



RSE at The Linden Centre

19/01/2021

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RSE - Staff Share

Plan Your Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum

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► Introduction

This PowerPoint provides the basic principles to help school leaders plan and prepare for the new statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. Schools have the flexibility to design their own curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of pupils and the community, as well as the statutory requirements.

Full statutory guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Given the challenging circumstances presented by COVID-19, schools are encouraged to begin teaching RSE from September 2020. If this is not practical, then they should begin as soon as possible but no later than the start of the summer term 2021.

► What Are Schools Required to Teach?

1. Relationships Education (all primary aged pupils)
2. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (all secondary aged pupils)
3. Health Education (all pupils in state-funded schools only)

Independent schools are required to teach personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

Sex education at primary school is not compulsory but schools may teach it if they see it as appropriate.

All pupils should receive teaching on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships. Secondary schools should include LGBT teaching as part of their curriculum, and primary schools are strongly encouraged, when teaching about different types of families, to include families with same sex parents.

► What to Teach at Primary and Secondary

The statutory guidance specifies:

- topics that need to be taught at primary and secondary phase;
- what pupils should know at the end of each phase.

The guidance does not break the curriculum up by key stage, year group or age. These decisions will vary depending on the pupils and school context.

Schools should use their knowledge to decide if secondary requirements should be introduced to primary students, subject to being appropriate and with parental consent. Schools should also decide whether primary requirements should be taught to secondary students if, for example, they have gaps in their understanding and need to develop their knowledge before progressing.

► Primary Curriculum - an Overview

The focus in primary school is on building positive relationships, including friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and adults.

Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect, recognising and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate/unsafe contact - physical or otherwise; these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary school.

Teachers should talk to pupils about the features of a healthy relationship, which is more likely to lead them to happiness and security; this should include online safety. Relationships education also creates an opportunity to teach pupils about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support good mental health.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary>

► **At the end of primary school, children should know about the following:**

- Families and people who care for them

- including characteristics of a healthy family life, commitment, marriage, different types of relationships and families, and relationships that make them feel unsafe

- Caring friendships

- including characteristics of friendships, how to repair friendships, managing conflict, and who to trust

- Respectful relationships

- the importance of respecting the similarities and differences of others, courtesy and manners, self-respect, bullying and cyber-bullying, stereotypes and how they can be negative and destructive

- Online relationships

- applying the same principles to relationships online and offline, people pretending to be someone they are not, keeping safe online and data sharing

- Being safe

- appropriate boundaries, privacy, how to recognise and report feeling unsafe or uncomfortable

► Secondary Curriculum - an Overview

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.

It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner.

It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships, resisting pressure to have sex and, conversely, not applying pressure. It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy.

Pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, while respecting the rights of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary>

► **At the end of secondary school, children should know about the following:**

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● Families | - different types of stable, committed relationships, marriage and its legal status, roles and responsibilities of parenting |
| ● Respectful relationships, including friendships | - characteristics of positive relationships, how stereotypes can cause damage, respect and tolerance, different types of bullying, what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence |
| ● Online and media | - expectations of behaviour online, online risk, appropriate material to share, how to report/manage issues online, the impact of viewing harmful content, material which is a criminal offence, how data is collected and shared |
| ● Being safe | - concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation (FGM) |
| ● Intimate sexual relationships and sexual health | - facts about reproductive health, the choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex, contraception, pregnancy and miscarriage, sexually transmitted infections, the impact of alcohol and drugs and where to get further advice and treatment |

► Points to Consider When Planning Your Curriculum

You may wish to consider these points, amongst others, when planning your curriculum:

- How does the 'whole-school' curriculum look?
- Does each topic 'fit' for the term, year group and key stage?
- Are there topics which will need to be revisited as pupils grow in maturity?
- How regularly will lessons be taught?
- Who will deliver the lessons?
- Will there be additional whole school/key stage assemblies?
- Will any sessions (lessons/assemblies) be led by external speakers or experts?

► External Agencies

There are many external agencies that can provide speakers, tools and resources to enhance and supplement the RSE curriculum.

When using external agencies, the school must ensure that any materials used are appropriate and in line with the school's legal duties. Schools are also responsible for ensuring that speakers, tools and resources do not undermine fundamental British values of democracy (rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different beliefs and faiths) and are also balanced and age-appropriate.

You should be clear on what the individual is going to say and what their position is on the issues to be discussed. You should ask to see in advance any materials that are going to be used.

► External Agencies - Compliance

Ensure that you know the named individuals who are going to be presenting, address any need for DBS checks and make sure that you have an agreed safeguarding procedure, should the need arise.

You should also complete a basic online search on the external agency and individual speaker. You should also address any items that you and your parents or carers may have concerns about beforehand.

Schools should make appropriate checks to ensure compliance with:

- Your school's policy
- Teaching Standards
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education Act 1996

► Choosing Resources

There are many external resources available to schools to support the delivery of an RSE curriculum.

Any materials you intend to use should align with the statutory guidance and should be assessed to make sure that they are age-appropriate, meet the curriculum objective they are intended for, fulfil the school's legal duties and are impartial. Schools should not use resources produced by organisations that take an extreme political stance.

Schools should also consider whether the resource includes robust facts and statistics, is from a credible source, and supports pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings.

► Creating an Inclusive Classroom

It is important to consider the diverse range of pupils in your classroom, particularly when teaching complex and sensitive subjects like RSE.

These topics should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives.

When planning, consider that there will be many different personal experiences and stages of cognitive development within the classroom and that some pupils may have already been exposed to, or are at risk of being exposed to, some of the content being taught.

A sensitive teaching style is key to ensuring that pupils feel safe and supported in lessons and are therefore able to engage with the key messages.

► Ensuring Appropriate Content

In schools, the safety of children is paramount. As such, teachers should be aware of inappropriate content on the Internet, particularly when it comes to home learning or research. At primary level, teachers should be especially aware of exposing children to over sexualised content.

Knowledge of sex and sexual health should be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way, thus giving scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment and make safe, informed and healthy choices.

Topics involving gender and biological sex are complex and sensitive and teachers must not reinforce harmful stereotypes.

All schools are required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Duty Act.

Equality Act:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Public Sector Duty Act:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-schools-england>

► Sensitive Issues

The context of the school will dictate which topics may be sensitive for students and parents/carers. Teachers must create a safe environment and ensure that conversations within lessons do not lead to any type of bullying, ostracising or other forms of social and emotional harm.

To create a safe environment, you may wish to consider:

- setting ground rules for lessons, including not sharing personal information;
- stopping conversations where personal information is shared and following up privately if necessary;
- not promising confidentiality if a pupil discloses something of concern;
- telling pupils they can ask for help and will be taken seriously.

► Difficult Questions

Teaching in these subjects should allow appropriate opportunities for pupils to ask questions to check and test their understanding.

Most questions will be relevant to what the teacher has explained and general questions should be welcomed. Pupils should not feel penalised or censored for asking sensible or relevant questions, even if they are occasionally awkward.

Sometimes, pupils may ask questions which go beyond what the teacher has planned and may stray into sensitive territory. There is no single way to address all such questions – some may be handled in a straightforward manner for the whole class to hear, but others may relate to parts of the curriculum which have not yet been taught and, as such, these should not be answered in front of the whole class.

Before teaching, you should refer to the 'Managing Difficult Questions' section of the statutory guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary#managing-difficult-questions>

► Vulnerable Pupils and Disclosure

It is possible that you may see an increase in disclosures as a result of teaching the new subjects. Headteachers and Safeguarding Leads should remind all staff members of the correct procedures to follow, should any disclosures from individual pupils be prompted by lessons in these subjects.

It is good practice for the teacher to be in the room, particularly when using external agencies, so they know what was discussed and can follow up with their pupils. Being present for all lessons means the teacher will also understand what has been discussed if a pupil makes a disclosure later.

A difficult question in a lesson may occasionally raise a possible safeguarding concern and the school's safeguarding process should be followed in such cases.

► SEND Pupils

RSE must be accessible for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

If your school is a mainstream school, you should ensure that teaching is differentiated to support pupils with SEND to fully access the curriculum. Subject leaders should liaise with the class teacher and special educational needs coordinator to make sure:

- the needs of all pupils are met;
- the curriculum is fully accessible;
- education, health and care (EHC) plans are followed.

► Right to Withdrawal

Your policy should state that parents/carers have the right to request withdrawal from all, or part, of sex education. It will also tell them who to contact in the first instance - normally the headteacher.

When a request is received, consider meeting with the parents to discuss the background to their request and outline the benefits of discussing sex education in school.

If parents/carers still want to withdraw after the discussion or they refuse the meeting, the request must still be processed up until three terms before the pupil turns 16. A record should be kept of discussions with parents/carers and pupils, detailing the right to withdraw and including any exceptions and decisions not to grant it.

It is important to read the statutory guidance on the right to withdrawal from sex education.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/introduction-to-requirements#right-to-be-excused-from-sex-education-commonly-referred-to-as-the-right-to-withdraw>

► SEND Right to Withdrawal

In most cases, there should be no difference in approach between SEND and other pupils. However, in some cases, the nature or degree of the pupil's special educational need or disability means that they are demonstrably very likely to be at unusual risk from sexual activity or sexual exploitation. Their domestic or social circumstances should also be considered in tandem with this, and therefore your headteacher may judge that an exception should be made. In such exceptional cases, your headteacher may decline a parental request for withdrawal.

It is important to read the safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality part of the statutory guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/delivery-and-teaching-strategies#safeguarding-reports-of-abuse-and-confidentiality>

► Teacher Training

There are training modules, provided by the government, to support subject leaders and other staff members teaching RSE. These contain:

- key knowledge and facts;
- activities and templates to help run a training session;
- guidance for difficult questions.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health#train-teachers-on-relationships-sex-and-health-education>

► Teacher Needs

It is important that teachers maintain their own wellbeing when delivering the curriculum.

As such, school and subject leaders must be appreciative of the sensitive and complex nature of some areas of this curriculum. It is important to understand that each teacher will approach it from their own individual circumstances, which may require support. For this reason, you may wish to engage teachers in considering their own needs in advance and offering support where necessary.