

Press Release

The Free Church Council of Wales welcomes the publication of the Welsh Government's White Paper, *Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum*. We are grateful to Welsh Government for its engagement with churches and other faith groups during the development of the new curriculum for schools and are glad that a number of our concerns and suggestions have been taken into account. We warmly welcome the retention of Religious Education (RE) as an integral part of the new curriculum and its extension to nursery classes in maintained schools, as understanding different religious ways of understanding the world is more important than ever in contemporary Wales.

We welcome too the retention of local Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) which help ensure county ownership of RE taught in schools. We also welcome the decision to publish a national supporting framework to help SACREs develop their local county syllabuses. We look forward to contributing to the development of this new framework. We note that it will contain guidance on teaching about non-religious world views. While we accept that these have a place in the curriculum, we would caution against Religious Education being required to give equal emphasis to non-religious world views, any more than the Science curriculum should give equal emphasis to non-scientific world views.

We note that the Welsh Government has decided to consult on the right of parents to withdraw children from RE and from Relationships and Sexuality Education.

We encourage our member churches and individuals to engage with the Welsh Government's consultation that continues until March 25, and in the consultation on the draft of the curriculum itself, due to be published in April.

(I would like to thank Gethin Rhys, Cytûn for leading on this issue)

Vaughan Salisbury – Education Representative, The Free Church Council of Wales.