

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) — NI CURRICULUM · P1–P7

Oideachas Reiligiúnach i dTuaisceart Éireann

Religious Education — Both Traditions — P1–P7

RE in Northern Ireland's two main school types

1 **Controlled schools (state schools)**

Historically attended mainly by Protestant pupils (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist). RE is based on the Core Syllabus — a broadly Christian programme that all NI schools must follow, agreed by the four main churches.

2 **Catholic-maintained schools**

Under Catholic Church management. RE uses the Alive-O programme (primary) or similar Catholic programmes. Sacramental preparation (First Communion, Confirmation) is part of the school's role.

3 **The Core Syllabus**

A shared RE syllabus agreed by the four main churches (Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist). All NI schools must teach from it. Provides common ground across traditions.

4 **Alive-O**

The Catholic primary RE programme used in Catholic-maintained schools. Eight books from Junior Infants to 2nd Year secondary. Sacrament preparation integrated into P3 (First Confession) and P4 (First Communion).

5 **World religions**

The NI Curriculum requires pupils to learn about other world religions (not just Christianity). Both controlled and maintained schools teach about Islam, Judaism, and other faiths.



6

Sensitive teaching

Northern Ireland's divided society means RE requires care — particularly around topics where the two main Christian traditions have historically disagreed.

