

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 13 March 2018

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services)

SUBJECT: Curriculum for Excellence - Religious and Moral Education in Non-denominational Schools and Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of an updated policy regarding the provision of Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools and religious education in Roman Catholic Schools (Appendix 1).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the policy Curriculum for Excellence – Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools and Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools (Appendix 1).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 continues to impose a statutory duty on local authorities to provide religious education in Scottish schools. This policy replaces the previous policy and reflects the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence across all of Scotland's schools.
- 3.2 This policy clarifies the current position regarding the provision of religious and moral education in non-denominational schools (RME) and religious education in Roman Catholic schools (RERC). It is intended to assist schools and practitioners when planning the curriculum.
- 3.3 The policy takes account of recent national and local guidance in relation to curriculum delivery and, current expectations regarding planning, teaching, learning and assessment in our schools. The key messages now contained within the policy makes clear what is expected in terms of

practice in all schools across the East Lothian to assist schools and practitioners when planning the curriculum.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This new policy will replace the previous Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools (RME) and Religious Education in Roman Catholic schools (RERC) policy.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
6.2 Personnel - None
6.3 Other - Non

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Religious and Moral Education in Non-Denominational schools (RME) and Religious Education in Roman Catholic schools (RERC) policy (Appendix 1).

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POLICY

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE - RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION IN NON-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS and RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

MARCH 2018

Introduction

East Lothian Council believes that Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools and religious education in Roman Catholic schools make an important contribution to the development of our children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Education about faith and belief in non-denominational schools and education in faith in denominational schools contributes to the development of the whole person, allowing children and young people to consider, reflect upon, and respond to important questions about the meaning and purpose of existence, the range and depth of human experience and what is ultimately worthwhile and valuable in life.

This curriculum area increases children and young people's awareness of the spiritual dimension of human life through exploring the world's major religions and views, including those which are independent of religious belief, and considering the challenges posed by those beliefs and values. It supports children and young people in developing and reflecting upon their own values and their capacity for moral judgement.

Through increasing awareness and appreciation of the value of individuals within a diverse society, children and young people can develop responsible attitudes to other people. It is intended that this awareness and understanding will assist in counteracting prejudice and intolerance as children and young people consider issues such as sectarianism and discrimination more broadly.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 continues to impose a statutory duty on local authorities to provide religious education in Scottish schools. This letter replaces guidance previously contained within Circular 6/91 and reflects the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence across all of Scotland's schools.

This policy clarifies the current position regarding the provision of religious and moral education in non-denominational schools (RME) and religious education in Roman Catholic schools (RERC). It is intended to assist schools and practitioners when planning the curriculum.

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Section 1- Religious Education in non-denomination schools and Roman Catholic schools.

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Section 5- Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools

Section 6- The Right to Withdraw

Section 7- Advice and Support

Religious Observance is covered in a separate policy.

Section 1

Religious and Moral Education in Non-Denominational and Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools

Religious and moral education in non-denominational schools and religious education in Roman Catholic schools is one of the eight core curriculum areas within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It should contribute to the totality of the curriculum through the delivery of the experiences and outcomes as part of a broad general education and as a continuing core subject throughout the senior phase S4 to S6. The principles and practice papers for both RME in non-denominational schools and RERC in Roman Catholic schools and the corresponding experiences and outcomes enable the education service and individual schools to take full consideration of local circumstances and community expectations and to involve parents, learners and the wider community when planning for teaching and learning. In Roman Catholic schools the experiences and outcomes should be delivered in line with the guidance provided by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES).

SCES advises that the CfE 'Principles and Practice' document is essential reading for teachers to enable them to work with the experiences and outcomes for Religious Education in Roman Catholic schools (RERC). SCES also advises that full understanding of these principles and practice can only be achieved by reading them in conjunction with **This is Our Faith** which sets out the content of the RERC curriculum.

Section 2

Learning Through Religious and Moral Education and Religious Education

Learning through this curriculum area enables children and young people to:

- recognise religion as an important expression of human experience
- learn about and from the beliefs, values, practices and traditions of Christianity and the world religions selected for study, other traditions and viewpoints independent of religious belief
- explore and develop knowledge and understanding of religions, recognising the place of Christianity in the Scottish context
- investigate and understand the responses which religious and non-religious views can offer to questions about the nature and meaning of life
- recognise and understand religious diversity and the importance of religion in society
- develop respect for others and an understanding of beliefs and practices which are different from their own
- explore and establish values such as wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity and engage in the development of and reflection upon their own moral values
- develop my beliefs, attitudes, values and practices through reflection, discovery and critical evaluation
- develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking and deciding how to act when making moral decisions
- make a positive difference to the world by putting their beliefs and values into action
- establish a firm foundation for lifelong learning, further learning and adult life.

Section 3

Planning learning, teaching and assessment using the East Lothian RME Curriculum Framework in non-denominational schools and 'This is Our Faith' in RC Schools.

Key Messages for schools and practitioners

What to do:

- Become familiar with the 'On track' statements in the RME Curriculum Framework or the 'I can, I know , I recognise' statements' in 'This is Our Faith' and the Curriculum for Excellence RME Principles and Practice paper or the Curriculum for Excellence Religious Education in Catholic Schools Principles and Practice Paper.
- Plan and organise learning in a way which provides space and time for depth of learning.
- Plan for progression (look forward and backwards to help gauge progress and build towards the next stage), particularly at key points of transition.
- Make connections across levels and subjects to aid planning for interdisciplinary learning.
- Practise effective moderation within and between levels, subjects, departments and schools.
- Use the progression statements to plan for assessment
- Use the progression statements to assess whether learners are making suitable progress towards the national standards expected
- Use the evidence to plan next, challenging steps in learning
- When reporting give clear, positive and constructive feedback about children's and young people's learning and progress
- When reporting create an agenda for discussions between learners and those teaching and supporting
- Discuss the progression frameworks within and across your school to achieve a shared understanding of the national standards expected in RME and RE.

What not to do:

- Avoid undue focus on individual progression framework statements.
- Avoid spending time collating excessive evidence to assess learners' achievement
- Do not assess the framework statements individually. Plan periodic, holistic assessment of children's and young people's learning
- Do not tick off individual progression statements

The same messages can be applied to the RME benchmarks which may be used until the RME Progression Framework is published June 2018.

Section 4

Religious Education in RC Schools

All RC schools are expected by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland to follow guidelines established by the Catholic Education Commission on the provision of adequate time for religious education within the school curriculum. These guidelines indicate a requirement for a minimum of 2.5 hours per week in primary school and 2 hours per week in all stages of secondary school. In all secondary stages this minimum time allocation is expected by the Commission to be provided through 2 periods of religious education classes per week and enriched by additional activities throughout the school year.

The relevant legislation on the management of denominational schools in Scotland states that:

"A teacher appointed to any post on the staff of any such school by the education authority shall be required to be approved as regards religious belief and character by representatives of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school has been conducted".

For those teaching posts which impact on the teaching of religious education, teachers will, in addition, be expected to have obtained an appropriate teaching qualification in Catholic Religious Education.

The process of learning in religious education in RC schools assists children and young people to make an informed mature response to God's call to relationship. This encourages children and young people to act in accordance with an informed conscience in relation to matters of morality through developing their knowledge and understanding of significant aspects of Catholic Christian faith.

The role of the wider parish community plays an important part in the delivery of religious education. Active learning approaches to learning and teaching, including collaborative learning, will encourage children and young people to discuss and share ideas, experiences and moral challenges in a variety of ways. Such opportunities are not only provided by the teacher but by parents and families and in local parish and community settings. Schools are encouraged to use the rich resources available from the local, national and global community when planning their programmes of study.

Section 5

Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools

It remains that schools and local authorities must provide RME in non-denominational schools to every child and young person in accordance with legal requirements. This is statutory for all pupils attending primary and secondary education and includes those in S5 and S6. Children and young people deserve the opportunity to have this taught in a meaningful and progressive way.

Building the Curriculum 3 states the importance of subject specialism as one of the four contexts for learning. In secondary schools, the role of qualified teachers of religious and moral education and religious education is therefore very much an important one

particularly when aiming to deliver high quality learning experiences and meeting principles such as depth and progression. East Lothian have a responsibility to ensure religious and moral education and religious education staff receive continued support and access to continuing professional development opportunities.

In order to meet statutory requirements and the principles and practices of Curriculum for Excellence, schools should plan and deliver RME as both a specific subject discipline and one which contributes to high quality interdisciplinary learning, as they do with each of the eight curriculum areas. Every child and young person can expect their education to provide them with a broad general education, and within RME this includes well planned experiences and outcomes across Christianity, world religions and developing beliefs and values. Schools are required to consider how this is met and apply careful planning to ensure an appropriate balance of subject specific learning and interdisciplinary learning so that the entitlement to all experiences and outcomes up to and including the third curriculum level is met. There is scope to increase higher order skills and critical thinking through developing learning based on the experiences and outcomes to encourage deeper learning. Although there is no prescribed time allocation for core Religious and Moral Education in S4-S6, it is statutory that it should be taught until the end of S6. The approaches taken up to and including the third curriculum level should be built on within the core element of religious and moral education in the senior phase to ensure continued progression, depth and personalisation and choice. RME should also contribute to learning and development through the other contexts for learning, that is the ethos and life of the school community and the opportunities provided for personal achievement.

Section 6

The right to withdraw

Under section 9 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the conscience clause advises that parents have a statutory right to withdraw children from participation in religious and moral education in non-denominational schools and religious education Roman Catholic schools. Schools should provide parents with sufficient information on which to base a decision, and ensure that parents are aware of the content of the religious and moral education or religious education that the school wishes to undertake. This is especially relevant within the context of Curriculum for Excellence since this area of their education contributes to pupils thinking for themselves and making their own decisions about what they believe to be true about human living. Without this aspect of their education, learners will not enjoy the full benefits of Curriculum for Excellence.

Where a child or young person is withdrawn, schools should make suitable arrangements for them to participate in a worthwhile alternative activity. In no circumstances should a pupil be disadvantaged as a result of withdrawing from religious and moral education or religious education. An additional factor which parents should consider is that in choosing a denominational school for their child's education, they choose to opt in to the school's ethos and practice which is imbued with religious faith and it is therefore more difficult to extricate a pupil from all experiences which are influenced by the school's faith character

Section 7

Support and Advice

Support and advice on the delivery of the experiences and outcomes can be found on the Education Scotland website, and for the delivery of religious education in Roman Catholic schools on the website of the Scottish Catholic Education Service.

Curriculum for Excellence, Principles and Practice

<https://education.gov.scot/Documents/rme-pp.doc>

SCES

<http://sces.org.uk/>

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