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Lynne Neagle MS

Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government
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Subject: Support for Mandatory Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in Wales

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (WASACRE) to express our continued support for the inclusion of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) as a mandatory element within the Curriculum for Wales. We also wish to seek clarity on the Welsh Government's approach to ensuring that this important subject within the humanities Area is being effectively supported and implemented across the country, particularly in years 10 and 11.

As you are aware, the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on schools to provide mandatory RVE from 3 to 16 having regard to the statutory RVE guidance. This is a progressive and welcome step, and we are pleased to see the value placed on enabling young people to explore ethical and moral issues and consider diverse religious and non-religious worldviews.

However, we have some concerns regarding the level of prioritisation and provision for mandatory RVE in years 10 and 11, where pressures related to examination subjects can often lead to a narrowing of curriculum provision. Whilst the new Religious Studies GCSE will provide some learners with the opportunity to study the subject in depth, it is not designed to fulfil mandatory RVE requirements. In addition, alternative qualifications for those who are not taking the GCSE do not seem to fully meet the requirements for mandatory RVE under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

Therefore, we would like a meeting to discuss the following:

1. **What steps is the Welsh Government taking to support and monitor the delivery of mandatory RVE at Key Stage 4**, ensuring that learners continue to receive meaningful, challenging and high-

quality provision that supports learner progression in line with the 14-16 learning guidance?

2. **What mechanisms are in place to ensure that schools are complying with the statutory requirements of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 in relation to RVE?** Is there an opportunity to include mandatory RVE, which is within the wider learning and experiences component of the 14-16 learner entitlement, as part of the new performance measures to support consistency and compliance across local authorities?
3. **How is the Welsh Government supporting the professional development of existing and future RVE teachers,** to ensure high quality provision across Wales particularly in light of the current recruitment and retention crisis?
4. **What role is envisaged for SACs and WASACRE going forward** in supporting continued learner progression from 14-16 through high quality mandatory RVE within the Curriculum for Wales?

We remain committed to working with the Welsh Government, local authorities, and educators to ensure that RVE continues to play a vital role in preparing learners for life and work in this fast changing and diverse society. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further on these issues in a meeting with you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Edward J Evans

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