

Religious Education in Scotland: An overview

The state-funded school system in Scotland is, with a few exceptions, broadly organised into non-denominational and denominational schools. The former has no official religious affiliation, while most denominational schools are Roman Catholic. This arrangement has given rise to two distinct Religious Education curricula. Religious and Moral Education (RME) refers to the curriculum area in non-denominational contexts. Religious Education in Roman Catholic schools is often abbreviated as RERC. RME, or RERC for Catholic schools, is one of eight curriculum areas within Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), each with a set of documents to guide curriculum development. Schools can also offer certificated learning pathways in the curriculum area.

RME or RERC should be a feature of children and young people's curricular experiences throughout primary (P1 – P7, aged 5-11) and secondary (S1-S6, ages 12-18) schools. As a result of recent legal changes, there will no longer be a parent/carer right to withdraw child(ren) from subject provision.

Scotland has recently embarked on its first 'Curriculum Improvement Cycle' (CIC), a process to evolve the curriculum every 10 years. This first CIC is focused on evolving the technical framework, meaning a review of the above-noted documents that guide the planning of learning, teaching and assessment, in step with a broader shift to a curriculum framework centred on Big Ideas and a 'know-do-understand' model. Full drafts will be published in Autumn 2026 for further feedback.

Useful Links:

- Education Scotland. (2026). *Curriculum Improvement Cycle Draft Technical Framework – Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies. Sample*. Available here: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/cices/uploads/sites/10666/2026/06/24143224/CIC-Draft-Technical-Framework-Religious-Moral-and-Philosophical-Studies-June-2026-1.pdf>