



Humanism in the Curriculum for Wales

A guide to teaching about humanism and
non-religious philosophical convictions
as part of Religion, Values and Ethics
in the new Curriculum for Wales

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Introduction

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) is part of the Humanities area of learning in the new [Curriculum for Wales \(2022\)](#). The subject guidance demands the inclusion of teaching about both religions and non-religious philosophical convictions. This guidance sets out how teaching about humanism can support the aims and requirements of the new curriculum and how the resources available on [Understanding Humanism](#) can support teaching and learning.

The Curriculum and Assessment Act (2021) states that a syllabus for RVE:

- 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; and
- must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales

What is and isn't a non-religious philosophical conviction or worldview?

What is a non-religious philosophical conviction?

Examples

- 1) A *religious* philosophical conviction: **Christianity**
- 2) A *non-religious* philosophical conviction: **humanism**
- 3) A philosophical conviction that is *neither* religious nor non-religious: **veganism**

Philosophical convictions are defined by case law under the European Convention on Human Rights. A 'philosophical conviction' is not just an 'opinion' or 'idea'. Instead, the term denotes [views that](#) 'attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance'. Further, the view [must be](#) 'consistent with basic standards of human dignity or integrity', possess 'an adequate degree of seriousness and importance', 'be a belief on a fundamental problem', and 'be coherent in the sense of being intelligible and capable of being understood'.

Religious worldviews/beliefs such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are philosophical convictions. They are *religious* philosophical convictions.

The Curriculum and Assessment Act uses the term '*non-religious* philosophical convictions'. Religious philosophical convictions are already covered by the term 'religions', which are also referenced in the act. Non-religious philosophical convictions of relevance to RVE will be non-religious worldviews, such as humanism, and

non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and agnosticism. These are philosophical convictions that are specifically *non-religious*.

Note that there are also philosophical convictions that are *neither* religious nor non-religious. These are convictions that sit outside the religious/non-religious framework. For example, the European Court of Human Rights has found that the refusal of parents to accept corporal punishment at their child's school constituted a philosophical conviction. This conviction might be held for religious or non-religious reasons, as well as for reasons that do not bear on such issues at all. Veganism is another example of a philosophical conviction that is neither religious nor non-religious. It is a conviction that can be held for either religious or non-religious reasons or neither. These philosophical convictions may be explored in RVE, but teaching about them would not cover the requirement to include *non-religious* philosophical convictions.

For more about what is and isn't a non-religious philosophical conviction, see humanists.uk/education/non-religious-philosophical-convictions.

What is a non-religious worldview?

A worldview is often defined as the way a person makes sense of, navigates, and responds to the world. Knowing about somebody's worldview supports an understanding of their beliefs, values, behaviours, commitments, and identity. There are both religious and non-religious worldviews.

Humanism is an example of a non-religious worldview. It makes claims about the nature of reality and how we can best understand it, and it makes claims about how we should live and treat other people. Atheism and agnosticism are *not* non-religious worldviews. They are positions on belief or knowledge about the existence of a god. Knowing that someone is an atheist tells you little about their wider worldview. Similarly, secularism is not a worldview. It is a position on how society should be organised (one that advocates the separation of church and state, supports freedom of religion and belief, and calls for equal treatment on the grounds of religion and belief). It is supported by both religious and non-religious people. Teaching about atheism, agnosticism, and secularism should be included in RVE, but they should not be presented as *worldviews*.

For more about what is and isn't a non-religious worldview, see the [Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk) website.¹

¹ understandinghumanism.org.uk/teaching-about-humanism/what-is-and-isnt-a-worldview

What is humanism, and why should we teach about it?

Humanism is a non-religious worldview shared by millions of people in the UK and around the world. Humanists believe that this life is the only one we have, that the universe is a natural phenomenon with no supernatural side, and that we can live ethical, meaningful, and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity. They trust the scientific method when trying to understand how the universe works, make their ethical decisions based on a concern for the welfare of human beings and other sentient animals, and seek to make a positive contribution towards building a better society.

Including teaching about humanism in RVE supports the aims of the subject. It enables the acquisition of essential knowledge about the heritage and culture of Wales and of the contemporary landscape of religion and belief, it contributes to the goals of social cohesion and mutual understanding between those of different worldviews, and it helps support young people's personal development of their own beliefs and convictions. Inclusive RVE can contribute to a school's legal duty to provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development.

Teaching about humanism can support students to develop an understanding of **cynefin**. Cynefin is defined as 'the place where we feel we belong, where the people and landscape around us are familiar, and the sights and sounds are reassuringly recognisable'. Humanist thought and action has had a deep and rich influence on the beliefs, behaviour, and values found in Wales today and has played a key role in its cultural heritage and national identity, from its politics to its literature and art, from the foundation of the welfare state to non-religious ceremonies. Humanists UK's [Humanist Heritage](#) website is a valuable source of information about the history of humanism in Wales and the wider UK.

Why is humanism the most appropriate non-religious philosophical conviction to teach about?

Humanism is the predominant non-religious worldview in Wales and across the UK today. Teachers familiar with teaching about the main religions will find it straightforward to include teaching about humanism. While humanism is not a religion, it shares many features with religions. It is an attempt to answer life's big questions about identity, knowledge, meaning, and values. Like many religions, it has a long and rich history and has had, and continues to have, a significant influence on modern society. It provides humanists with community and services (such as ceremonies) that support them to live fulfilling lives. Teaching about humanism can therefore be carried out in a similar manner to the way in which teachers already explore religions with their students in the classroom.

How teaching about humanism fits into the new Curriculum for Wales

Four purposes

The Curriculum for Wales states:

Ultimately, the aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society²

It also states that 'RVE makes an important and distinctive contribution to supporting the four purposes'. Teaching about humanism alongside teaching about religions can support this.

Statements of what matters

Below are the statements of what matters from the Humanities area of the Curriculum for Wales:

- Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.
- Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
- Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.
- Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.³

In support of the above statements of what matters, teaching and learning about humanism can:

- Inspire curiosity about life's biggest questions about our origins, our nature, and our goals; offer exploration of non-religious perspectives on concepts that have

²

hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/developing-a-vision-for-curriculum-design/#curriculum-design-and-the-four-purposes

³ hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters

been traditionally studied through a religious lens; and enable opportunities to evaluate and reflect on them

- Contribute to a wider understanding of the range of human experience, including how non-religious people make sense of the world through a variety of events, experiences, and evidence, and how these influence perceptions and interpretations
- Provide a non-religious perspective on the origins and value of the natural world and the human responsibility for the environment
- Enable a better understanding of the complex, pluralistic, and diverse nature of societies; the development of their organisations and institutions; and the impact of humanism, secularism, and non-religious beliefs on the history, heritage, culture, and attitudes of Wales and the wider world
- Support the moral development of active, informed, and self-aware citizens through deepening understanding of our human rights, responsibilities, and shared goals and the need to contribute to a fair and inclusive society

Opportunities for students to discuss and explore their personal perspectives on religious and non-religious worldviews, ethical dilemmas, and social inclusion issues will support the development of healthy, confident individuals that are able to reflect critically and empathetically on their own and others' beliefs and are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Religion, Values and Ethics guidance

In this section, we'll flag up some of the content in the RVE guidance⁴ that makes clear the importance of including teaching about humanism.

Objective, critical, and pluralistic

Teaching about RVE must be objective, critical, and pluralistic:

In the Curriculum for Wales RVE must be objective, critical and pluralistic, both in content and pedagogy; it is not about making learners 'religious' or 'non-religious'. The expression 'objective, critical and pluralistic' comes from European Convention on Human Rights case law. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 ensures that all learners must be offered opportunities through RVE to engage with different religions and non-religious philosophical convictions in their own locality and in Wales, as well as in the wider world.

This is why it is essential that it includes teaching about non-religious worldviews as well as religions, that both are taught from an objective standpoint, and that space is made for critical reflection.

⁴ hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/designing-your-curriculum

Spiritual development

The Curriculum for Wales states:

In the context of RVE, spiritual development is concerned with our natural ability to look for, express and understand what is important in life, and to question who we are and why we are here. Spiritual development may or may not involve religion. Through experiencing and reflecting on our relationships, spiritual development may be apparent in the following: awareness of self in relation to others; connections to the wider and the natural world (and, for some people, to a higher power or ultimate reality); creativity and going beyond the everyday; exploration of ultimate questions and contemplation of meaning and purpose.

Teaching about humanism can support students from non-religious backgrounds and those with non-religious beliefs with their own spiritual development. It can help them to see how life's big questions can be explored from a non-religious perspective and how naturalistic sources of wonder, meaning, and connection can be found.

Concepts and sub-lenses in RVE

Teaching about humanism supports learners to explore and engage with the range of religious and non-religious concepts highlighted within the RVE guidance (see Appendix).

Below, you will find information on how the resources on Understanding Humanism can support teaching about the specific sub-lenses in RVE.

Learning experiences

Learning experiences are a central aspect of the philosophy of the [Curriculum for Wales framework](#).

Experiences highlighted in the RVE guidance include opportunities to:

- engage with religious and non-religious local communities in ways that learners will find meaningful and valuable
- meet people for whom faith and belief is important to help learners explore lived experiences
- engage with religious and non-religious sources, for example religious leaders, people of faith and belief, philosophers, places of worship, artefacts, sacred texts and philosophical writings
- consider what influences people in their response to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems, and explore past events

- ask big questions relating to higher powers or ultimate reality, the world, the meaning and purpose of life and of their own experiences
- learn to respond to the beliefs and convictions of others whilst exploring and analysing their own views and values

One way to provide a rich learning experience about humanism is to invite in a free, local, trained, and accredited [Understanding Humanism school speaker](#). Humanist school speakers can explain why their beliefs are important to them and describe how their humanism supports them to ask and answer big questions about the world, respond to ethical dilemmas, and consider the meaning of their lives. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on and respond to the school speaker's answers.

Progression

Teaching about humanism can take place across the age phases. Below are some suggestions for how progression might take place. Teachers will want to adapt the content appropriately for their own contexts. However, the below should be considered a helpful guide to support progression in students' understanding.

At ages 3–5, students can learn age-appropriate content about simple concepts that are integral to the humanist approach to life: curiosity, kindness, fairness (treating everyone equally), friendship, and the search for what makes us happy. Events like World Humanist Day and Darwin Day can support students' understanding of what humanists might celebrate. Learning about humanist ceremonies (such as humanist naming ceremonies) can also support students' understanding of the value humanists place on freedom and relationships. Learning about humanism can support young children to learn more about themselves and other people and understand the ways in which people are similar and different. This can help develop respectful relationships and an understanding of people's right to believe different things.

At ages 5–8, students can begin to be introduced to humanist beliefs about human beings and the world. They can learn that humanists believe it is possible to lead a good, happy, and meaningful life without the need for religion. The scientific story of our origins can be introduced in an age-appropriate way, and students can learn that not everyone believes in a god. Students can investigate the Happy Human symbol and why happiness is so important to humanists, and they can learn about the Golden Rule and why humanists value kindness and empathy.

At ages 8–11, students can build on their prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of the humanist approach to life. They can learn about the humanist understanding of human nature and potential. They can be introduced to the humanist approach to answering questions about the world: asking questions, thinking carefully, and looking for evidence. This can support them to recognise why science is so important to humanists. Students can learn about the importance humanists place on

the consequences of our actions and the need to take responsibility. Students can learn that humanists believe this is the one life we have and so it is important to make the most of it and support other people to do the same. They can investigate why humanists believe we should work for a world that promotes freedom, fairness, kindness, and individual human rights and why they believe we should take care of the natural world that sustains us.

At ages 11–14, students can further develop their understanding of humanist beliefs and values. This can include what it means to have a naturalistic understanding of reality and how scepticism and reason can be applied when seeking to discover what is true. They can learn that, while humanists do not believe in some ultimate meaning or purpose to the universe, we can each make our own lives meaningful in the here and now. They can explore the value humanists place on the freedom to be the authors of our own lives and consider where humanists believe the limits to such freedom might lie. The scientific story for the origins of our moral instincts and capacities can also be investigated as an alternative to the traditional religious explanations. Students can also be introduced to secularism and its support for freedom of religion and belief and equal treatment of all on such grounds.

At ages 14–16, students can deepen their understanding of what they have previously learned about humanist approaches to questions of human nature, knowledge, ethics, meaning, and society. They can then use this knowledge to investigate how humanists might approach contemporary ethical questions and debates, such as those connected with abortion, assisted dying, war, crime and punishment, relationships, animal welfare, and the environment.

The resources on [Understanding Humanism](#) have been designed to build students' knowledge sequentially over time. The [Core Knowledge guide](#) can support teachers to consider the key concepts and ideas that are appropriate to introduce students to at different ages. See below for more information.

Making links with other areas of curriculum

Literacy: Learning about humanism provides opportunity for oral discussion and debate and explanatory and persuasive writing activity. Understanding Humanism makes suggestions for books and stories to illustrate the humanist approach to life that can support young people's literacy. Many humanist artists and writers have had a profound influence upon our culture.

Numeracy: Opportunities to research, explore, and analyse data on the number of humanists and non-religious people in the UK, as part of a wider investigation into the demographics of religion and belief, can support learning about mathematical concepts such as fractions, percentages, ratio, statistics, probability, and representing data in a real-world context. For example, students might investigate the number of humanists and/or non-religious people in their area. Consideration might be given to the best

questions to ask to find reliable data (Humanists UK would like the current question on the UK census to be changed from 'What is your religion?' as it implies people have one and increases the likelihood of them selecting one).

Digital competence: Like with most subject content, teaching about humanism will allow opportunities to create digital content and carry out online research (perhaps most specifically in an exploration of humanism around the globe). Teaching about humanism can also provide an opportunity to explore questions around what counts as a trustworthy source and questions the ethical questions raised by contemporary (and potential future) technology.

The following can be considered trusted sites to find information about humanism:

- understandinghumanism.org.uk
- humanists.uk
- heritage.humanists.uk
- humanists.international

Humanities: As well as the obvious role in RVE, learning about humanism can support students' understanding of the rich and influential history of humanism in Wales and the rest of the UK. It can also enable students to develop a better picture of the landscape of religion and belief in Wales and around the world. For example, students might explore the history of the process of secularisation. They might investigate which countries have higher proportions of non-religious people, identify on a map which parts of the world are more or less religious, and attempt to explain the reasons for this (including questioning where people are less likely to be open about being non-religious).

Humanists UK's [Humanist Heritage](https://heritage.humanists.uk) website is a valuable source of information about the history of humanism in Wales and the wider UK.

Science and technology: For humanists, knowledge about how the world works is the product of a curious mindset and the search for evidence. Learning about the humanist reliance on the scientific method as the source of knowledge about the world opens up opportunities to explore how science works and the output of the scientific endeavour. The humanist understanding of human beings as naturally evolved animals can support links to required learning in science about evolution and the natural world. The humanist recognition that we are part of the natural world and dependent upon it can inform ethical consideration about our treatment of the environment. Many humanist scientists have contributed to human understanding.

Understanding Humanism resources

All our free teaching resources can be found on the [Understanding Humanism website](#), including information sheets, presentations, activities, films, assessment ideas, and humanist perspectives on a wide range of questions and topics. Our [How to use Understanding Humanism](#) guide provides a good place to start, and our [Core knowledge](#) guide can support planning. Introductory resources can be found in our [What is humanism?](#) area, and many of these resources are available in [Welsh](#). We also have resources on the [history of humanism in Wales](#) and more information can be found on our [Humanist Heritage website](#).

Below, we have laid out where teachers can find specific resources that can support teaching the **sub-lenses in RVE** and can support **other areas of the curriculum**.

Sub-lenses in RVE	Understanding Humanism area of knowledge	Example resources	Content to explore
Search for meaning and purpose: How people respond to the deeper questions of life in order to understand the human condition.	Human beings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human beings: where do we come from? Human potential and responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A scientific understanding of our origins What are human beings capable of, and what are our responsibilities?
	One life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happiness and freedom The Happy Human Making the most of life Making life meaningful Criticisms of a humanist approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The absence of belief in an 'ultimate' meaning or purpose to the universe but the capacity to make our own lives meaningful How humanists find happiness and meaning in the one life they believe they have

	Atheism and agnosticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atheists, agnostics, and humanists • Why atheists don't believe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be atheist or agnostic, and why might somebody not believe in a god?
The natural world and living things: How and why people show concern and responsibility for the world and experience awe and wonder in nature.	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pale Blue Dot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do humanists believe we have responsibilities towards each other and the planet?
	Humanist perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal welfare • Environmental issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates non-religious people's concern for animal welfare and desire to protect the environment?
Identity and belonging: What makes us who we are as people, communities and citizens living in a diverse world.	Human beings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings: where do we come from? • Human potential and responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A scientific understanding of our origins • What are human beings capable of, and what are our responsibilities?
	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special places • Humanist motivations and goals • A fair society • Pale Blue Dot • The veil of ignorance • Secularism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates humanists to build what they believe will be a better world? • What rights should we have as citizens? • How can people with diverse beliefs and worldviews live well together?
	What is humanism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering humanism • Humanist organisations • Humanist groups • The Amsterdam Declaration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where might non-religious people find community? • What might humanists agree on?

	Global humanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global humanism ● Humanists in danger ● Humanisms of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is life like for humanists around the world? ● How might life differ for humanists in different parts of the world?
Authority and influence: How and why different types of authority influence people's lives.	Understanding the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the world ● Beliefs and evidence ● Science and religion – humanism and religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The absence of a holy book or figures of authority ● Science as a progressive source of knowledge
	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanist motivations and goals ● A fair society ● Secularism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The value humanists place on human freedom ● Secularism as a desirable system for organising society
	History and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A history of humanist thought ● Championing change ● A history of humanism in Wales ● Humanists from Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How might humanist thought and action have influenced our beliefs, values, and institutions in the modern world?
	Atheism and agnosticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Atheists, agnostics, and humanists ● Why atheists don't believe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does it mean to be atheist or agnostic, and why might somebody not believe in a god?
Relationships and responsibility: How people live together and why developing healthy relationships is important.	One life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making life meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How connections are important to humanists
	Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanist ceremonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanist naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals ● Why is the support of other people important to humanists?

<p>Values and ethics: How and why people make moral choices and how this influences their actions.</p>	Humanist ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being good ● The Golden Rule ● The evolution of morality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What motivates non-religious people to be good? ● How might non-religious people make decisions about the best way to act? ● Where do our values come from?
	Humanist perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abortion ● Euthanasia ● War and peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do humanists make their decisions on contemporary ethical questions?
	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanists in action ● Humanism and charity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What actions have been inspired by humanist values? ● What causes do humanists support?
<p>The journey of life: What people experience as part of the journey of life and how these experiences are acknowledged.</p>	One life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Happiness and freedom ● Making the most of life ● Making life meaningful ● Criticisms of a humanist approach ● River of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The absence of belief in an 'ultimate' meaning or purpose to the universe but the capacity to make our own lives meaningful ● How humanists find happiness and meaning in the one life they believe they have ● What might humanists believe survives our deaths?
	Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanist ceremonies ● Humanist funerals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanist naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals

Other curriculum areas	Understanding Humanism area of knowledge	Example resources	Content to explore
History	History and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A history of humanist thought ● History of Humanists UK ● A history of global humanism ● Humanisms of the world ● Championing change ● A history of humanism in Wales ● Humanists from Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the history of humanism? ● What is secularisation, and why has it taken place? ● How might humanist thought and action have influenced our beliefs, values, and institutions in the modern world?
	Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How many people are non-religious? How many are humanists? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How has the landscape of religion and belief changed over time? ● What is secularisation?
	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A fair society ● Secularism ● Humanists in action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What actions have individual humanists in history taken that have had an impact on the world? ● What is the history of secularism?
Geography	Global humanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanists International ● Humanist organisations around the world ● Global humanism ● Humanists in danger ● Humanism of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What global actions are humanists involved in? ● What is life like for humanists around the world? ● How might life differ for humanists in different parts of the world?
Maths	Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How many people are non-religious? How many are humanists? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What proportion of people are non-religious? How many people don't believe in a god?

Appendix: Content from the [Curriculum for Wales](#)

[The four purposes](#)

Ultimately, the aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Humanities [introduction](#)

Humanities is central to learners becoming ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world. In contemporary and historical contexts, investigation and exploration of the human experience in their own localities and elsewhere in Wales, as well as in the wider world, can help learners discover their heritage and develop a sense of place and cynefin. It can also promote an understanding of how the people of Wales, its communities, history, culture, landscape, resources and industries, interrelate with the rest of the world. Contemplating different perspectives will in turn help promote an understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity within Wales. Taken together, these experiences will help learners appreciate the extent to which they are part of a wider international community, fostering a sense of belonging that can encourage them to contribute positively to their communities.

It is important that learners reflect upon the impact of their actions and those of others, and how such actions are influenced by interpretations of human rights, values, ethics, philosophies, religious and non-religious views. Through being encouraged to engage with, respect and challenge a variety of worldviews, as well as to understand how to exercise their democratic rights, learners can imagine possible futures and take social action. Such critical engagement with local, national and global challenges and opportunities past and present will help learners become enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.

As they explore their locality and Wales, as well as the wider world, learners can establish a solid base of knowledge and understanding of geographical, historical, religious, non-religious, business and social studies concepts. This exploration will encourage learners to participate in different methods of enquiry, evaluate the evidence that they find, and apply and communicate their findings effectively. These experiences, in and outside the classroom, will help them become ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.

It is important that learners have opportunities to discuss and explore their personal perspectives on religious and non-religious worldviews, ethical challenges and social inclusion issues. Likewise, opportunities to explore the natural world, locally, within and beyond Wales, will help foster in them a sense of place and of well-being. These experiences will help develop learners' resilience, build independence, and increase self-confidence and self-esteem. This will support the development of healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Statements of what matters

- Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.
- Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
- Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.
- Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.

RVE guidance

Mandatory 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
- 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

Concepts are important in RVE because they are central ideas that help learners to make sense of and interpret human experience, the natural world and their own place within it. Learners will have opportunities to explore RVE concepts through a variety of sub lenses which make up the RVE disciplinary lens. These concepts and sub lenses are set out in this RVE guidance.

Concepts

The [statements of what matters in this Area](#) allow learners to explore and critically engage with a broad range of religious and non-religious concepts, which should be carefully considered and underpin curriculum design.

When considering RVE concepts within their curriculum, schools and settings should:

- develop an understanding of the discipline and its value
- provide rich contexts for learners to be curious, to explore ultimate questions and to search for an understanding of the human condition, as well as providing opportunities for learners to reflect and to experience awe and wonder, in a range of meaningful real-world contexts
- develop rich contexts for enquiry into the concepts of religion, lived religion, worldviews, secularity, spirituality, life stance, identity and culture to develop learners' well-rounded understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs and practices
- provide rich contexts for engaging with concepts of belief, faith, truth, purpose, meaning, knowledge, sources of authority, self, origin, life, death and ultimate reality, which can enable learners to develop an understanding of personal and institutional beliefs about the nature of life and the world around them

- develop rich contexts for exploring the concepts of identity, belonging, relationships, community, cynefin, diversity, pluralism and interconnectedness, which can enable learners to gain a sense of self and develop spirituality
- explore the concepts of equality, sustainability, tolerance, freedom, prejudice, discrimination, extremism, good and evil, which can give learners an insight into the challenges and opportunities that face societies
- reflect the concepts and contexts of religiosity, practice, ritual, tradition, worship, sacredness, symbolism and celebration to develop learners' understanding of religion and belief
- provide rich contexts for exploring the concepts of ethics, morality, justice, responsibilities, authority, humanity, rights, values and social action

Sub-lenses in RE

Sub lenses in RVE include:

- Search for meaning and purpose: How people respond to the deeper questions of life in order to understand the human condition.
- The natural world and living things: How and why people show concern and responsibility for the world and experience awe and wonder in nature.
- Identity and belonging: What makes us who we are as people, communities and citizens living in a diverse world.
- Authority and influence: How and why different types of authority influence people's lives.
- Relationships and responsibility: How people live together and why developing healthy relationships is important.
- Values and ethics: How and why people make moral choices and how this influences their actions.
- The journey of life: What people experience as part of the journey of life and how these experiences are acknowledged.