

OAKMONT Education

Policy

Religion, Values and Ethics

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Oakmont School Religion, Values and Ethics Policy

Oakmont School has designed its school curriculum based on the framework of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. This act sets out in legislation requirements that ensure all pupils aged 3-16 cover the same core learning in a context that is appropriate to them. The Act includes guidance on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE). As RVE is a mandatory requirement of the Curriculum, and we have rolled the Curriculum for Wales out across the school, parents and carers can no longer apply to withdraw their child from any aspect of RVE. This means that all of our learners will receive this education.

This policy aims to provide all members of our school community, pupils, staff, parents, carers and external agencies, with clear information and an understanding of how RVE will be planned for and delivered to, learners at Oakmont School.

Principles and Values

In a world that is evolving and changing rapidly, we need to empower our learners to develop their sense of self, an understanding of what they value and their own reflective and critical thinking skills. RVE delivery should be objective, critical and pluralistic, both in content and pedagogy; it is not about making learners 'religious or 'non-religious'. A pluralistic approach means that a *range* of factual information and a *range* of views on a given subject will be provided without bias.

Oakmont school is an inclusive community. We take a whole school approach to delivering our curriculum and meeting the needs of all learners. We want everyone to feel heard and included. To this end all interested parties will be consulted on this policy and learner voice will influence RVE curriculum content, as it does across all of the Areas of Learning and Experience.

Oakmont School recognises the importance of diversity and difference in society. Our RVE Curriculum will include learning that develops awareness and understanding of different identities, views, values and beliefs. High quality RVE education will allow learners to engage with different religions and non-religious philosophical convictions in their own locality, in Wales and in the wider world.

All topics will be explored sensitively and through a rights-based approach. Pupils at Oakmont School understand they have rights as protected by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Understanding their own rights is a gateway to understanding that others have rights that need to be respected too. This includes Articles 13: Sharing thoughts freely and Article 14: Freedom of thought and religion.

High quality provision for RVE offers a distinct contribution to the realisation of the four purposes behind the Curriculum for Wales. It can encourage learners to know and understand their communities and the world around them. It can provide the means to develop an understanding of religious and non-religious philosophical convictions within in a pluralistic society. It can lead to the opportunity to become informed and respectful instigators of social change and justice. It helps prepare learners in Wales for life and work in a fast-changing and diverse world, as responsible and informed citizens.

It must be noted that this RVE policy is complemented by other school policies such as, but not limited to, Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, E-Safety, Prevent, Equal Opportunities and Community Values.

RVE Curriculum Design and Content

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales are the four purposes, which are the key drivers of all curriculum development. The four purposes set out the aspirations for all learners.

By the age of 16, they should be:

- 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

For RVE, each local authority has a legal duty to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review and to recommend syllabus content. This 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 locally. It must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales.

All educational settings within each authority should then 'have regard' to this Agreed Syllabus. As a school located within Cardiff Local Authority, (although we accept learners from other local authorities), we have regard to the Agreed Syllabus of Cardiff County Council (ASC).

Cardiff local authority sets out the following vision for RVE education:

All children and young people in Cardiff to experience high quality RVE education and develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that enable them to become personally successful, with the skills for lifelong learning and globally engaged citizens, in line with the vision of the Cardiff 2030 child friendly city. The four purposes are the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person within the Curriculum for Wales Act 2021. In fulfilling these, we set high expectations for all, promote individual well-being, tackle ignorance and misinformation, and encourage critical and civic engagement. A school's RVE curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what RVE we teach, but how we teach it, and crucially, why we teach it.

Through delivering high quality RVE education, Oakmont School are committed to:

- Respecting the rights of all children and young people and actively listening to them and involving them in their RVE curriculum.
- The development of happy, well informed and resilient learners, through a focus on RVE academic achievement, personal well-being and progression beyond school.
- Equality of opportunity, championing and celebrating the success and life chances of all children and young people, through all learners studying RVE.
- Raising the aspirations of all children and young people and our expectations of what they can achieve, irrespective of their background.
- Embracing and celebrating the religious and non-religious diversity of the city.
- Respecting and protecting our natural environment for the children and young people of today and for generations to come.
- Openness and collaboration in learning about and sharing diverse beliefs and practices.

At Oakmont School our curriculum should be a reflection of the different beliefs and values we find in society today. This ensures that our learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum.

Through our RVE curriculum, we aim to:

1. Prevent learners from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religious philosophical convictions and worldviews. This requires that the curriculum is based on academic study and scholarship.
2. Create a curriculum that allows learners to develop their knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth and avoids superficial coverage of chosen content.
3. Create a curriculum that is structured and well-sequenced which will support learners in their development through the progression steps. It should allow learners to make progress consistently throughout their time in school.
4. Be inclusive - of both religious and non-religious philosophical convictions and worldviews and ensure these are fairly and accurately represented.
5. Incorporate local context - which includes the school context and the locality as well as learner and teacher knowledge and experience. It should enhance the understanding of 'cynefin' and demonstrate the rich culture of myths, legends and sacred sites in Wales and how these relate to the wider world.

RVE Curriculum Delivery

RVE education, while rooted in Humanities, will be embedded across the whole school curriculum. Delivery will feature a combination of cross curricular thematic studies where religion, values and ethics are explored in context, and discrete lessons at the appropriate level of challenge. This ensures our learners develop their knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth and avoids superficial coverage of content. We are intending that over time all learners will demonstrate increasing effectiveness, an increasing breadth and depth of knowledge, a deepening understanding of the ideas and disciplines of RVE, refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills and an ability to make connections and transfer learning into new contexts.

Whilst the school has a designated RVE lead, it is everyone's responsibility to plan and deliver RVE.

The values and concepts delivered through the curriculum will be reinforced by the culture of the school, both through our work on children's rights, our modelling of respectful communication about and recognition of diversity and our intrinsic school values. Everyone is welcome in our community, everyone is valued and has a contribution to make, and we foster curiosity about each other and our different beliefs, religions and values.

RVE Concepts

The statements of What Matters within Humanities allow learners to explore and critically engage with a broad range of religious and non-religious concepts. Our curriculum will provide opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom for learners to:

- 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

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. Learners can develop an awareness of themselves in relation to others. Spiritual development can also occur as learners engage with cynefin (how our connection to our surroundings can shape our sense of identity and well-being) and in everyday life within their local, national and global communities.

As a school we seek to enhance pupil engagement through enrichment activities. In RVE these may include opportunities to:

- engage with religious and non-religious local communities in ways that learners will find meaningful and valuable
- engage in role play and participate in, or observe, activities such as celebrations or re-enactments
- consider what influences people in their response to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems, and explore past events
- experience and reflect on the mystery, awe and wonder of the natural world, historical locations and religious and cultural sites
- observe and participate in cultural activities that help learners to understand human experiences
- handle and explore religious artefacts and objects, including sacred and other texts
- visit local places of worship and other special places, landscapes and environments, including those with a significant religious and spiritual dimension
- meet people for whom faith and belief is important to help learners explore lived experiences
- ask big questions relating to higher powers or ultimate reality, the world, the meaning and purpose of life and of their own 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
- learn to respond to the beliefs and convictions of others whilst exploring and analysing their own views and values.

Religion, Values and Ethics Post 16

RVE education is not mandatory post 16. However, as learners at Oakmont School are placed in peer groups best matched to their developmental abilities, they may be learning in a group that is following the Curriculum for Wales, including cross-curricular RVE.

For those learners who may be following post compulsory educational pathways, they will be encouraged to include RVE as part of their curriculum. Learners will be given the opportunity to co-construct their own learning which can encompass religion and philosophical convictions, worldview studies, alongside engagement with ethical and philosophical topics. Delivery may combine timetabled lessons, guest speakers and visits, enrichment activities and projects.

Inclusion and Equality in Religion, Values and Ethics

This RVE Policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against learners on the basis of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the *protected characteristics*). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

RVE is not only classroom based. It will be embodied in the culture of the school community. We are an inclusive school where everyone is valued and we foster respectful communication between each member.

All teachers ensure that learners are ambitiously planned for, within a progression step relevant to their need. All pupils will receive an RVE education that is pluralistic and will contribute to the content of the curriculum set at the appropriate level. Pupils at Oakmont School have additional learning needs (ALN) and will be supported to overcome any barriers to learning. Further information can be found in our ALN Policy.

Our curriculum design adheres to the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales (2022). Learners will have opportunities to learn about Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stories within their RVE lessons and will be supported with a curriculum that demonstrates an understanding of anti-racism and challenges stereotypes and harmful norms.

Prevent and Safeguarding

While Prevent is a whole-school safeguarding responsibility, RVE plays a pivotal role in building resilience and awareness among learners to help keep them safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The nature of the RVE curriculum addresses some of the primary Prevent objectives. Cardiff is a Home Office Prevent priority area, therefore as a Cardiff school, we will consider how our RVE curriculum can actively support the safeguarding of learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Learners may disclose information to school staff that cannot remain confidential. All Oakmont School staff are trained and confident in Safeguarding procedures and these are clearly outlined in the Schools Safeguarding Policy. The policy complies with The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 and Keeping Learners Safe 2022.

If any staff member is concerned regarding a disclosure from a learner, they will always inform the learner that they are going to pass the information on. They will then follow school policy by speaking with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Head Liz Nihan . If the DSL is not available, they will inform the Deputy DSL.

Curriculum Evaluation and Review

At the start of each half term, our learners take home a Curriculum Overview. This outlines the Areas of Learning and Experience, and cross-curricular themes and skills themes that learners will cover. We encourage parents and carers to contact the class teacher if they have any questions or concerns about the content or how it might be covered in class.

We welcome and provide opportunities for parents and carers to explore the resources we plan to use in school and to offer feedback on the curriculum and its impact on their child. In situations where parents and carers have spoken with the class teacher and remain unhappy with elements of the Curriculum that are to be covered, they should contact the Head Teacher, or follow the Complaints Policy for Oakmont School.

High quality professional development for all staff will support an effective whole school approach to delivering RVE. Staff skills and knowledge in RVE will be regularly audited and from this continuous professional development will be facilitated. All staff will be supported in developing their confidence, knowledge, and skills in planning for and delivering high quality RVE. There will be regular curriculum reviews including staff, parents and carers and learners. We aim to support all staff to reflect upon and contribute to effective curriculum design, high quality planning and the delivery of stimulating, interactive and supportive lessons for all learners.

Monitoring

The effectiveness of the Religious Values Education Policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with staff, pupils, and parents.

