

North Yorkshire Guidance for schools on developing a Relationships and Sex Education Policy and implementing effective provision

Updated September 2023

The purpose of this document is to support your school to develop and embed effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision and policy through wide consultation with the whole school community. This guidance and a range of supporting information are provided to ensure your final policy reflects the needs, ethos and personal development of the school.

For further information or support please contact Clare Barrowman, Senior Health and Well-Being Adviser, School Improvement at clare.barrowman@northyorks.gov.uk

A range of training and PSHE networks run each academic year to support schools with the implementation of an effective RSHE curriculum. Further information can be accessed <https://nyes.info/>

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) become statutory for schools in September 2020 and the final document is available [here](#) . The table below shows the key areas that have become statutory for all schools.

Topic areas for primary schools – Under each topic heading there are learning outcomes that all pupils should know by the end of primary school	Topic areas for secondary schools – Under each topic heading there are learning outcomes that all pupils should know by the end of secondary school
<p>Relationships Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families’ and people who care for me • Caring friendships • Respectful relationships • Online relationships • Being safe 	<p>Relationships and Sex Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families • Respectful relationships, including friendships • Online and media • Being Safe • Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

It will be for primary schools to determine whether they should cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils outside of the science curriculum.

Health Education

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Changing adolescent body (puberty)

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The law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues.

There are many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Pupils should be aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught for example:

- marriage ([legal age raised to 18 in the UK](#))
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting, youth produced sexual imagery, nudes etc)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism / radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example through gang involvement or county lines)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

Some further key aspects from the statutory RSHE guidance for schools include:

- **All schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships and Sex Education.** Schools **must** consult parents/carers in developing and reviewing their policy. Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents

and reflects the community they serve. Schools should publish the policy on the school website. A school should keep a record of the consultation processes.

- RSHE Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with **special educational needs and disabilities** as they represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.
- In teaching Relationships and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach pupils about **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT)** they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.
- **Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons.** Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to practise applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skilfully and confidently in real life situations.
- **Use of visitors should be to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of the teaching staff, rather than as a replacement** for teaching by those staff.

The DfE have produced some **Non-statutory implementation guidance entitled [Plan your Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum](#)**. It gives schools some basic principles to help school leaders plan and prepare for the new statutory curriculum.

The DfE have published staff [training modules](#) to support schools implement the statutory RSHE curriculum. The training modules are aimed at staff who will be delivering the curriculum and should be adapted to each school's needs. They presently cover the following areas:

- Mental wellbeing
- Changing adolescent body
- Basic first aid
- Drugs alcohol & tobacco
- Caring friendships (primary schools only)
- Respectful relationships (for secondary schools this also includes friendships)
- Online relationships
- Internet safety and harms
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Health & prevention
- RSE and SEND learners

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#)

RSE plays a vital part in schools fulfilling their **statutory duties to protect and safeguard** their pupils. When considering the relationships and sex education provision a school needs to be implement the requirements set out in, 'Keeping children safe in education guidance for schools' which states that schools:

"should ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In schools,

relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). In teaching these subjects schools must have regard to the statutory guidance”

“Schools and colleges play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. The school/college will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school/college life. These will be underpinned by the school/college’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such a programme should be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This program will tackle, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- *healthy and respectful relationships*
- *boundaries and consent*
- *stereotyping, prejudice and equality*
- *body confidence and self-esteem*
- *how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour*
- *the concepts of, and laws relating to – sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called ‘honour’-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and*
- *what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable”.*

(paragraph 129 - 131)

Schools should be ensuring that the RSE curriculum is responding to the specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues set out ‘Annex B of KCSIE: Further Information’ in Keeping Children Safe in Education page 141 onwards.

Ofsted Inspection Framework

The Ofsted inspection guidance does refer directly to the statutory requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education

- Relationships education is compulsory for all schools providing primary education. Relationships and sex education is compulsory for all schools providing secondary education (including, where a school has one, in sixth form provision). Health education is also compulsory for pupils in state-funded schools.
- If a school is failing to meet its obligations, inspectors will consider this when reaching the personal development and leadership and management judgements.

It is recommended that schools also review the personal development section of the school inspection handbook for further information on what the expectations are in relation to what pupils will be learning from the PSHE curriculum.

Key features as set out in the statutory RSHE guidance for schools to consider for the development of an effective RSE policy.

- The RSE policy is the statutory responsibility of the school's governing body
- Schools must consult parents/carers in developing and reviewing their policy and the recommendation is to keep a record of this consultation process. This may be an ongoing consultation process when the RSE policy is due for review or changes are made to the delivery of the RSE curriculum.
- The policy should reflect the views pupils (listening and responding to the views of pupils will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils)
- Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community they service
- All schools must have an up-to-date RSE policy which is made available to parents/carers and others and reflects the provision and resources that are being used in school
- Schools must provide a copy of the policy free of charge to anyone who asks for one and should publish the policy on the school website

The policy must include:

- Have a definition of Relationships Education and Sex Education
- For primary schools that choose to teach sex education they need to define the sex education they teach other than that covered in the science curriculum
- Set out the subject content, how it is taught and who is responsible for teaching it
- How is the subject monitored and evaluated
- Clarify what parents / carers do not and do have the right to withdraw from
- Confirm the date by which the policy will be reviewed

A policy is likely to include the following information:

- Details of content /scheme of work and when each topic is taught, taking account of the age of pupils
- How the policy has been produced, and how it will be kept under review , in both cases working with parents
- How delivery content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND
- Requirements on schools in law e.g Equality Act
- How often the policy is updated
- Who approves the policy

A school must provide their own definition of Relationships Education and Sex Education (RSE)

"The RSE policy and curriculum needs to sit within the ethos and values of the school. RSE is important as it provides pupils with accurate, reliable information to support them growing up, "to lead safe, happy and healthy lives".

- The schools RSE policy should define relationships education and sex education as two separate definitions

- In a primary school, the school can choose if it is going to teach sex education as part of the RSHE curriculum as this is not a statutory requirement for primary schools. If the school does choose to teach sex education as part of the RSHE curriculum then parents / carers can withdraw their child from sex education (not that provided in the science curriculum)
- In a secondary school parent/carers have the right to withdraw their child from sex education up to three terms before the child is 16, a pupil can then request sex education
- There may be some exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making a decision about parental withdrawal BUT this approach MUST be reflected in the school's RSE policy
- Having two definitions will make it clearer to parents/carers what they can withdraw from as parents/carers cannot withdraw from the statutory relationships and health education curriculum (the health education curriculum contains the changing adolescent body learning outcomes)

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools but the content in the DfE RSHE guidance covers everything that primary schools should teach about relationships and health education, including puberty. The national curriculum for science also includes subject content in related areas. It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so. The Dfe do recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

A school also needs to consider the learning outcomes from the Health Education curriculum, which focuses on the changing adolescent body, as this is part of the statutory curriculum so parents will no longer be able to withdraw their child from lessons on puberty.

The school also needs to consider the statutory requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, which states that schools, "should ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety".

The definitions below are only as guidance as it is the decision of a school what they decide to include as their definitions as the Governments guidance does not provide any.

Relationships Education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, gender, sexuality and sexual health. It should support pupils gain accurate information, develop skills and form positive beliefs, values and attitudes. It also gives pupils essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful, loving and non-exploitative friendships and relationships, staying safe both on and offline. This enables them to take responsibility for their body, relationships, reproduction, sexual health and wellbeing.

Sex Education could be defined drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science – the ways a baby could be conceived and born. For a secondary school it is also about considering the aspects under the, 'Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health' topic and collectively agreeing what aspects are relationships education, components that come under teaching about safeguarding and what is being defined as sex education.

Health Education – Changing Adolescent Body, pupils should know:

- Key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes
- About menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle

Roles and Responsibilities of members of the schools community;

The Governing Body

- The governing body has the responsibility to ensure a school has an up-to-date RSE policy that describes the content and organisation of RSE through curriculum areas like PSHE and the national curriculum for science
- The governing body, in co-operation with the Headteacher, is expected to involve families, pupils, and the wider school community to ensure that RSE addresses the needs of pupils, local issues and trends and that parents / carers are consulted on the RSE policy
- In a primary school agree if sex education will be included in the RSHE curriculum and this is included as part of the RSE policy
- The governing body has the responsibility to ensure the school is meeting requirements under the equalities legislation (Equalities Act 2010)
- Ensure all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes in the RSHE curriculum
- Ensure the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- Ensure the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Ensure teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- Ensure clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn
- Ensure the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations
- Foundation governors and trustees of faith academy trusts will also have wider responsibilities in relation to maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the schools.

It is recommended that the RSHE curriculum is part of the governor's curriculum monitoring cycle and safeguarding monitoring. The PSHE association and NGA have produced some joint guidance which highlights the crucial link between PSHE education and safeguarding, health and wellbeing in schools. The guidance also provides best practice advice for meeting statutory RSHE requirements and outline the importance of a supportive governing board. The document can be accessed [here](#).

The policy should also clearly reference any access pupils have to **on-site sexual health provision**. If this service is being offered on the school site or pupils can access this provision during the school day then approval is needed by the governing body and should be included in the school's RSE policy. Parent/carers need to be informed that the service is available on the school site. It is highly recommended that information sharing protocols are in place to ensure the confidentiality of the pupil but also adhering to safeguarding responsibilities.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and learning. The Headteacher's responsibilities in respect of RSE are to:

- Work with governors to ensure compliance with the 2020 statutory requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education including any staff CPD needs
- Liaise with the PSHE subject lead to ensure the effective delivery of the RSE within the curriculum is being monitored
- Ensure the curriculum is meeting the needs of the pupils and responding to local issues within the community
- Keep the governing body fully informed of provision, issues and progress around RSE issues
- Act upon any concerns which may arise from pupil's disclosure during RSE sessions
- Monitor staff training requirements in relation to effective teaching and learning of RSE
- Ensure all parents/ carers are informed about the taught RSE curriculum in all year groups to support a partnership approach and also provide information about what pupils can and cannot be withdrawn from

The PSHE subject lead:

The school has a subject lead for PSHE who is responsible for all aspects of the subject including RSE. In respect of RSE, responsibilities are to:

- Work with headteacher to ensure compliance with the statutory guidance and implementing the statutory requirements including any staff CPD needs
- Ensure the implementation and quality of long term and medium term RSE schemes of work
- Ensure all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes for RSE
- Ensure that all staff are confident in the skills to teach and discuss RSE issues as trained, confident and competent staff are essential to raise standards in RSE
- Consider the needs of all pupils and ensure the curriculum is meeting the needs of SEND pupils, and to achieve this recognise that the school might need to address some specific issues.
- Consult with pupils to inform provision around RSE and use the schools' Growing Up in North Yorkshire bi-annual survey' results to inform planning
- Access appropriate training
- Monitor and advise on RSE organisation, planning and resource issues across the school
- Ensure procedures for assessment, monitoring and evaluation are included
- If used, co-ordinate with external providers to ensure their provision meets the outcomes of the planned provision using age appropriate materials
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure parents/carers are informed about the taught RSE curriculum in all year groups to support a partnership approach and also provide information about what pupils can and cannot be withdrawn from.

Parents / Carers

- School MUST consult with parents / carers in developing and reviewing their RSE policy
- A school should aim to work in active partnership with families, value their views and keep them informed of the RSE provision. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum. [The Dfe have produced some supporting leaflets for parents](#) to inform them about the changes and they have [developed some guidance for primary schools on engaging with parents / carers about the](#)

[statutory changes](#). The [PSHE association](#) have also developed some guidance on engaging with families.

- Consultation with parents/carers does not mean a parental veto on curriculum content. The DfE want schools to consult parents, listen to their views, and make reasonable decisions about how to proceed.
- Parents/ carers could be signposted to resources to support them talk to their child about healthy relationships (on and offline) , staying safe, growing up and sex education, so schools and parents can work in partnership
- The school's RSE policy should be made available to all parents/carers and it should be published on the school website
- Parents/carers must be able to view the resources that the school plan to use as part of the taught curriculum
- Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, and clearly communicate the fact that parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education.
- Consider ongoing communication with parents and carers throughout the academic year to keep them informed of the RSE curriculum and safeguarding aspects.



The Parental Right to withdraw their child from RSE lessons;

- The parental right to withdraw from Sex Education needs to be part of the schools RSE policy
- Parents cannot withdraw from Relationships or Health education (which includes the puberty learning outcomes)
- In a primary schools a parent / carer can withdraw their child from any sex education that is part of the RSE lessons (sex education as defined by the school)
- In secondary schools the request to withdraw can be respected up to and until three terms before a child turns 16. After that point , if the child wants to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms
- Parents have no right to withdraw from aspects of the National Curriculum for Science. Maintained schools must follow the national curriculum. There is no change here from the previous situation.
- Before granting a request to withdraw it would be good practice for an identified member of staff to meet with the parents to discuss their concerns to see if the issues can be resolved this could include looking at the curriculum content and age appropriate resources. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept
- If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupils receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Working with external agencies

- Use of visitors should be to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of the teaching staff, rather than as a replacement for teaching by those staff
- Whilst the responsibility for organising and delivering most, if not all, of the RSE programme rests with the school, there may be times when an external contributor can add value and bring to the classroom additional experience, skills or knowledge that teachers may not always have. However they may not possess the skills of organising teaching and learning or managing behaviour. The '[Guidance to support schools work effectively with external agencies who contribute to the PSHE curriculum](#)' is strongly recommended to be used when planning, and for evaluating the input of an external contributor. By using this it is more likely that clear learning outcomes will be established, effective teaching and learning will be used, and that the work will be tailored to the target audience
- It is essential to ensure that at all times a member of staff is present when an external contributor is working with pupils. The visitors input will be more effective if a teacher provides the context and follow up to the session
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that they check the visitor or visiting organisations credentials. Schools should also ensure that the teaching delivered by visitors fits with their planned programme and the schools published policy.

Delivery of RSE and the Curriculum

A successful RSE programme should be firmly embedded within the school's framework for PSHE, National Curriculum for Science and other supporting curriculum areas:

- State how the RSE curriculum is delivered e.g. through Science, PSHE lessons, ICT and cross-curricular etc.
- Explain who delivers the RSE programme and how their training requirements are met
- State the content of the RSE curriculum with clear learning outcomes (or where this can be found)
- Explain the range of resources and teaching methods used and the methodology for selecting the resources
- State how effective provision is ensured for all learners (including SEND, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation and gender)
- It is recommended that RSE is not taught in single sex groups as pupils need to learn how everybody changes and develops to ensure a shared understanding

The Sex Education Forum have produced an up-to-date briefing on the delivery of effective RSE within a school which can be accessed [here](#) and Brook have made a short film on the evidence base for the positive impact RSE can have on pupils. This short film can be accessed [here](#).

Choosing resources:

- Any materials a school intends to use should align with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance.
- A school should assess all resources carefully to ensure they are age appropriate, meet the outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum, and are in line with the school's legal duties in relation to impartiality.
- When deciding if a resource is suitable, a school should consider if it:
 - aligns to the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance

- would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- is age-appropriate - think about the age, developmental stage and background of your pupils
- is evidence-based and contains robust facts and statistics
- fits into your curriculum plan
- is from a credible source
- is compatible with approaches to teaching which are known to be effective

DfE Guidance to support schools choose appropriate PSHE teaching resources can be accessed [here](#)

Assessing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing RSE

RSE (PSHE) should be assessed in accordance with the school's policy for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing of Curriculum Subjects:

- Be planned from the beginning as an integral part of teaching and learning
- Ensure all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes for RSHE
- Ensure there is a well-planned, sequenced curriculum that gives pupils age-appropriate knowledge that is built on and revisited to give pupils good knowledge of the risks that they may face and ways to keep themselves safe
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to give and receive feedback on the planned RSE/ PSHE curriculum to ensure they are learning from the curriculum and it is meeting their needs
- The content and delivery of the curriculum is reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of the pupils and responding to any local issues
- Regularly review resources and renew as appropriate
- Update training in line with current guidance and staff identified needs
- Bi-annually complete the Growing up In North Yorkshire Survey to support the monitoring and evaluation of the RSE provision and to identify any emerging issues for pupils

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

RSE can be a sensitive issue. To protect privacy and engender respect for all, staff will be expected to develop ground rules with pupils at the onset of work. This will include information on confidentiality and information will be given on where pupils can get help on personal concerns both inside and outside school. Pupils should be informed about the remit of confidentiality and that staff cannot offer or guarantee pupils unconditional confidentiality. Distancing techniques will be used throughout lessons and all staff could use question boxes (or similar techniques) to allow pupils the opportunity to ask further questions anonymously.

If pupils ask particularly sensitive questions that appear to be inappropriate in the circumstances, staff will deal with this outside of the lesson but an agreed holding statement will be used for example, 'that is a really interesting question and I need time to ensure I provide you with the correct information' this then allows staff to follow a number of options. These include: further questioning of the pupil with another member of staff present asking them for interpretation of the question they asked. Time to consult with colleagues to construct an appropriate answer, or liaise with the pupil's family, and obtain information about where to get further help or, if the matter is considered a potential safeguarding issue the normal safeguarding procedures will be followed.

It is the responsibility of the school to support its pupils and to carry out its functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. In fulfilling this duty they must have regard to guidance around safeguarding. Staff will report any information or disclosure which raises concern that a child or children may be at risk of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated person will then, in line with the School's Child Protection policy take action as appropriate.

Religion and belief, including teaching in schools with a religious character

Pupils from all faiths and cultures have an entitlement to RSE. Teaching effective RSE means being sensitive to the range of different values and beliefs within a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.

- In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the governments RSHE guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.
- All schools may teach about faith perspectives. In particular, schools with a religious character may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious. For example, the school may wish to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how their faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships and sex.
- In all schools, teaching should reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

It is important when developing the RSE curriculum to work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. Research has shown that if parents/carers and faith leaders work together to examine assumptions and beliefs and ensure effective communication this reduces misunderstandings and allows for the development of a values framework for RSE.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) and work on 'Different Families'

The 2010 Equalities Act sets out that schools are required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations, so the curriculum should be inclusive for all pupils which includes LGBT pupils. This also means schools have to be proactive in preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and make all children and young people feel included.

- In teaching RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.
- Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. The Dfe RSHE guidance states that when schools are teaching about LGBT it should be fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and they expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum.

- Secondary school pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There should be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into the RSE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

Ofsted have produced some further guidance to support schools. [Ofsted Guidance on the teaching of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act](#), which sets out how Ofsted will work with schools to support what they should teach in relation to the 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010, particularly the sexual orientation and gender reassignment characteristics.

Inspectors will gather evidence on how schools promote equality and pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics. They will use this evidence as part of evaluating and coming to judgements on 3 main areas:

- the personal development of pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management
- how the school meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE)'s statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education

If inspectors identify at inspection that a school is not teaching about all the protected characteristics, they will always report on this and will explain how (if at all) it has affected the school's inspection judgements.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- RSE Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Schools should also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.
- Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND.
- In special schools and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.
- The resources and activities need to be accessible for all pupils and through monitoring the taught programme and ensuring all pupils are making the progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes pupils who perhaps require further support can be identified and target provision can be implemented.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community (GRT)

In the past engagement levels for GRT communities has been low, this can lead to a lack of knowledge, skills and attributes which would allow pupils to keep themselves safer in relationships and understand more about their growing and changing bodies.

It is not possible to make a blanket statement which reflects the views of all GRT families. Direct engagement with each family is the one reliable way to assess what each family thinks. A direct conversation has the added benefit of providing opportunities to alleviate parental concerns and increase the likelihood that decisions are well informed. Time is needed to discuss with the families what the curriculum will cover, the resources that will be used and the importance of safeguarding all pupils. This should be an integrated part of the induction process for any GRT families that join the school and ongoing communication with the families. Ideally by a member of staff where there is a pre-existing relationship and trust and who is equipped to sensitively discuss the curriculum content and answer any questions that the family may have.

The [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities report](#) published by the Government states:

- The Department for Education guidance for RSE education in schools makes it clear that the teaching should include an understanding of the religious and cultural context of the children in the school. It also includes the “right to withdraw” a child from sex education classes, should the parent choose to do so. It does not, however, give parents the right to withdraw their children from education entirely. All children benefit from age-appropriate RSE, but more needs to be done to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents do not remove their children from school because of an objection to it. Schools must have a plan for how to have constructive conversations with parents to explain to them the benefits of RSE in a way that is reassuring.
- Schools have a duty to proactively plan for how they will have conversations with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents about what RSE education involves and what parents’ options are for their children, short of removing them from school.

[Further useful reading could be, Travellers’ attitudes to sexual relationships and sex education. Pavee Point Travellers Centre, 2011](#)

Accessing sexual health services

Teenage Pregnancy rates in England have been decreasing over the last few years and the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey 2022 suggests that about 17% of Year 10 pupils are or have been sexually active. However, they do remain the group least likely to access contraceptive and sexual health advice, putting them at high risk of experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and/or contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). The Sexual Offences Act 2003, does not limit children’s right to RSE and sexual health support and advice. Please see the section below for further information on the Sexual Offences Act.

Easy access to young-people friendly contraceptive services has been identified as key factors in areas with declining teenage conception rates. Schools can find their nearest sexual health clinics at <https://yorsexualhealth.org.uk/> which provides up-to-date information. Enabling pupils to access sexual health services should be part of the planned RSE curriculum with secondary school aged pupils.

All staff should be aware of the North Yorkshire safeguarding procedures around working with sexually active young people. In all cases where the sexually active young person is under the age of 13, a full assessment must be undertaken. Each case must be referred to the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

The Sexual Offences Act aims to clarify what constitutes a crime of sexual nature against children, young people and adults. The Act does not limit children's right to RSE and sexual health support and advice. The aim of the Act is to protect young people from sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The Act recognises:

- The legal age for young people to consent to have sex is still 16, regardless of sexual orientation
- Although the age of consent remains 16, it is not intended that the law should be used to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involves abuse or exploitation
- Young people under 16, including those under 13, can continue to seek sexual health and contraceptive information, advice or treatment in confidence
- The law ensures that those providing information and support with the purpose of protecting a young person from pregnancy, STIs, protecting their physical safety or promoting their wellbeing, will not be guilty of an offence
- The aim of the law is to protect the safety and rights of young people and make it easier to prosecute people who pressure or force others into having sex they don't want

Staff should report any information or disclosure which raises concern that a child or children may be at risk of significant harm to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Pornography

Research shows that an increasing number of young people are being exposed to pornography. Pornography can depict a lack of communication about choices, sexual consent and contraception, and often shows violent and oppressive behaviours particularly towards women, which can be frightening and confusing, and make young people feel pressured to behave in particular ways. Teaching about pornography should be part of the planned PSHE curriculum (RSE) for secondary schools and should emphasise that it is not the best way of learning about healthy, consensual sex. Teaching should build on learning about relationships, gender expectations of sex, body image, consent, gender stereotypes and the importance of healthy, loving and respectful relationships. Pornographic images must never be shown to pupils, and there is no need for teachers to look at pornography to plan their teaching.

The PSHE association has further guidance which can be accessed [here](#).

RSE Policy checklist

Please use the checklist and all the supporting information throughout this guidance document to enable the school to develop an effective Relationships and Sex Education policy.

XX School Policy for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

<p>Background reading to support the development of the policy.</p> <p>Reference to statutory legislation, safeguarding, school responsibilities that need to be in the RSE policy</p>	<p>Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is statutory for all schools. The Dfe guidance can be accessed here.</p> <p>Meeting safeguarding responsibilities as set out in the Keeping Children safe Guidance</p> <p>Meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Understanding of the Ofsted inspection framework and links to the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education</p> <p>The needs of pupils in your school and the wider community (data from the Growing up in North Yorkshire survey)</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Arrangements for consulting with the whole school community have been described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are pupils, parents/carers, governors, staff, partners and stakeholders going to be consulted and involved in the development / review of the RSE policy and provision? • How will we keep a record of the consultation process and any outcomes from it?(recommended this record is at the start of the policy) • Are all staff aware of the policy and provision? Has it been discussed at a whole staff meeting? • How will the policy and provision be disseminated to the whole school community? • The RSE policy must be provided free of charge to anyone who asks for it and it should be published on the school website • How will we have an ongoing conversation with parents / carers about the RSE and safeguarding curriculum throughout the academic year? • How will the policy and provision be shared with any external providers to ensure their contribution adds value to the RSE curriculum?
<p>Reference to related school policies</p>	<p>This policy could link to: (for example please list the relevant ones in school)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding / child protection. • Confidentiality Policy • Anti-bullying policy • PSHE Policy • Online safety policy • Inclusion Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND • Equalities Duty
<p>The school's statement of values and ethos</p> <p>The definition for RSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the school values and ethos that will underpin the RSE policy and provision. • How is RSE defined in the context of the school, linking to the schools values, ethos and safeguarding responsibilities • What are the schools separate definitions for relationships education, sex education and health education? • What does the school consider that Relationships Education and Sex Education includes? • For primary schools will the school teach sex education within the RSHE curriculum?
<p>What will be the aims, objectives and outcomes of RSE?</p>	<p>Consideration needs to be given to the school's overall aims and objectives and how these inform practice in teaching RSE in the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the school trying to achieve through the RSE provision? • How does this relate to the wider PSHE provision and the wider curriculum? • What will be the learning outcomes for pupils (what will they be able to demonstrate) from taking part in the RSE programme • What is the universal entitlement for all pupils? • Does there need to be targeted work for some pupils e.g SEND, GRT etc
<p>Statement of responsibilities of all stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Body (the PSHE association and NGA have produced a supporting document for Governors about PSHE/ RSE) • Headteacher • PSHE subject lead • Parents/Carers • External agencies
<p>Parents/carers right to withdraw</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will parent/carers be informed about how and when RSE is going to be taught across all the year groups and that they do have the right to withdraw from sex education only? Whose responsibility will this be? • Does there need to be any special consideration for working with any parents within the school? • What are the procedures if a parent/ carer wishes to withdraw their child from sex education (up to three terms before a child is 16, a child can then request sex education)? • If a pupil is withdrawn, physical where will they go and how will they be protected from the possible reaction of peers to this withdrawal? (the pupil has to remain on school site) • How will parents / carers be supported to enable them to talk to their children about RSE? • Will parent/carers be invited to see the resources / attend a workshop? Will any parents need individual support ?
<p>Working with external agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any external agencies support the delivery of RSE? • Who will have responsibility for liaising with the external agency and making all the relevant checks on the person / organisation? • Who will ensure the input of the external agency is clearly planned to fit into the school's RSE programme and it is monitored and evaluated?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will ensure all staff understand their roles and responsibilities when supporting the learning of pupils in partnership with the external agency?
Delivery of RSE and the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it clear where all aspects of the RSE curriculum are taught and the intended learning outcomes for each year group (PSHE, ICT, cross – curriculum, enrichment days)? Who is expected to teach the RSE curriculum and what training have they received and how are further training needs met? Is there an explanation of the methodology for selecting resources (recommendation that governors have seen the resources and approved their use) How will the school ensure that a range of resources and teaching methodologies are used based on good practice? How is it ensured that all pupils have equal access to the RSE programme? How are pupils different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances (sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture) recognised and respected?
Procedures for assessment, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation and involvement of pupils in RSE is crucial if teaching is to meet their needs and address the issues they are facing- how is the pupils prior learning assessed and how are pupils engaged in the evaluation of the RSE provision? How will the school ensure all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes in the RSE curriculum? How will the school monitor the quality of the RSE provision to ensure pupils are learning from the curriculum being provided? What are the key aspects from the school's 'Growing up In North Yorkshire' bi-annual survey that needs to be reflected in the curriculum? How will staff training needs be identified? How will resources be reviewed and renewed if appropriate?
Confidentiality and Safeguarding issues are addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will the school ensure that all members of staff who deliver RSE develop ground rules with the pupils to support the teaching of sensitive issues? Are all staff trained in effective PSHE methodology e/g distancing techniques? What is the agreed procedure for all staff to manage the asking of a particularly sensitive question that appears to be inappropriate in the circumstances, and are all staff aware of the agreed procedures? Are all staff up-to-date with their child protection training / safeguarding training ?
Pupils are advised where to get confidential advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are pupils informed of where to access age appropriate help inside and outside of school The school is aware of local support services / sexual health services and staff who are teaching RSE ensure they provide up-to-date information to the pupils?
Young People accessing sexual health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are staff aware of local sexual health services? https://yorsexualhealth.org.uk/ What procedures are in place to ensure pupils can access appropriate sexual health advice and services if required?

(secondary schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information protocols are in place to ensure the confidentiality of the pupil but also adheres to safeguarding responsibilities? • Is the planned RSE curriculum ensuring pupils know where to and how to access sexual health services?
Other aspects for schools to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the school teach about different families and the taught curriculum is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans /gender aspects and transphobic, biphobic and homophobic language / bullying is consistently challenged? • Are all staff aware of the Sexual Offences Act and their safeguarding duties? • Are all staff aware of safeguarding elements from Keeping Children safe in Education and how these are integrated into the planned RSE curriculum • How do staff receive regular training to support them effectively teach RSE and the emerging issues?

Appendix 2

Sample letter for primary schools which needs to be adapted to ensure it reflects the provision within the school that could be sent out to parents / carers to support the delivery of relationships and sex education.

Supporting information for the school to consider and ensure is in place and up-to-date before sending out the letter to parents/carers. The information set out below does not need to go into the letter.

This letter needs to support the content of your schools Relationships and Sex Education Policy which is a statutory policy and should be available for parents/carers to access on your school website

The government have made RSHE statutory for all pupils. Parents / carers will not be able to withdraw their children from Relationships Education and Health Education but they will still have the right to withdraw their child from all, or part, of sex education. The government have produced some [supporting information leaflets](#) for parents which could also be accessible for parents to read.

This letter is only an example of the type of information you may like to provide to parents and carers to support the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education. The guidance for the letter has been developed in partnership with schools and parents/carers, as parents have reported that they often do not receive enough detail about what the content of the curriculum is. The content of the letter needs to reflect what is taught in your school, when and the methodology that is used.

Proposed letter content which needs to be adapted to meet the needs and delivery model of your school.

Dear Parent / Carer

As a school we are committed to providing all pupils with a planned Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE) programme to enable pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. PSHE education helps

pupils to stay healthy, safe and prepared for life in modern Britain. It plays a key role in safeguarding and supporting mental and physical health.

The Government have made Relationships Education and Health Education statutory for all schools from September 2020. A full outline of our PSHE curriculum is published on our school website (*insert link*) along with our Relationships and Sex Education Policy (*insert link*)

The Government have produced some information leaflets for parents to explain what the curriculum consists of and is trying to achieve. These can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

As part of the schools planned programme we teach pupils about the following aspects with the aim being to ensure pupils learn about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe both on and offline. *If your school uses a specific resource to deliver the RSE then please include the details here and set out what is covered in each year group:*

- EYFS and Year 1 / 2 / 3's are taught the names for different body parts which include the names for external genitalia. They learn about what physical contact is acceptable or unacceptable. This is vital to support the work we do in keeping all pupils safe. Pupils need to have the language to describe the private parts of their body and learn that their body belongs to them, they have a right to say no both on and offline (consent), and that they should tell an adult if they're upset or worried. To support us in delivering this message to the pupils we use information from the NSPCC Underwear Rule campaign. You can find out more at <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- In Year 4 pupils start to learn that their body and emotions will change as they get older and continue to build on learning about the key components of a healthy relationship and how to keep themselves safe both on and off line . This learning continues in Year 5 and 6
- In Year 5 pupils learn about all the external and internal genitalia and the ways in which children grow and develop in puberty both physically and emotionally.
- In Year 6 pupils further develop their understanding of the physical and emotional changes they go through at puberty *and about human reproduction.*

(if your school is using the [busy bodies resource](#) to teach pupils about puberty at Year 5 / 6 then you make like to reference the web address here so parents can view the resource- you would need to make it clear which of the sections the school were using)

- Throughout all year groups pupils learn about, 'Different Families' which does include lesbian, gay and bisexual couples and there is also learning about gender identity and gender stereotypes.

Relationships and health education is statutory for all children in all schools.

Parents/carers can withdraw their children from sex education which as a school we do teach in Year xx. We define sex education as (XXXX).. If you have any further questions about any aspect of this curriculum please can you contact XXXX (or you could hold an open parents RSE session to show the resources and to enable you to discuss further the aims and methodology of the RSE planned programme). Write in how parents can inform you that they would like to withdraw from the sex education lessons.

Teaching staff approach this aspect of the curriculum very sensitively and are aware of how it contributes to pupils development supporting them to develop healthy relationships,

keep themselves safe and having factually correct information and the skills to positively manage the physical and emotional changes that will happen as they grow into hopefully happy, confident and responsible teenagers and adults.

Parents and carers also play a vital role in talking to your child(ren) about this important part of growing up and keeping themselves safe. You may find the following information useful to support these conversations at home

<https://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/parents/how-to-talk-about-sex/>

Then how you normally finish off a school letter