



Department of

Education

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Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on Review of the Religious Education (RE) Syllabus

26 June 2026

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:

✉ E-mail: RE.Review@education-ni.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

About the Department of Education

- 1.1 The Department of Education is responsible for the central administration of all aspects of education and related services in Northern Ireland - except the higher and further education sector, responsibility for which is within the remit of the Department for the Economy.
- 1.2 The Department's main areas of responsibility are in pre-school, primary, post-primary, and special education; the youth service; the promotion of community relations within and between schools; and teacher education and salaries. Its primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. Its key functions include:
 - advising ministers on the determination of education policy;
 - framing legislation;
 - accounting for the effectiveness of the education system;
 - allocating, monitoring, and accounting for resources;
 - through the Education and Training Inspectorate, evaluating, and reporting on the quality of teaching and learning and teacher education.
- 1.3 The Department also aims to ensure that children, through participation at schools, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement. In pre-school settings, schools and through the Youth Service, the Department also promotes personal well-being and social development, so that children gain the knowledge, skills, and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals.

Section 75 and the statutory duties

- 1.4 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, including the Department of Education when conducting their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:
 - between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.

- 1.5 Without prejudice to the above obligations, the Department must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.
- 1.6 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland approved the Department of Education's Equality Scheme in September 2013. The Scheme outlines how the Department proposes to fulfil its statutory duties under Section 75.
- 1.7 Under the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department undertakes to conduct an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening has indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine Section 75 categories. Part of the EQIA Process is consultation.
- 1.8 Given the statutory nature of Religious Education, and its direct relationship to issues of religious belief, identity and community relations, the potential for differential impact across Section 75 groups is more pronounced than in other curriculum areas.
- 1.9 The Department has therefore undertaken a full Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that equality considerations are fully integrated into the development of the RE Syllabus from the outset, and that the policy complies with its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 1.10 This EQIA is published alongside the public consultation on the proposed RE Syllabus to support transparent consideration of equality impacts and to inform policy development through stakeholder engagement.
- 1.11 The Department of Education (DE) welcomes any comments on this EQIA and on the preliminary conclusions in relation to potential impacts and mitigating measures.
- 1.12 Further copies of this EQIA are available on the Department's website at www.education-ni.gov.uk.
- 1.13 If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats then please contact the Curriculum Team by:

E-mail: RE.Review@education-ni.gov.uk

Write to: Curriculum Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Room G11
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to assess the potential impact of proposals for a Review of the Religious Education (RE) Syllabus for Northern Ireland on equality of opportunity, in line with the Department of Education's obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 2.2 The proposed RE Syllabus responds to the findings of the Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2025), as well as more specific legal and policy drivers relating to Religious Education. In particular, it reflects the findings of the High Court judgment (2022), subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court (2025), which concluded that existing RE provision did not ensure teaching in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner.
- 2.3 The draft RE Syllabus is intended to establish a clear, coherent and knowledge-rich entitlement for all learners. Its central aim is to promote both excellence and equity by ensuring that every child and young person, regardless of background or belief, can develop an informed and critical understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews, supporting their participation in a diverse and democratic society.
- 2.4 At the policy design stage, no evidence of direct adverse impact on any of the nine Section 75 categories has been identified. The RE Syllabus applies to all children and young people and does not differentiate on the basis of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.
- 2.5 However, the Department recognises that RE is a distinctive area of the curriculum with a direct relationship to issues of religious belief, identity and community relations, and therefore has the potential to influence equality outcomes in a more pronounced way over time. Evidence from the review process, including the Call for Evidence and stakeholder engagement, highlights that current RE provision has been experienced inconsistently and has not always fully reflected the diversity of contemporary society.
- 2.6 In this context, the proposed RE Syllabus has the potential to promote equality of opportunity positively by providing greater clarity, balance and consistency in what is taught across all schools, thus: reducing reliance on school-level interpretation, which can lead to variation in provision; ensuring that RE is delivered in a more objective, critical and pluralistic manner; strengthening pupils' understanding of both shared and diverse beliefs and worldviews, thereby supporting mutual understanding and respect; and improving access to a common body of knowledge for all learners, including those most reliant on school-based provision.
- 2.7 The Department also acknowledges that the overall equality impact of the RE Syllabus will depend on effective implementation, including the development of supporting guidance, high-quality resources and targeted professional learning for teachers. While these operational aspects sit beyond the scope of this policy-

stage EQIA, they will be addressed through subsequent implementation planning.

- 2.8 The Department further recognises the importance of ensuring that the RE Syllabus is accessible and meaningful for all learners. This includes alignment with broader curriculum workstreams, such as those relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Irish-medium education (IME), which will support adaptation, accessibility and progression for diverse learner groups as implementation progresses.
- 2.9 Data limitations exist in relation to some Section 75 categories, including sexual orientation, political opinion and dependants. This assessment therefore draws on the best available evidence, including stakeholder engagement and relevant research, and will be further informed through consultation responses and ongoing monitoring.
- 2.10 This EQIA is being published alongside the public consultation on the draft RE Syllabus. The Department is committed to engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including schools, faith communities, parents and young people, and welcomes feedback on any potential equality impacts, data gaps or mitigating actions that should be considered.
- 2.11 The Department will continue to monitor equality outcomes throughout the consultation, design and implementation phases, ensuring that any emerging impacts are identified and addressed appropriately.
- 2.12 Comments and feedback on the potential impacts of the RE Syllabus are invited through this EQIA and as part of the formal public consultation. All responses received will be carefully considered in informing final policy decisions and the refinement of the RE Syllabus.

3. The aim of the Review of the RE Syllabus

- 3.1 For context, the Independent Review of Education (IRE) report (published December 2023) provided a thorough, evidence-based consideration of the key issues impacting education in Northern Ireland. The Review made a range of proposals for progressive reform of the education system, including conclusions supporting the need to review the curriculum to ensure that it is knowledge-rich, coherent and aligned with international best practice.
- 3.2 The IRE Review identified curriculum design as one of the most significant levers for improving educational outcomes, including attainment, equity and long-term life chances for children and young people.
- 3.3 In responding to these recommendations, the Minister of Education commissioned a Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, which commenced in November 2024 and was tasked with making recommendations on the purpose, design and implementation of a new curriculum framework.
- 3.4 Alongside this wider programme of reform, and reflecting the specific statutory, legal and societal importance of Religious Education, the Minister also announced a Review of the RE Core Syllabus in February 2026. This EQIA relates specifically to the RE Syllabus, which is independent, but parallel to the wider curriculum framework.
- 3.4 The review was undertaken in the context of the High Court judgment (2022), subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court (2025), which concluded that the existing RE Syllabus did not provide for teaching in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner.

Department of Education response to Supreme Court judgement

- 3.5 The Department initiated a comprehensive review of Religious Education (RE) following the judgment, establishing clear Terms of Reference to guide the development of a revised syllabus. The Terms of Reference for the review required that the new RE Syllabus should:
 - treat Religious Education as an academic discipline, structured to promote intellectual engagement;
 - develop pupils' critical and analytical skills;
 - retain Christianity as a central focus, reflecting its historical and cultural role in Northern Ireland;
 - be pluralist and inclusive, incorporating a range of religious and non-religious worldviews; and
 - prepare children and young people for future learning and citizenship, promoting respect and understanding.
- 3.6 To deliver this, Professor Noel Purdy OBE, Director of Research and Scholarship at Stranmillis University College and Mrs Joyce Logue, former Principal of Long

Tower Primary School and Joyce Logue were appointed to lead the review. The Drafting Group also comprised teachers from primary, post-primary and special schools across all sectors. Under the leadership of Professor Noel Purdy and Mrs Joyce Logue, the Drafting Group developed and drafted a revised core RE syllabus from Foundation stage to Key Stage 4.

- 3.7 A public Call for Evidence took place between February and March 2026, generating substantial engagement, including 917 survey responses, 110 emails and 25 submissions, reflecting a wide range of perspectives on the future direction of RE.
- 3.8 A Church Consultative Group (CCG) was established to provide theological advice and feedback throughout the syllabus development process, comprising representatives from the four main Churches, including nominees from the Transferors' Representative Council (TRC) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). The CCG engaged with the Drafting Group to help ensure the revised syllabus remained theologically informed and appropriately balanced.
- 3.9 The new RE Syllabus has been designed in line with the overarching curriculum reform principles, ensuring that it is:
 - purpose-led;
 - knowledge-rich;
 - continuous and coherent;
 - specific and focused; and
 - inclusive and flexible.
- 3.10 The aim of the new RE Syllabus is to establish a clear and coherent entitlement for all learners to study religious and non-religious worldviews in a way that is objective, critical and pluralistic, enabling pupils to develop informed understanding, analytical skills and respect for diversity.
- 3.11 This Equality Impact Assessment has been produced to support the accompanying public consultation on the proposed RE Syllabus. The Department considers that clearer specification of RE content, and a stronger emphasis on objectivity, criticality and pluralism, represent key mechanisms for improving equity, reducing variability in provision and ensuring consistency of experience for all learners.
- 3.14 At this stage, the policy relates to the design of the RE Syllabus. Detailed implementation arrangements, including supporting guidance, resources and professional learning, will be developed as part of subsequent implementation planning.

4. Consideration of available data and research

Background information

4.1 The development of the new RE Syllabus has been informed by a range of evidence sources, including:

- the Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2025);
- the Independent Review of Education (2023);
- the High Court (2022) and Supreme Court (2025) judgments relating to Religious Education;
- the RE Call for Evidence exercise conducted between February and March 2026;
- engagement with children and young people; and
- ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including the Church Consultative Group and the RE Drafting Group.

4.2 The RE Call for Evidence elicited a significant level of response, including written submissions, survey responses and stakeholder engagement. The responses reflected a wide range of perspectives, often strongly held and at times divergent, in relation to the purpose, content and delivery of Religious Education.

Basis for the Review of the RE Syllabus and potential for promoting equity

4.3 This evidence highlighted a number of key considerations for the development of the new RE Syllabus, including:

- the need to ensure that RE is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner;
- the importance of reflecting both the historical and contemporary role of Christianity in Northern Ireland;
- the requirement to include other religious and non-religious worldviews in a meaningful and balanced way; and
- the need to support pupils in developing understanding of identity, diversity and community relations.

4.4 Evidence gathered through engagement with children and young people indicates that learners value opportunities within RE to:

- explore questions of meaning, identity and belief;
- understand different perspectives and worldviews; and
- engage in respectful discussion about issues that affect their lives and communities.

4.5 The Department recognises that, as with the wider EQIA for the curriculum framework, there are limitations in the available data across a number of Section

75 categories, including sexual orientation, political opinion and dependants. As such, this assessment draws on the best available evidence, including qualitative insights from consultation and engagement activities, and will be further informed through ongoing monitoring.

- 4.6 The available evidence indicates that the design of the RE Syllabus has significant potential to influence equality outcomes, particularly in relation to religious belief, identity and community relations. A syllabus that is clearly specified, knowledge-rich and balanced in its representation of different worldviews can contribute positively to promoting mutual understanding and respect among pupils.
- 4.7 The Terms of Reference for the RE review required that the syllabus should embed principles of inclusion, diversity and equality, ensuring that the needs of all learners, including those from diverse backgrounds and those with additional learning needs, are reflected in the syllabus design.
- 4.8 In assessing the potential equality impacts of the RE Syllabus, the Department has considered the available evidence in the context of the wider findings of the Strategic Review, which identified inconsistency in curriculum delivery and a lack of clarity as contributing to variation in pupil experience across schools.
- 4.9 The Department considers that the introduction of a clear, coherent and appropriately balanced RE Syllabus represents an opportunity to address these issues and to support greater consistency, inclusivity and equity in the experience of all learners across Northern Ireland.

5. Assessment of impacts

- 5.1 The proposed RE Syllabus has been considered in relation to the potential impact on each of the nine Section 75 equality categories, taking account of the available evidence, stakeholder engagement and the particular characteristics of Religious Education as a statutory subject.
- 5.2 At the policy design stage, no direct adverse impacts have been identified. The RE Syllabus applies to all children and young people and does not differentiate on the basis of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.
- 5.3 However, the Department recognises that RE is a distinctive area of the curriculum with a direct relationship to issues of religious belief, identity and community relations. As such, it has the potential to influence equality outcomes in a more pronounced manner than other curriculum areas, particularly over time.
- 5.4 The following assessment outlines the potential impacts across each of the Section 75 groups.

Group	Potential to promote equality of opportunity
Religious Belief	<p>No direct adverse impacts have been identified in relation to religious belief.</p> <p>The proposed RE Syllabus is designed to be objective, critical and pluralistic, applying equally to all pupils regardless of religious or non-religious background.</p> <p>The syllabus retains Christianity as a central focus, reflecting its historical and cultural significance in Northern Ireland, while also ensuring that pupils engage meaningfully with a range of other religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>This approach has the potential to promote equality of opportunity by enabling all learners to develop understanding of both shared and diverse beliefs. However, the Department recognises the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance in representation to ensure that all pupils feel respected and included.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to political opinion have been identified.</p> <p>The Department recognises that in the Northern Ireland context, religious identity can intersect with political and cultural identity. The RE Syllabus includes explicit opportunities to explore identity, diversity, conflict and</p>

	<p>reconciliation, and therefore has the potential to make a positive contribution to promoting good relations.</p> <p>Careful implementation will be required to ensure that content is approached in a balanced and sensitive manner.</p>
Racial Group	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to Race have been identified.</p> <p>The inclusion of a range of global religious and non-religious worldviews has the potential to support inclusion of pupils from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>The RE Syllabus's emphasis on religious literacy and understanding of different traditions is expected to promote equality of opportunity for newcomer and minority ethnic pupils.</p>
Age	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to age have been identified.</p> <p>The RE Syllabus is designed to provide a clear and progressive framework from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4, supporting age-appropriate learning and development.</p>
Marital Status	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to marital status have been identified.</p> <p>The RE Syllabus applies equally to all pupils.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to sexual orientation have been identified.</p> <p>The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people.</p> <p>The Department recognises that aspects of RE relating to ethics, identity and relationships may require further consideration to ensure that teaching is inclusive and respectful of all pupils.</p>
Men and Women generally	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to men and women have been identified.</p> <p>The RE Syllabus applies equally to all pupils.</p>

Disability	<p>No additional direct adverse impacts relating to disability have been identified.</p> <p>The Department recognises that there are opportunities to improve accessibility through the RE Syllabus for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), supported by clearer specification, structured progression and appropriate adaptation of content.</p> <p>Alignment with wider SEN workstreams will support inclusive implementation of the RE Syllabus.</p>
Dependants	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to dependants have been identified through the available data.</p> <p>Recent information in this area is limited. Officials are aware that work in respect of young carers is in progress. This work will be monitored as appropriate.</p>
Multiple identities	<p>No direct adverse impacts relating to multiple identities have been identified.</p> <p>The RE Syllabus has the potential to positively support pupils in understanding the intersection of religious, cultural and social identities, particularly within the Northern Ireland context.</p>

Religious Belief

5.5 At schools' level information from the school census for 2025/26¹ (published 12 March 2026) records the religion of pupils by school type and management type. In summary the total number of pupils from All Funded Pre-school, Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary, Special Schools, And EOTAS Centres are:

- Protestant: 98, 071
- Catholic: 174, 115
- Other: 79, 052
- Total 351238

¹[Pupil religion by school management type 2000-01 to 2025-26.xlsx](#)

- 5.6 The proposed RE Syllabus will promote equity of opportunity for all learners and apply equally to all children and young people regardless of religious belief.
- 5.7 No direct adverse impacts relating to religious belief have been identified.

Political Opinion

- 5.8 The political opinion of pupils is not available.
- 5.9 Religion is often taken as a proxy for political opinion. Therefore, the data referred to above for religious belief is considered in informing the impact on political opinion.
- 5.10 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people and will not differentiate based on political opinion. The syllabus is expected to promote equity of opportunity for all learners. No direct adverse impacts relating to political opinion have been identified.

Race

- 5.11 Information from the latest summary data from the school census for 2025/26 - School enrolments - Northern Ireland summary data (published 12 March 2026) ² confirms there are 20,971 newcomer pupils registered in schools in Northern Ireland, accounting for 6.0% of the school population. (A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school, but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum.)
- 5.12 Evidence from the wider curriculum review highlights that learners with English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be better supported through a curriculum that emphasises clear vocabulary development, structured talk and explicit teaching approaches. In the context of the Review of the RE Syllabus, similar principles apply, with a structured and knowledge-rich approach supporting accessibility and understanding for all pupils.
- 5.13 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people regardless of their race and is expected to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. The development of appropriate high-quality resources to support diverse learners is recognised as a critical component of successful implementation. No direct adverse impacts relating to racial group have been identified.

²[Newcomer pupils 2001-02 to 2025-26.xlsx](#)

Age

5.14 The Annual enrolments 2025/26 in Northern Ireland at schools³ provides the number of children and young people across year groups as follows;

- There are 21,898 funded pupils in the Pre-School Education Programme and reception.
- There are 164,713 pupils in primary schools and preparatory departments (years 1-7)
- There are 156,766 pupils enrolled in post-primary schools.
- Over 7,700 pupils (10.9% of all SEN pupils in schools and pre-school settings) were enrolled in 40 dedicated special schools.
- There are approximately 29,900 pupils in sixth forms in schools, 57% of all 16–17-year-olds in Northern Ireland.

5.15 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4 and is designed to provide progression across all stages. It is expected to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. No direct adverse impacts relating to age have been identified.

Marital Status

5.16 In 2024, there were 7,251 marriages in Northern Ireland⁴; in the age band 16-19 there were 46 males and 71 females. Available demographic data indicates that very few individuals aged 16–19 in Northern Ireland are married.

5.17 The marital status of pupils is not part of the data collected in respect of post primary school pupils within the school census.

5.18 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people, including, where relevant, those who may be married. It is expected to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. No direct adverse impacts relating to marital status have been identified.

Sexual Orientation

5.19 Data is not collected or available that could provide a break-down of sexual orientation of all children and young people.

³[Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 202526](#)

⁴[Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2024](#)

5.20 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people and is expected to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. No direct adverse impacts relating to sexual orientation have been identified.

Men and Women Generally

5.21 Information drawn from the 2024-25 annual school census shows that there is an even distribution of males and females within the school population, with 50.8% male pupils and 49.2% female.

5.22 The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. No direct adverse impacts relating to Men and Women generally have been identified.

Disability

5.23 Evidence from the wider curriculum review identified that the existing curriculum was not always sufficiently appropriate for some learners, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

5.24 In recognition of this, and alongside the Review of the RE Syllabus, the Department is taking forward a separate workstream focused on the needs of pupils with SEN.

5.25 In 2025/26, over 70,700⁵ pupils in schools have some form of special educational need, representing 20.1% of the school population.

5.26 The majority of these pupils are educated in mainstream settings, with a smaller proportion in specialist provision and special schools.

5.27 The proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people and is expected to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. No additional direct adverse impacts relating to disability have been identified.

Dependants

5.28 There is limited data available regarding dependants among children and young people.

5.29 Previous survey data indicates that a proportion of young people have caring responsibilities, although more recent data is limited.

5.30 No adverse impacts relating to dependants have been identified through the available evidence.

Multiple Identities

5.31 The Evidence from the wider curriculum review identified that some groups of learners, including those with SEN, those in Irish-medium education, and those

⁵ [Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 202526](#)

experiencing disadvantage, may not have been fully supported by the existing curriculum.

- 5.32 It is recognised that the proposed RE Syllabus will apply equally to all children and young people and is intended to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. The policy intention is that all pupils will benefit from a more clearly defined, objective and inclusive RE Syllabus.
- 5.33 The Review of the RE Syllabus has the potential to support pupils in understanding the interaction between religion, identity and community in Northern Ireland, thereby supporting those with multiple or intersecting identities.
- 5.34 No direct adverse impacts relating to multiple identities have been identified.

6. Mitigation measures to address adverse impacts

- 6.1 While no direct adverse impacts have been identified at the policy design stage, the Department recognises that Religious Education, by its nature, engages directly with issues of belief, identity and community relations. As such, appropriate mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Review of the RE Syllabus actively promotes equality of opportunity and supports good relations.
- 6.2 The proposed RE Syllabus has been designed to mitigate potential risks and promote equality from the outset. Key features include:
- an explicit commitment to an objective, critical and pluralistic approach;
 - clear specification of curriculum content to reduce variability in delivery;
 - inclusion of both religious and non-religious worldviews; and
 - a structured, knowledge-rich approach to support progression for all learners.
- 6.3 To further mitigate any potential differential impacts, the Department will ensure that appropriate supporting measures are developed as part of the implementation process arising from the Review of the RE Syllabus.
- 6.4 These measures will include the development of clear statutory guidance, including exemplification where appropriate, to support schools and teachers in delivering the RE Syllabus in a balanced, inclusive and consistent manner across all sectors.
- 6.5 The Department will also support schools through the development of high-quality, accessible curriculum resources that:
- reflect a diversity of religious and non-religious perspectives;
 - promote respect, inclusion and understanding; and
 - are suitable for a wide range of learners, including those with additional needs.
- 6.6 Targeted professional learning will be provided to support teachers in:
- delivering the RE Syllabus in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner;
 - managing sensitive and potentially contentious issues effectively;
 - supporting inclusive classroom dialogue; and
 - meeting the needs of diverse learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and those from different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- 6.7 The Department will ensure that the RE Syllabus is adaptable and accessible for all learners, including:
- pupils with Special Educational Needs;

- newcomer pupils and those with English as an Additional Language; and
 - pupils from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds.
- 6.8 Implementation will be supported through alignment with wider curriculum workstreams, including SEN and Irish-medium education, to ensure coherence and inclusivity across the system.
- 6.9 The Department will adopt a phased implementation approach for the RE Syllabus, enabling ongoing review and refinement of content, guidance and support arrangements in response to emerging evidence and feedback.
- 6.10 Monitoring arrangements will be established to assess the equality impacts of the RE Syllabus over time. This will include:
- ongoing engagement with stakeholders;
 - collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data where available; and
 - periodic review of the impact of RE on equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 6.11 Where any adverse or differential impacts are identified through monitoring, the Department will take appropriate action to address these, including revisions to guidance, resources or implementation support.
- 6.12 Through these measures, the Department is committed to ensuring that the RE Syllabus not only avoids adverse impacts but actively contributes to promoting equality, inclusion and mutual understanding across Northern Ireland.
- 6.13 These mitigation measures will be further informed and refined through the public consultation process and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

7. Formal consultation

- 7.1 The Department wishes to engage with as wide an audience as possible on the draft RE Syllabus as described in this EQIA. The Department is committed to seeking the views of those who are affected by the proposed RE Syllabus.
- 7.2 The Department is keen to hear from a broad range of stakeholders, including schools, teachers, parents, pupils, faith communities and other interested parties, on the equality implications of the proposed RE Syllabus.
- 7.3 Responses to this EQIA will form part of the Department's public consultation on the new RE Syllabus Framework. Responses received during the consultation will be used to consider further mitigating measures, to be reflected potentially in the legislation, related policies and / or programmes.
- 7.4 The Department welcomes comment on any aspect of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses by completing the on-line consultation survey.

7.5 The main consultation document, hosted on Citizen Space, can be found here:

 [RE Syllabus Consultation](#)

7.6 The closing date for responses is **30 SEPTEMBER 2026**

7.7 Any enquiries about this EQIA or the wider policy consultation should be sent to Curriculum Team whose contact details appear on Page 22.

8. Publication

- 8.1 The outcomes of the consultation, including responses to this EQIA, will be published on the Department of Education website or can be obtained in other formats from DE Curriculum Team.
- 8.2 The Department will provide a summary of responses received, along with an explanation of how these responses have informed the final approach to the RE Syllabus.
- 8.3 Further copies of this EQIA and associated consultation documents are available on the Department's website or can be provided in alternative formats on request.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 In keeping with the Department's commitments under its Equality Scheme, any adverse differential impacts on equality of opportunity or good relations identified through this EQIA process will be taken into account in finalising the Review of the RE Syllabus.
- 9.2 The Department will establish appropriate monitoring arrangements to assess the equality impacts of the RE Syllabus over time. This will include the development of indicators and measures to evaluate outcomes across the Section 75 categories where possible.
- 9.3 Monitoring will include ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including representatives from the education sector and wider community, to ensure that the implementation of the RE Syllabus continues to reflect the needs of all learners.
- 9.4 The RE Syllabus will be introduced in line with the wider curriculum reform programme, with implementation planned on a phased basis from September 2028. This phased approach will allow for ongoing review and refinement in light of emerging evidence and feedback.
- 9.5 The Department will keep the equality impacts of the RE Syllabus under review throughout implementation and will take appropriate action where any unintended adverse impacts are identified.

Department of Education EQIA Response Form for the proposed Religious Education Syllabus

The closing date for responses is: **30 September 2026**

Your Details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Contact Phone number: _____

If you are the official respondent for a group or organisation, please state its name:

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, or paper) and/or language, please contact:

✉ E- mail: RE.Review@education-ni.gov.uk

EQIA Response Form Questions:

Your views are welcomed on the following:

1. Are there any data issues in relation to Section 75 categories that the Department needs to consider?

2. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to Section 75 equality groups that the Department needs to consider?

3. What action do you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts.

4. Are there any other comments you would like to make about this EQIA?

The Department welcomes comment on any aspects of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses by the deadline, which will be used to inform further mitigation measures.

Please return the completed document preferably by e-mail to:

✉ RE.Review@education-ni.gov.uk

or alternatively, by posting it to:

Curriculum Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Room G11
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR