

Curriculum Vision – *Religious Studies*

What is the purpose of the curriculum?

- To enable pupils to understand different religions, beliefs and worldviews
- To develop pupils' knowledge of religious teachings, practices, and how religion has evolved over time

Why is *subject* an important subject?

- Religious Studies enables students to understand and respect different cultures, beliefs and traditions
- Religious Studies enables students to think critically, ask meaningful questions, and reflect on moral and ethical issues



Types of Knowledge – *Religious Studies*

- **Substantive knowledge** (the content pupils learn): Pupils develop knowledge of key religions, beliefs and worldviews, including core concepts such as beliefs about God, authority, practices, ethics and ways of life. This includes important concepts like belief, sacred, authority, morality and identity.
- **Disciplinary knowledge** (how pupils think in the subject): Pupils learn how to think like theologians, philosophers and social scientists, for example by interpreting religious texts, evaluating arguments about ethical issues, and analysing how religion is lived and experienced in different contexts.
- **Conceptual / ‘big ideas’ knowledge**: Knowledge is organised around recurring concepts such as belief, meaning, truth, authority, diversity and identity, helping pupils to connect ideas across different religions and topics over time.
- **Procedural knowledge** (skills and methods): Pupils learn how to discuss, debate, justify opinions and use evidence, including comparing viewpoints, constructing arguments and evaluating different perspectives.



Substantive Knowledge - Religions

In the Nova Hreod curriculum, students will encounter major world religious and non-religious traditions. They will be encounter **substantive knowledge** through depth studies as well as philosophical and ethical studies that consider religious and non-religious perspectives. (Note, students will study Buddhism OR Sikhi in depth. Humanism and other non-religious traditions are encountered across the curriculum).



Judaism



Christianity



Islam



Hindu
Dharma



Buddhism



Sikhi



Humanism



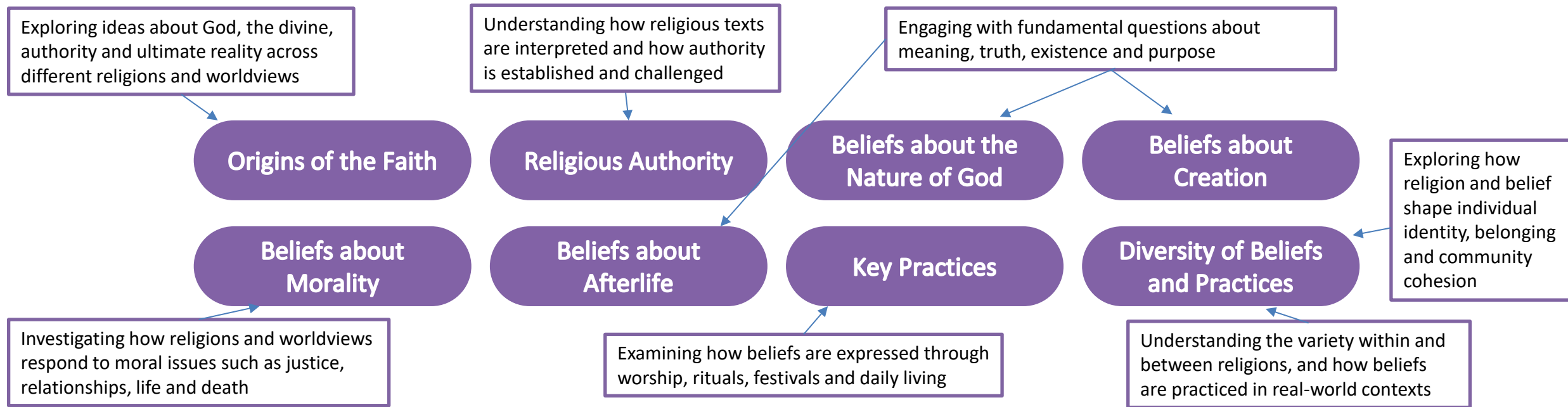
Other Non-
Religious
Traditions



Curriculum Themes Overview – Religious Studies

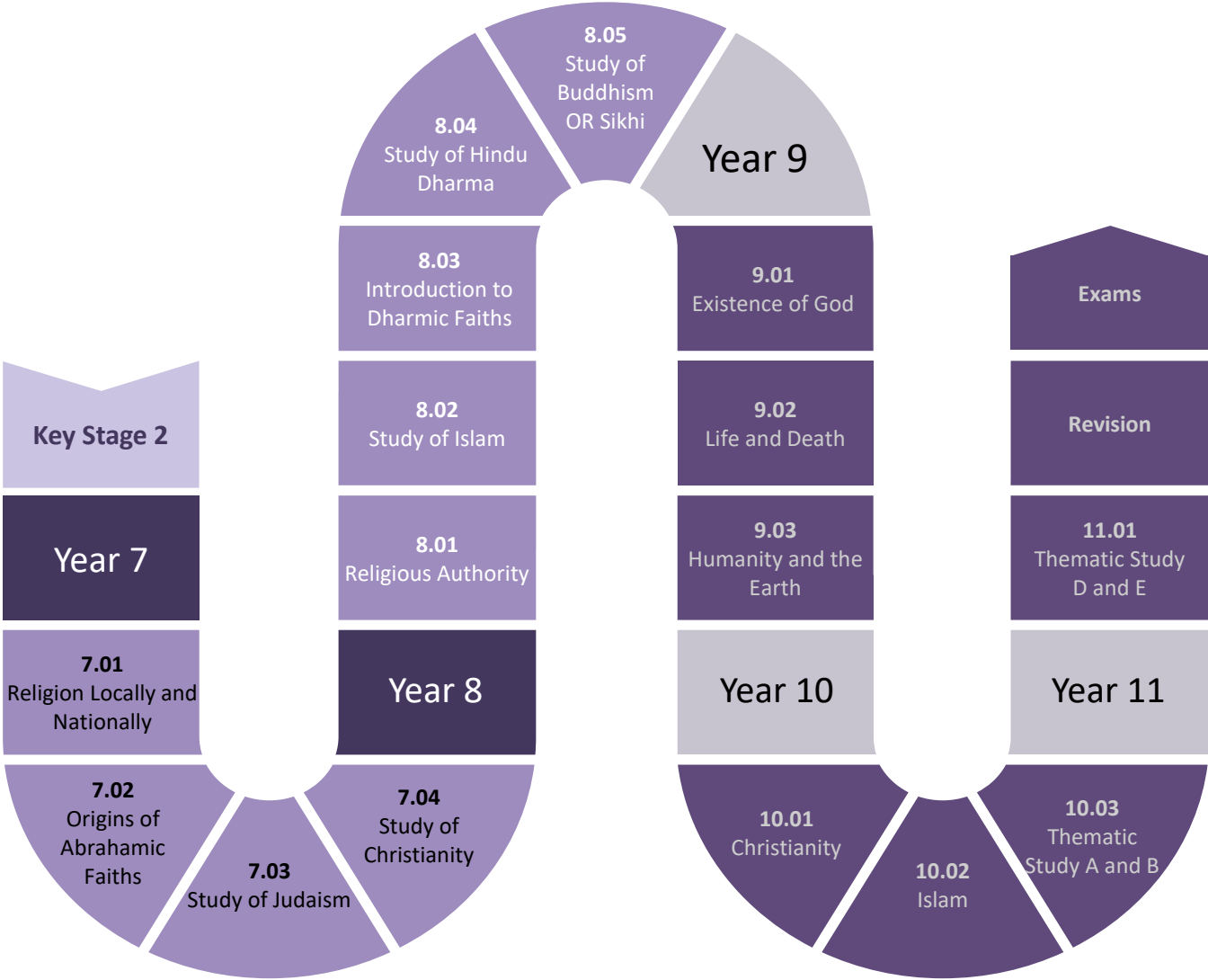
Within each tradition, students will revisit key **threads**, as listed below. These threads serve two purposes. Firstly, they provide a consistent conceptual framework (or schema) that students can use to organise their knowledge from religious studies. Secondary, it makes it easier for students to make connections between the various religious and non-religious traditions.

Note, some of these threads are only relevant to religious traditions.



Curriculum Five Year Journey

Note, Year 9-11 are indicative only and subject to change, pending consultation with HoDs in 2025/26 ahead of first teaching from September 2026.



AQA	
Year 10	Year 11
- Christian Beliefs and Practices - Islam Beliefs and Practices - BiE1 Assessments - Thematic Studies A - Thematic Studies B - BiE2 Assessments	- Thematic Studies D - Thematic Studies E - PPE1 Assessments - Revision - GCSE Exams

Curriculum Themes Map Part 1

Theme/Big Idea/...	Description	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Origins of the Faith	How religious and non-religious traditions began, developed and changed over time. Students explore founders, key figures, formative events, schisms and the spread of beliefs, allowing them to understand how traditions emerged and why they continue to shape communities today.	The shared origins of the Abrahamic faiths through Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Prophet Muhammad in 7.02 <i>Origins of Abrahamic Faiths</i> . The development of the Christian Church through St Peter, St Paul , the Nicene Creed , Catholicism and Protestantism in 7.04 <i>Study of Christianity</i> .	The life of Prophet Muhammad , the Hijrah , the conquest of Mecca and the Sunni/Shia split in 8.02 <i>Study of Islam</i> . The origins of the Dharmic traditions and their development in India in 8.03 <i>Introduction to Dharmic Traditions</i> . The origins of Hindu Dharma, Buddhism or Sikhi in the Year 8 depth studies.	The ways religious and non-religious worldviews shape responses to the question of God's existence in 9.01 <i>Existence of God</i> . Students consider how different traditions justify and maintain their foundational claims.	Revisiting the development of Christianity through different denominations , beliefs and practices in 10.01 <i>Christianity: Beliefs and Practices</i> . Revisiting the development of Islam through Sunni and Shia traditions in 10.02 <i>Islam: Beliefs and Practices</i> .	Applying knowledge of the origins and development of religious traditions when evaluating GCSE thematic issues in 11.01 <i>Thematic Studies D and E</i> .
Religious Authority	How believers determine what is true, sacred and binding. Students explore scripture, revelation, religious leadership, tradition and interpretation, and evaluate how authority is understood differently within and across traditions.	The authority of Moses' revelation at Mount Sinai . The structure and authority of the Torah, Tanakh and Talmud in 7.03 <i>Study of Judaism</i> . The authority of the Bible , religious leaders and apostolic succession in 7.04 <i>Study of Christianity</i> .	How religious authority is transmitted through founders, texts and leaders in 8.01 <i>Religious Authority</i> . The authority of the Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah and leadership within Sunni and Shia Islam in 8.02 <i>Study of Islam</i> . The authority of the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Dharmic texts in 8.04 <i>Hindu Dharma</i> .	Considering religious and non-religious perspectives on authority while evaluating philosophical arguments in 9.01 <i>Existence of God</i> and later ethical studies.	The authority of Christian sources including the Bible, Creeds and religious traditions in 10.01. The authority of the Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic traditions in 10.02.	Evaluating the role of religious authority in shaping responses to contemporary ethical and social issues through GCSE thematic studies.

Curriculum Themes Map Part 2

Theme/Big Idea/...	Description	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Beliefs about the Nature of God	How traditions understand ultimate reality, including the existence, characteristics and nature of God or divine reality. Students compare monotheistic, polytheistic, non-theistic and non-religious perspectives.	The monotheism of Judaism, Christianity and Islam through the covenant narratives studied in 7.02. The nature of God and the Trinity through the Nicene Creed in 7.04 Christianity.	The nature of Allah through Tawhid in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . Different understandings of Ultimate Reality within Dharmic traditions in 8.03 and 8.04, including beliefs about Brahman .	The arguments for and against the existence of God and atheist and agnostic responses in 9.01 <i>Existence of God</i> . The contribution of religious thinkers to debates about God's nature and existence	Deepening understanding of Christian beliefs about God through 10.01 <i>Christianity: Beliefs and Practices</i> . Exploring Islamic understandings of Allah in 10.02 <i>Islam: Beliefs and Practices</i> .	Applying understanding of God's nature when evaluating GCSE thematic questions involving suffering, morality and human purpose.
Beliefs about Creation	How traditions explain the origins, purpose and nature of the universe and humanity's place within it. Students compare religious, philosophical and scientific approaches to creation and existence.	The Genesis creation narrative in 7.03 <i>Judaism</i> and humanity's responsibility through <i>*Tikkun Olam</i> . Christian understandings of creation and the significance of Jesus within creation narratives in 7.04 <i>Christianity</i> .	The role of Adam in Islamic teachings and similarities and differences with Judeo-Christian accounts in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . The Dharmic understanding of cyclical time , samsara and the universe in 8.03 and 8.04. Buddhist ideas including dependent arising , or Sikh creation narratives in 8.05.	The First Cause and Design Arguments alongside the Big Bang Theory in 9.01 <i>Existence of God</i> . Religious and non-religious responses to humanity's place on Earth in 9.03 <i>Humanity and the Earth</i> .	Revisiting Christian and Islamic teachings about creation, stewardship and humanity's responsibility through GCSE religion units and thematic studies.	Evaluating religious and non-religious beliefs about creation, environmental ethics and human responsibility in GCSE thematic studies.

Curriculum Themes Map Part 3

Theme/Big Idea/...	Description	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Beliefs about Morality	How religious and non-religious traditions understand right and wrong, the purpose of ethical living, and the principles that should guide human behaviour. Students explore moral laws, duties, virtues and ethical teachings, and consider how beliefs shape decisions in modern society.	The moral importance of Abraham's Covenant , the Ten Commandments , Leviticus and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in 7.02 <i>Origins of Abrahamic Faiths</i> . The significance of the 613 mitzvot and Tikkun Olam in 7.03 <i>Judaism</i> . Jesus' teachings on love, forgiveness and ethical living in 7.04 <i>Christianity</i> .	The moral guidance provided through the Five Pillars of Islam , including prayer, fasting and modesty, in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . The importance of dharma and ahimsa in 8.04 <i>Hindu Dharma</i> . The Eightfold Path , metta and karuna in 8.05 <i>Buddhism</i> (or equality and seva in Sikhi).	Students compare religious and non-religious approaches to the purpose of life and ethical behaviour in 9.02 <i>Life and Death</i> . Students evaluate moral responsibilities towards people, animals and the environment in 9.03 <i>Humanity and the Earth</i> .	Christian moral teachings applied to contemporary issues in 10.01 <i>Christianity: Beliefs and Practices</i> . Islamic teachings, Sharia and ethical decision-making in 10.02 <i>Islam: Beliefs and Practices</i> . Application of moral teachings in 10.03 <i>Thematic Studies</i> .	Evaluating Christian, Islamic and non-religious responses to ethical issues through 11.01 <i>Thematic Studies D and E</i> , drawing upon teachings studied throughout the curriculum.
Beliefs about Afterlife	How traditions understand death, the soul, judgement and what happens after death. Students explore different beliefs about heaven, hell, resurrection, reincarnation, liberation and non-religious perspectives on mortality.	Jewish beliefs that place emphasis on living a good life , alongside varied beliefs about life after death in 7.03 <i>Judaism</i> . Christian beliefs about Judgement Day , Heaven and Hell in 7.04 <i>Christianity</i> .	Islamic beliefs about Jannah , Jahannam and accountability after death in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . Beliefs about samsara and moksha in 8.04 <i>Hindu Dharma</i> . Beliefs about nirvana and enlightenment in 8.05 <i>Buddhism</i> (or Sikh teachings about liberation and the afterlife).	The nature of the soul, life after death and non-religious understandings of mortality in 9.02 <i>Philosophical and Ethical Study: Life and Death</i> . Comparison of Abrahamic, Dharmic and Humanist perspectives on death and meaning	Christian beliefs about judgement, heaven, hell and salvation revisited in 10.01 <i>Christianity: Beliefs and Practices</i> . Islamic beliefs about Akhirah , judgement and the End Times explored in 10.02 <i>Islam: Beliefs and Practices</i> .	Applying knowledge of afterlife beliefs to GCSE thematic questions concerning suffering, death, purpose and human destiny in 11.01 <i>Thematic Studies</i> .



Curriculum Themes Map Part 4

Theme/Big Idea/...	Description	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Key Practices	How beliefs are expressed through worship, festivals, rituals and daily acts of devotion. Students explore how religious communities live out their faith and how practices reinforce identity, belonging and belief.	Prayer, Shabbat, Pesach , synagogue worship and Bar/Bat Mitzvah in 7.03 <i>Judaism</i> . Christian celebrations, Christmas , the Eucharist , matrimony and other sacraments in 7.04 <i>Christianity</i> .	The Five Pillars, Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr and Islamic worship in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . Puja, Diwali, Holi , pilgrimage and ritual life in 8.04 <i>Hindu Dharma</i> . Meditation, Taking Refuge and Buddhist devotional practices in 8.05 <i>Buddhism</i> (or key Sikh practices including langar and worship in the Gurdwara).	Students consider how beliefs influence religious practice and everyday life across traditions in ethical and philosophical studies, particularly when examining how worldviews shape behaviour.	A detailed study of Christian worship, prayer, evangelism, mission and the sacraments in 10.01 <i>Christianity: Beliefs and Practices</i> . A detailed study of Sunni Five Pillars , Shia Ten Obligatory Acts, Hajj, Eid-ul-Adha, Ashura and other Islamic practices in 10.02 <i>Islam: Beliefs and Practices</i> .	Students apply their understanding of religious practices when evaluating belief and behaviour within GCSE thematic studies and revision.
Diversity of Beliefs and Practices	How beliefs and practices vary within and between traditions. Students explore denominations, schools of thought, different interpretations and the influence of culture, history and society on religious expression.	Different interpretations of scripture in Orthodox and Progressive Judaism and varying approaches to Shabbat and Pesach in 7.03 <i>Judaism</i> . Differences between Catholic and Protestant traditions in 7.04 <i>Christianity</i> .	The diversity of Sunni and Shia Islam and varying approaches to fasting, modesty and worship in 8.02 <i>Islam</i> . Diverse expressions of worship and festivals within Hindu Dharma in 8.04. The global diversity of Buddhist or Sikh beliefs and practices in 8.05.	Throughout 9.01 <i>Existence of God</i> , 9.02 <i>Life and Death</i> and 9.03 <i>Humanity and the Earth</i> , students encounter a broad range of religious and non-religious viewpoints and evaluate contrasting responses to philosophical and ethical questions.	Students continue to explore diversity within Christianity and Islam through differing beliefs, practices and interpretations studied in GCSE religion units.	Students evaluate the diversity of religious and non-religious responses to contemporary social and ethical issues through 11.01 <i>Thematic Studies D and E</i> .



Careers opportunities – based on themes - *Religious Studies*

Year	Specific opportunities for teaching about carers linked to Religious Studies
7	• Religion Locally and Nationally – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in social research and data analysis through their study of local and national census data and how demographic information is used to understand changes in society • Origins of the Abrahamic Faiths – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in archaeology, museum curation or heritage through their study of the historical origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and the significance of places such as Jerusalem.
8	• Study of Islam – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in law through their study of religious authority, Sharia, differing interpretations of scripture and debates surrounding equality and justice. • Study of Hindu Dharma, Buddhism or Sikhi – opportunities for pupils to discuss careers in international development, charity work and community leadership through their study of ahimsa, seva, compassion
9	• Existence of God – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in academic research, philosophy or journalism through evaluating evidence, analysing arguments and communicating reasoned conclusions. • Humanity and the Earth – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in environmental conservation and sustainability through their study of stewardship, environmental ethics and religious and non-religious responses to climate and ecological issues.
10	• Christianity: Beliefs and Practices – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in teaching, community leadership or the clergy through their study of worship, mission, evangelism and the role of religious communities in society • Theme A: Relationships and Families – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in social work, counselling or family support services as the unit allows pupils to understand the challenges faced by modern families and the importance of supporting healthy relationships. • Theme B: Religion and Life – opportunities for pupils to discuss a career in environmental conservation, veterinary science or sustainability through their study of stewardship, animal welfare, the origins of life and humanity's responsibility for the environment.
11	• Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict – opportunities for pupils to discuss careers in the armed forces, diplomacy, international relations and peacebuilding through their study of war, terrorism, conflict resolution and reconciliation. • Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment – opportunities for pupils to discuss careers in law, policing, probation services and the judiciary as the unit enables pupils to evaluate justice, punishment, forgiveness, rehabilitation and the purpose of the criminal justice system.

