

## Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Statutory guidance for governing bodies,  
proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior  
leadership teams, teachers

## Summary of main points

### - PRIMARY -

#### Regulations

The new subjects of Relationships Education and RSE must be taught in all maintained schools, academies and independent schools. This includes:

- pupil referral units
- maintained special schools
- special academies
- non-maintained special schools

All schools, except independent schools, must make provision for Health Education.

#### Headlines for Primary Schools

- Schools are free to determine how they deliver the content but the expectation is that it will be taught within a planned programme or lessons in a sequenced way rather than during off-timetable days.
- The use of visitors should be to enhance teaching by the school staff rather than as a replacement for it.
- Schools must ensure that teaching: is accessible to all pupils with SEND and additional learning needs; reflects the preparing for adulthood outcomes in the SEND code of practice; takes into account that some of these pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying and exploitation; and if required, tailor content to the specific needs of individual pupils.
- Schools must ensure they are inclusive and comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Protected characteristics: age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation.)
- Schools must promote fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- All schools must take into account the religious backgrounds of all pupils and are expected to include LGBT content within their relationships teaching.
- In primary schools this equates to reflecting the fact that children are raised in different types of families including LGBT parents and same sex couples can get married. Underpinning this work with the fundamental British values of acceptance, tolerance and valuing difference will allow schools to make clear that the views of different faiths can vary but difference will be accepted and valued within the law.
- Primary schools do not have to teach sex education but may choose to teach some, in addition to the content included in Relationships Education, Health Education and NC Science.
- Advisable to refer to Relationships & Health Education as sex education content is not compulsory.
- Parents can NOT withdraw from relationships education or health education (see below for content).
- Parents CAN withdraw from any additional sex education content, not included in relationships education, health education or science, the school decides to deliver.
- Schools need to consider how they will respond to any questions from pupils that fall outside the curriculum (relationships education, health education or science) or within any sex education included but from which the child asking has been withdrawn.
- Schools are encouraged to consult pupils to gain their views about their learning needs.
- Schools are encouraged to engage with parents but the Department for Education is very clear that parents do not have the right to dictate or veto the content of relationships and health education on the grounds of protected characteristics.

#### Policy development requirements - Primary Schools

- From September 2020, primary schools must have a Relationships Education Policy and the law requires them to consult with parents when it is written and whenever updated.

- From September 2020, if the school chooses to teach sex education they must also have a Sex Education Policy and the law requires primary schools to consult on this also.
- Both of these can be within another policy e.g. PSHE but must be clearly defined to allow consultation.

### **Policy content requirements - Primary Schools**

1. Define relationships and health education and link to the school ethos and inclusiveness.
2. Set out the subject content, how it is taught, when it is taught year group(s) and term, who is responsible for teaching it (e.g. class teachers, science teachers, PE teachers etc).
3. Make clear any additional sex education content the school has decided to deliver.
4. Information about how the subject is monitored and evaluated.
5. Information about a parent's right to withdraw including:
  - what they can and cannot withdraw from
  - the process for withdrawal
  - the process if a withdrawn child asks a question
6. Policy review dates, updates and how it is approved (i.e. governors or trustees).
7. How parents will be involved and how and when pupils will be consulted.
8. How the content and delivery will be made accessible to pupils with additional learning needs and SEND.
9. Information about the school's obligations in law e.g. the Equality Act.

### **DofE: Parental Engagement on Relationships Education, October 2019**

- Refer to 'parental engagement', rather than consultation, because schools ultimately make the final decisions and parental engagement does not amount to a parental veto.
- The process advised by the DofE is:
  - policy and curriculum development
  - engagement to present curriculum and policy and reassure
  - opportunity for parents to ask questions and give views
  - school considers views and makes final decisions
  - final decisions communicated to parents
  - possible support for parents to enable them to talk to their children and answer questions at home
- Engagement with parents means providing an opportunity for parents to express their views.
- The school is not obliged to make changes based on parent feedback as long as they have provided the opportunity.
- Parent expectations of engagement need to be managed.
- "The Department for Education will back any school that, having engaged with parents and listened to their views, takes reasonable decisions on their relationships curriculum, including the teaching of topics sensitive to their parents."
- Engagement does not need to be lengthy or ongoing, the DofE advise is should have a defined end point.
- Existing parent engagement processes can be used or new ones developed.
- The DofE recommends that schools do NOT accept anonymous feedback and take steps to ensure that feedback received is from current parents.
- It is advisable to meet face-to-face with individual parents who have concerns.

## **Content for Primary Schools – Relationships Education**

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.</li> <li>• The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.</li> <li>• That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.</li> <li>• That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.</li> <li>• That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</li> <li>• How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</li> </ul>
Caring friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.</li> <li>• The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.</li> <li>• That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.</li> <li>• That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.</li> <li>• How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).</li> <li>• About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.</li> <li>• That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.</li> <li>• How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.</li> <li>• How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.</li> <li>• How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.</li> <li>• How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.</li> <li>• Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>• The conventions of courtesy and manners.</li> <li>• The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.</li> <li>• That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.</li> <li>• What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.</li> <li>• The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.</li> </ul>
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.</li> <li>• That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.</li> <li>• The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.</li> <li>• How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.</li> <li>• How information and data is shared and used online.</li> </ul>

### **Content for Primary Schools – Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education)**

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Physical health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.</li> <li>• The importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise.</li> <li>• The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity).</li> <li>• How and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.</li> </ul>
Basic first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary.</li> <li>• Concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.</li> </ul>
Changing adolescent body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.</li> <li>• About menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.</li> <li>• That there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.</li> <li>• How to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.</li> <li>• How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.</li> <li>• The benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness.</li> <li>• Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.</li> <li>• Isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.</li> <li>• That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).</li> <li>• It is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.</li> </ul>
Internet safety and harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits.</li> <li>• About the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.</li> <li>• How to consider the effect of their online actions on others and know how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online and the importance of keeping personal information private.</li> <li>• Why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted.</li> <li>• That the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health.</li> <li>• How to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted.</li> <li>• Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.</li> </ul>
Healthy eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content).</li> <li>• The principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.</li> <li>• The characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).</li> </ul>
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Health and prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body.</li><li>• About safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer.</li><li>• The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.</li><li>• About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist.</li><li>• About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing.</li><li>• The facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.</li></ul>