

## **Suggested consultation responses**

### **Deadline: 16 July 2021**

#### **Question 1: How well does the guidance explain the scope of RVE and its context within the Humanities Area appropriately?**

Not well at all

#### **Points to include:**

- The definition of non-religious philosophical convictions is confusing and doesn't use humanism as an example.
- Instead it mixes up non-religious philosophical convictions with philosophical convictions which simply have nothing to do with religion.
- For example, the deeply held belief that corporal punishment is wrong is included in the guidance in a way that could lead to teachers thinking it is a 'non-religious philosophical conviction'. However, this conviction is no more non-religious than it is religious: could be held for religious or non-religious reasons. And more importantly, it shouldn't normally feature in RVE lessons..
- This and other similarly confusing examples should be replaced and the guidance should make it clear that RVE should cover non-religious philosophical convictions that are analogous to religions, like humanism. That is, beliefs that 'attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance' but are also non-religious worldviews.
- A failure to do this could mean humanism, which is the primary non-religious worldview in Wales, continues to be excluded from the curriculum.
- The guidance should also make it clear that narrower non-religious philosophical convictions, like atheism and agnosticism should also be studied.
- The definition of religion excludes many religious groups, including those who do not worship a 'supreme being' and those who believe in multiple gods.
- There is no explanation of what it means to teach the subject in line with human rights law. That is, in a way that is 'objective, critical, and pluralistic'.
- Since there will be no right for parents to withdraw their children from RVE, it is vital that teachers know that they must teach it in a neutral way. They must also make sure that religions and humanism are included on an equal footing. A section on this should be added to the guidance.

**Question 2: Is the guidance, as a whole, clear and helpful for you in your role?**

Very unclear

**Points to include:**

- Refer to your own role/ interest in RVE (see suggestions for parents, teachers, pupils, and SAC(RE) reps above).

**Question 3: Does the guidance offer relevant information to support practitioners when designing their school curriculum for RVE?**

Very unclear

**Points to include:**

- Because it will be a new subject for many, there will need to be additional resources and support for teachers to deliver lessons on humanism.
- The guidance doesn't include a section on how to teach the subject in line with the requirement to be 'objective, critical, and pluralistic'. This may lead to breaches in human rights law and undermine the freedom of religion or belief of pupils and their families.

**Question 5: Does the guidance offer all practitioners sufficient support for their planning and teaching of RVE?**

Insufficient

**Points to include:**

- Reiterate points made in response to Question 1 and 3.

**Question 6 – Is additional support (e.g. professional learning and resources) needed to ensure the successful implementation of this guidance?**

Yes

**Points to include:**

- Many teachers won't have taught about humanism before so will need additional training to do so effectively..
- Now there is no right to withdraw, teachers must fully understand the law and teach in a way that is objective, critical, and pluralistic. They will need training to do this.

## **Question 7**

### **i) Is the guidance a helpful document for developing agreed syllabus conferences?**

Not helpful at all

#### **Points to include:**

- The section of the guidance dealing with the make-up of the local bodies that oversee and develop the RVE syllabus (known as SACs and ASCs) doesn't say they must appoint at least one non-religious representative. So humanists may still be blocked from joining.
- Local authorities often use data from the Census to determine the number of people holding a particular religion or belief in their area. Research shows that the biased nature of the religion question in the Census – 'What is your religion?' rather than whether you have a religion – greatly underestimates the number of non-religious people. And, because there is no 'humanist' option, the Census is completely unable to record how many humanists there are in any one area. For this reason, unreliable Census data is regularly used as a reason to refuse humanist membership SACREs.
- Unless the guidance is changed to make it clear that every SAC and ASC should appoint a non-religious representative, this unfair treatment could continue even after the new curriculum comes into force.

### **ii) Is the guidance a helpful document for developing agreed syllabus conferences?**

Not helpful at all

#### **Points to include:**

- See response to previous question.