

# Environmental awareness in the curriculum

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Hydref 2020  
Petitions Committee | 13 October 2020

Reference: RS20/13898

**Petition Number:** P-05-1024

**Petition title:** For Environmental awareness to be made compulsory and a key module within Schools in Wales for all years (Primary and Secondary Education)

**Text of petition:** Environmental Awareness and action as part of the educational framework in Wales would be relevant to the Wellbeing Act and Wales Education Agenda. The petition aims for Welsh Government to consider for all schools in Wales to apply a core module from early years on the Environment encouraging awareness and action. It can be a fundamental initiative which encourages young people to engage in their environment by being educated of the environment and allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it throughout the curricula at each school year.

Environmental education is essential to ensure our future generations apply the measures require to preserve our environment. Bringing nature to the classroom is imperative to highlight to school children (and parents indirectly) the need for change. Environmental awareness and nature should be "on a par" with key classes in all schools in Wales. It is essential that children grow up with a great understanding, education in current nature issues and knowledge on what actions they can take to protect the diverse environment we live in. It is also teaching them day to day about respect to nature.



## 1. Current curriculum

Delivery of Personal and Social Education (PSE) is a statutory requirement of the basic curriculum although content is at the discretion of schools. The non-statutory [Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales](#) (2008) provides a recommended approach and learning outcomes. Sustainable development and global citizenship is one of the five themes within the PSE framework.

## 2. New curriculum

Subject to the passing of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#), the new age 3-16 Curriculum for Wales will be introduced in all maintained schools and publicly funded nursery settings from September 2022 on a phased basis.

The Bill was introduced to the Senedd on 6 July 2020. The Bill sets out the four purposes of the curriculum:

- To enable pupils and children to develop as ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as healthy, confident individuals, ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The Welsh Government has emphasised that the new Curriculum for Wales will be **purpose-driven rather than content-driven**. Specific learning content is not stipulated in the same way as under the current national curriculum.

The Bill sets out six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) for the new curriculum and the mandatory elements within them. The AoLEs are:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities

- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology.

The mandatory elements within the AoLEs will be English; Relationships and Sexuality Education; Religion, Values and Ethics and Welsh.

The Bill provides for a 'What Matters Code' to set out key concepts of learning and experience in each AoLE (including Humanities) and that schools' curricula must encompass each of these concepts. The Welsh Government has published 'Statements of What Matters' in the [Curriculum for Wales documentation](#). This is intended to provide the 'national approach' which the [Minister for Education says](#) will ensure consistency for learners.

The [Science and Technology Statement of What Matters](#) includes:

The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.

The [Humanities Statement of What Matters](#) includes:

Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.

Local, national and international contexts is one of the cross-cutting themes of the new curriculum. The Welsh Government [guidance on cross-cutting themes](#) states:

These contexts provide an important opportunity for learners to understand and respond to different issues and challenges, including social, economic and environmental questions in working towards a sustainable and equitable future. The environment forms an important part of each of these contexts, with human impact transcending geographical and political boundaries. This includes the relationships between human activities and the local, national and international environment. Learners should have opportunities to respond to the issues and challenges that arise from these relationships, considering how they have shaped our past and present and how they may shape our future.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.