for example, national and local curricula noted in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002).

The Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2021 notes the four purposes of the curriculum under the law. It also notes the following mandatory elements that, except for English, encompass the 3 to 16 years old learning continuum:

cross-curricular skills, literacy, numeracy and digital competence

names of the learning and experience areas (Areas)

relationships and sexuality education

religion, values and ethics

Welsh

English - from 7 years old in accordance with Gwynedd's Language Policy

Once the agreed syllabus for religion, values and ethics is adopted, it will be a requirement for every maintained school and setting to consider the agreed syllabus, including schools of a religious character, when planning an element of the agreed syllabus in their Religion, Values and Ethics provision.

Should the local authority wish to adopt or adapt the guidance as their agreed syllabus, they may do this.

3.2 Statutory Function of SACRE

- Consider and recommend an agreed syllabus for the Local Authority following holding the Agreed Syllabus Conference [ASC];
- The Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2021 does not specify by which date the Agreed Syllabus Conference will firstly have to prepare and recommend the agreed syllabus. The local authority has to adopt a new syllabus to replace the existing agreed syllabus to be used in schools and settings that implement the Curriculum for Wales. Therefore, the SACREs for Religion, Values and Ethics and the Agreed Syllabus should be established in good time to present an agreed syllabus in accordance with the process of implementing the Curriculum for Wales in 2022. The local authority will be responsible for administrating this.

3.3 Legal Status of the Guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics

The Guidance on Religion, Values and Ethics in the Humanities Field is statutory and issued under section 71 of the Act, and it is proposed that it will assist those who are responsible within the Act for planning the syllabus for religion, values and ethics as part of the school curriculum.

3.4 The Welsh Government's Guidance on Religion, Values and Ethics

There was comprehensive consultation work on the Guidance from March 2020 onwards and Wales SACREs were an integral part of their creation. The output of the consultation efforts held is the guidance published by the Welsh Government.

It is not intended for the agreed syllabus to be a plan of work. Instead, it is proposed to be a guidance and a useful reference point for schools to assist them to plan an appropriate and relevant curriculum for their learners that include religion, values and ethics within the Humanities Field.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1 Share the Gwynedd Agreed Syllabus with Gwynedd schools by 16 September 2022.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

5.1 View of the Gwynedd Education Department: The Education Department is anxious to ensure that the religious education presented in our schools reflects the nature of local society and the views of Gwynedd residents.

5.2 View of Gwynedd SACRE Committee: On 12 July 2022, the Gwynedd SACRE Committee agreed to recommend that the Cabinet should accept and adopt the Welsh Government Guidance on Religion, Values and Morals as Gwynedd Council's Agreed Syllabus.

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

Background documents

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation/#crefydd,-gwerthoedd-a-moeseg>

[Guidance on Religion, Values and Ethics](#)