
RE legal requirement, agreed syllabus and teaching and learning

Legal requirements

By law, religious education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools and school sixth forms, except those withdrawn* by their parents.

The national curriculum states the legal requirement that:

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Locally agreed syllabus

In community, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character, RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the Local Authority by which the school is maintained.

The RE curriculum is determined by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). The locally agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught, and the attainment levels expected of pupils at different ages. (See [Ealing agreed syllabus for religious education 2020-25](#)).

*The right to withdraw from RE is outlined in the DfE [Circular 1/94](#) page 17-19.

Also, National Association of Teachers of RE provides a good summary of all [Legal Requirements for RE](#).

High quality learning and teaching of RE

In the [Religious Education Non-Statutory Guidance](#), the Government sets out expectations to ensure all pupils receive high-quality RE.

Ofsted Research Review on Religious Education published in 2021 [Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK](#), also identifies factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, the teaching of the curriculum, assessment and systems.

The Religious Education Council review of RE in England ([RE Review Summary](#)) carried out in 2013 draws widely on the expertise of the RE community to develop a benchmark curriculum that promotes high quality learning and teaching in all schools.

The review includes two elements:

1. A non-statutory National Curriculum Framework for Religious Education (NCFRE) which complements the programmes of study provided in the national curriculum.
2. An analysis of the wider context in which RE finds itself, including the opportunities and challenges that face the implementation of the new curriculum framework.

Most recently, the Religious Education Council first edition of the [National Content Standard 2023](#) provides clarification and a benchmark for excellence in religion and worldviews/religious education (RE) in England.

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- [No](#)

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