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We welcome calls in Welsh

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
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County Borough Council

Headteachers of
all state maintained
Secondary/Special Schools

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi.

*Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh
will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or
bilingual.*

Dyddiad/Date:

Ein Cyf./Our Ref.: SB
Eich Cyf./Your Ref.:

Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Mrs Sarah Bowen
Llinell Uniongyrchol/Direct Line: 01685 725082
e-bost/email: Sarah.Bowen@merthyr.gov.uk

Dear Headteacher

Statutory Requirements for Religious Education

Merthyr Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) has asked me to bring to your attention the statutory requirements for Religious Education in state maintained schools. As the curriculum review is getting under way it seems that some schools are confused as to the status of agreed syllabuses in schools.

As I am sure you are aware Religious Education is part of the basic curriculum and therefore sits outside the National Curriculum. The RE curriculum in state maintained schools is locally determined by the local authority and its SACRE. This means that there is a statutory requirement for LA's to provide Religious Education according to an agreed syllabus and monitor that statutory requirements are being adhered to by schools. With regard to the position of the Merthyr Agreed Syllabus for RE it was re-adopted in 2013 and therefore the current syllabus stays in place with an understanding that the syllabus will be reviewed once the shape of the new Donaldson curriculum is defined. There would need to be a change in legislation for the delivery of RE according to an agreed syllabus to be rescinded.

Professor Donaldson report *Successful Futures - Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* recommended that *Religious education should form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, and should remain a statutory curriculum requirement from reception.*

SACRE is aware that the Pioneer schools are now meeting in order to shape the new curriculum. The projected time line for Strand 3, where the *defining and elaborating* of each Area of Learning and Experience (AOLE) and the in-depth subject specific details will be shaped, is from January 2017. Until such time as the detail of the AOLE are shaped and a review of the agreed syllabus takes place then SACRE wish to ensure that schools

understand that coverage of the programmes of study of the locally agreed syllabus is the main statutory requirement.

I attach a copy of the current Merthyr agreed syllabus for RE where you can see the programmes of study for all key stages in the secondary school on pages 22-31.

SACRE is particularly interested in drawing to your attention the delivery of Religious Education at KS4 where there appears to be some confusion regarding statutory requirements. The statutory programme of study for KS4 can be found on pages 30-31 of the agreed syllabus. Many schools in Wales are providing statutory RE by following either a GCSE Short Course or a GCSE Full Course or a combination of the two courses. SACRE wish to inform you that this would fulfil statutory requirements as long as **all** pupils are receiving religious education whether or not they are entered for accreditation.

In 2016, the Wales Association of SACREs conducted a survey of the impact of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) on Religious Education in schools across Wales. SACRE understands that some schools in Wales are delivering RE at KS4 within the WBQ and believe that coverage of the Global Citizenship element of WBQ is sufficient to cover the RE requirements. Merthyr SACRE would like to ensure that its schools understand that the Global Citizenship unit alone would not be sufficient to cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus KS4 programme of study.

SACRE hope that this information is useful to you.

Yours sincerely



SB Sarah Bowen, Inclusion Manager
(LA representative on Merthyr SACRE)

Enc.