



## The Vegan Society Response: Curriculum for Wales: Religion, values and ethics

**Question 1** – Do you agree that religion, values and ethics (RVE) should encompass both religious and non-religious beliefs that are philosophical convictions (in line with the European Convention on Human Rights) as described in the consultation document?

<b>Agree</b>	✓	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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We agree with this point, however not all qualifying beliefs are confirmed by the European Convention on Human Rights but are confirmed under UK equality law.

The human right to freedom of conscience concerns all beliefs, new and emerging. Some beliefs will not necessarily be registered in the case law of the ECtHR and would not, therefore, be included in the Education Directorate’s advice to LAs. This is important because some qualifying beliefs are registered as relevant to the Convention right under UK equality law which is evolving on the same liberal grounds giving wide scope for protection. New and emerging beliefs around veganism, such as environmental or intersectional concerns, would not currently be recognised as a matter for RVE education. Legislative changes should look to the case law of the ECtHR but also to the case law under the relevant provision of the Equality Act 2010. The relevant provision of this Act looks to the Convention and the same legal principles and provisions as the Welsh RVE proposals.

The ECtHR has also introduced efficiency protocols to reduce its caseload and it is very expensive to take cases and have them heard. A case taken in 2020 might be ruled on until 2023 or later. The relevant provision of our Equality Act looks to the case law of the ECtHR, and its criteria, but is developing an additional body of relevant case law that should be included.

**Question 2** – Do you agree that agreed syllabus conferences must have regard to statutory guidance when they are developing their locally agreed syllabus?

Whilst it can be helpful, statutory guidance can cause problems if it is not fit for purpose or adequate in the long term. Statutory guidance must be future proof and incorporate flexibility to accommodate new and emerging beliefs.

**Question 3** – Do you agree with our proposal that community schools and foundation and voluntary schools without a religious character must be required to have regard to an agreed syllabus in designing and implementing RVE?

<b>Agree</b>	✓	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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A legal duty to ensure an objective, critical and plural education facilitates the human right to adopt a belief of choice in the context of diversity. An education that recognises veganism is helpful to advance veganism, support vegans and help transitioning vegans.



**Question 4** – Do you agree with our proposal that parents/carers of learners in schools without a religious character must no longer be able to request provision of RVE in line with tenets of a particular faith?

<b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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A consultation on plural education should ask questions in the context of the plurality it aims to achieve, whereas this question is framed only in terms of faith. Requests for non-plural, dogmatic teaching would not be within the scope of a syllabus for plural education but where an individual’s non-religious, philosophical belief was not recognised in the statutory guidance, and therefore the syllabus, then a parent should be able to request specific education. For example, veganism. Again, the failure to include protected beliefs under equality law will exclude people whose beliefs meet the criteria being used to inform this proposal for legislative change.

**Question 5** – Do you agree with the proposal that voluntary-controlled schools with religious character can teach RVE in accordance with the trust deeds of the school or the tenets of the faith of the school if requested by parents/carers?

<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Question 6** – Do you agree that voluntary-aided schools with a religious character should be required to teach the agreed syllabus where a parent/carer requests it and should not have discretion to refuse to do so?

<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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