

Curriculum for Wales: What do schools have to do for September?

Curriculum design will be an ongoing process of continuing improvement and we don't expect schools to have perfected or completed all aspects by roll-out. However, some legal requirements will need to be fulfilled when schools roll out their curriculum. Here's a summary of what's required.

Firstly, let's clarify what the terms 'mandatory' and 'statutory guidance' mean within the Curriculum for Wales guidance on Hwb.

Mandatory

The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act) puts mandatory duties on schools - things they are legally required to do. When the guidance talks about things schools 'must' do – it is talking about mandatory legal requirements.

Statutory Guidance

The rest of the Curriculum for Wales guidance, like the 'descriptions of learning' or the 'designing your curriculum' sections, is 'statutory guidance'. Schools must have 'due regard' to this guidance when carrying out their duties, which means they must read it carefully and should follow it, but if after careful consideration they have a good and clear reason for doing something differently, they can do so. When the guidance talks about things schools 'should' do, 'have regard to' or things they 'must consider', it is talking about **statutory guidance**.



So what are schools legally required to do - for September?

- 1 Design a curriculum*
- 2 Adopt their curriculum and publish a summary of it**
- 3 From September, implement their curriculum and assessment arrangements and keep these under review*
- 4 Follow additional duties around the curriculum

* Duty rests with Head Teacher ** Duty rests with Head Teacher and Governing Body

What does that look like in detail?



1 Firstly, schools must design a curriculum.

This curriculum must:

- enable learners to develop in the way described in the four purposes
- provide for appropriate progression and accord with the principles of progression set out in the 'Progression Code' – which applies to all learning across all AoLEs.
- be suitable for learners of differing ages, abilities and aptitudes – is our curriculum appropriate for all our learners?
- be broad and balanced – does our curriculum cover a breadth of learning?
- encompass the concepts set out in the statements of what matters in the 'Statements of What Matters Code' – the detail of the statements of what matters must be included in schools' curricula
- provide for learning and teaching that encompasses each of the Areas of Learning and Experience – (this doesn't necessarily mean that schools have to organise their timetable around AoLEs)
- include –
 - Welsh
 - English from 7 years old
 - Relationships and Sexuality Education (including the detail of the Relationships and Sexuality Code)
 - Religion Values and Ethics (RVE) – schools must also consider the agreed syllabus adopted by their local authority – more detail on RVE can be found on Hwb
 - The cross-curricular skills (literacy, numeracy and digital competence)

As explained above, when designing their curriculum, schools must consider the Curriculum for Wales guidance – the statutory guidance - carefully.

2 Secondly, schools must also adopt their curriculum and assessment arrangements and publish a summary of their curriculum.

To adopt the curriculum and assessment arrangements, the head teacher and the governing body simply need to agree to adopt it. The summary schools must publish is just that, a summary. We suggest it includes:

- information on how practitioners, learners, parents, carers and the wider community have been engaged to inform the curriculum's development
 - how the curriculum meets the required elements of the Curriculum for Wales, starting from the four purposes
 - information on how the school is approaching learning progression and its arrangements for assessment
 - how the curriculum will be kept under review, including the process for feedback and ongoing revision
- School Improvement Services can provide supporting material on this.

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Schools must implement the curriculum that they've designed and adopted, and have duties around how this curriculum is implemented.

Schools must ensure their curriculum is implemented in a way that:

- enables each learner to develop in the ways described in the four purposes
- secures learning and teaching that offers appropriate progression for each learner
- is suitable for each learner's age, ability and aptitude
- takes account of each learner's additional learning needs (if any)
- secures broad and balanced learning and teaching for each learner
- for each learner encompasses the Areas, the mandatory curriculum elements of English and Welsh, the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, RSE (which must be suitable for a learner's stage of development), and RVE

Alongside this, schools must also have arrangements for assessment in place. They must be embedded in day-to-day practice and be appropriate for all learners.

Longer term, schools and their governing bodies must keep their curriculum under review and revise it to make sure it continues to meet the legal requirements.

There are other legislative requirements about learner choice and disapplication which you can find out more about on the Curriculum for Wales page on Hwb.

There are requirements around assessments set out in the Education (Arrangements for Assessing in the Curriculum for Wales) Regulations 2022 and include:

- making arrangements for and conducting the ongoing assessment of every pupil and child throughout the school year by a practitioner
- making arrangements for and conducting on-entry assessments of every pupil and child at certain points set out in those Regulations

Subject to confirmation of the detail, schools will also be required to:

- Work within school and with other schools to develop a shared understanding of progression and to plan for transition for learners between schools
- Provide information to parents and carers so that they understand the progress their child is making

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Finally, there are three other requirements to be aware of.

Firstly, when schools make decisions about their curriculum, they must consider the impact on learners' mental health and emotional well-being.

Secondly, schools must promote knowledge and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to those people who provide learning and teaching, so that they understand these conventions.

Thirdly, schools must co-operate with other schools, settings, local authorities and institutions, if that helps them fulfil their duties under the Act.

For more details see the Curriculum for Wales page on Hwb. Support will also be provided through your school improvement service.

