



# Pupils and RE in secondary schools in the Netherlands

Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer  
Juliëtte van Deursen-Vreeburg

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*



**< 19 % affiliates as christian**



**43 % confessional schools**

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior  
written permission from the authors.*

**Loneliness**

**Depression**

**Performance  
pressure**

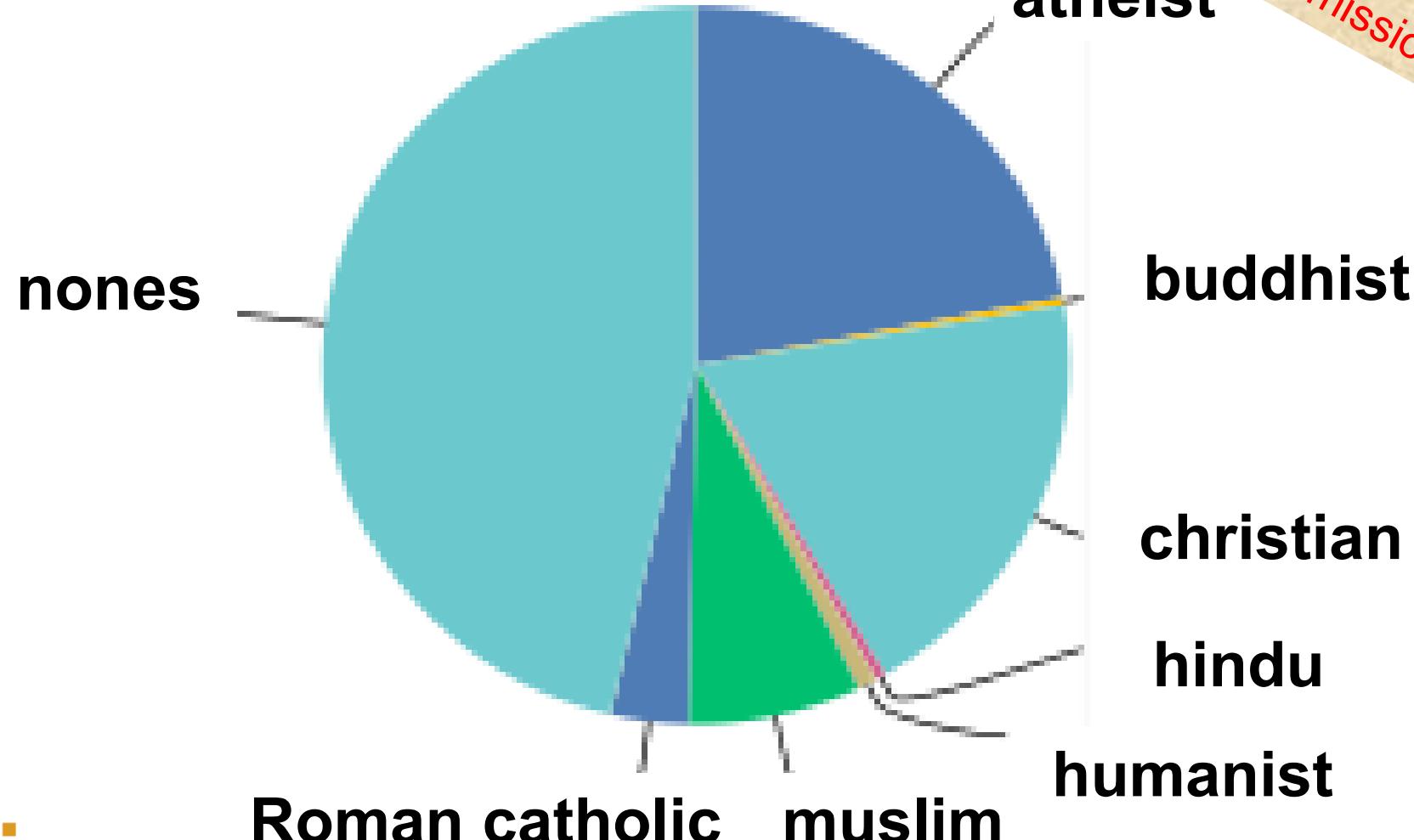
# Survey 2022

**1250 pupils**

**52% girls, 43% boys**

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior  
written permission from the authors.*

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*



## Survey 2022: important life goals

<b>Being happy with yourself</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Enjoying life</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Being free and independent</b>	<b>91%</b>

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

## Survey 2022: Unimportant life goals

**Living a life guided by God, Allah or another higher reality**

**61 %**

**Having faith in God, Allah or another higher reality**

**59 %**

**Having faith**

**47 %**

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

## Survey 2022: social goals seen as important

<b>Being a good person</b>	<b>86 %</b>
<b>Being just</b>	<b>82 %</b>
<b>Having a happy relationship</b>	<b>82 %</b>
<b>Always being there for others</b>	<b>77 %</b>

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text  
without prior written permission from the  
authors.*

# Survey 2022: different voices in Dutch RE-classes

*I believe it is important to spread the faith and bear fruit. I want to live a life in and for God.*

*I think everyone should do what feels right and not because their religion or a certain person says they have to. Because you want to.*

*My hobbies, friends and pets are very important to me. They give me peace of mind.*

*Everyone is free to believe in whatever they want, and I don't judge anyone for that.*

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*



# Survey 2022: different voices in the Dutch RE-class

*You should believe in yourself above all else.*

*Religion has no influence on my life.*

*That you should feel good mentally, be calm and not be tense all the time or worry about things in your head.*

*I think it's important that everyone can and is allowed to express their own opinion in a religious way, and although I'm not religious myself, I would definitely want to work towards making that possible for every religious belief.*

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

# Survey 2022: different voices in the Dutch RE-class

*I do attend church and celebrate holidays, but I'm not very active or connected to religion. However, I do like to pray occasionally. It does give me a little hope.*

*I am a Muslim, so I think it is important to pray and to commit your life to your faith. This also means living in the way prescribed by the Koran.*

*That you should enjoy life*

*Spreading God's love and being there for people who need help.*

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

# Conclusion about worldviews of secondary school students in the Netherlands



Diversity: religious background, cultural background etc.



Large percentage of 'nones'



Increase of mental health problems



Personal meaning-making and values



Polarisation in the classroom

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

## Each school has its own curriculum for RE

No RE on most public secondary schools

The monoreligious approach (confessional)

The hermeneutic-communicative approach (e.g. Roebben) (non-confessional)

The religious studies approach (learning about religions)

A perspective-oriented approach (LERVO)

Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.

# Challenges for RE in the Netherlands

---

Unity in diversity

---

Building on a stronger position of RE in schools

---

RE in public secondary schools

---

In need of more students for teacher training in RE

---

Creating a *national curriculum* for RE, in which there remains space for schools to consider what is essential for their school population

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

# Our view on RE: Tilburg School of Catholic Theology

---

Focus on the moral, religious, spiritual, and existential *formation* of students and teachers

---

Focus on the whole person: cognitive, affective, moral and spiritual

---

Narrative approach: working creatively and profoundly with the 'grand narratives' of Christianity and other religions

---

Spiritual approach: teaching methods to make space for deep listening, contemplative reading (Van Deursen-Vreeburg, 2023, 2024) and dialogue.

---

Teacher training: how to remain rooted in your own religious, moral and spiritual worldview and be open to all students in the classroom? What is your view on RE for the future?

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*



*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior written permission from the authors.*

## **Personhood formation through rooted awareness of core values**

Thank you for your attention!

Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer:  
[m.c.h.vandijk@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:m.c.h.vandijk@tilburguniversity.edu)

Juliëtte van Deursen-Vreeburg:  
[j.m.vandeursen@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:j.m.vandeursen@tilburguniversity.edu)

*Do not copy, share, or reproduce this text without prior  
written permission from the authors.*