

Writing your school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy

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Introduction

The aim of this document is to help schools to write or update their relationships and sex education (RSE) policy. The suggested headings can be adapted, amended or re-organised in line with your school's particular requirements and needs. The Department for Education published draft statutory guidance on RSE in Spring 2018, in preparation for the introduction of statutory relationships education (in primary schools) and relationships and sex education (in secondary schools) from September 2020. In the meantime, this framework should be read alongside the Secretary of State's 2000 guidance on SRE (until new statutory guidance is published) which schools must have regard to when putting together such a policy. This document uses RSE to include both relationships education and relationships and sex education.

We would recommend that you also refer to the Sex Education Forum's 'Twelve principles' of good quality RSE, which are supported by the PSHE Association, children's charities and education unions (published November 2017) available [here](#).

It is essential that once you have drafted your RSE policy, it is made available for consultation to the parent and pupil body, professional colleagues and school governors. The more transparent, and the greater the engagement of the school community in the process of writing the policy the better. However, the school's governing body ultimately holds the final responsibility for the policy and the subsequent learning in the curriculum. Remember that consultation is not the same as negotiation and it is virtually impossible to meet the values or viewpoints of everyone in the school community.

As a minimum, the policy should:

- set out an agreed approach to RSE in the curriculum and can act as a management tool to help in future decision-making
- offer a whole school statement of intent or beliefs through the aims of RSE
- clarify the school's intended outcomes through the objectives of RSE
- inform and reflect practice by detailing the content covered and methodology used to enable learning in RSE.

The policy will be used by:

- teachers, who will look to it to guide their lesson planning, and to put boundaries around the issues they can explore with children and young people, and the range of ways that these can be explored. This is of great importance both in terms of guiding teachers and protecting them.
- parents, who will look to see both the RSE curriculum content and the values the school is promoting
- health professionals, visiting speakers and so on, who will want to know the aims, objectives and values the school's RSE promotes, agreed teaching methodologies and boundaries for their work with young people

As you work through the key questions in the framework below, a draft of your policy should form. There may be other areas we have not included that are important to you in the context of your school and your community – please feel free to edit or add to it as you feel appropriate.

Diversity and Inclusion

It is essential that an RSE policy is sensitive to the range of religious and cultural views about sexual behaviour whilst still ensuring that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. This should include clear, impartial scientific information on matters such as the changes of puberty, abortion and assisted conception, as well as covering the law in relation to, for example, forced-marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

It should also cover the concept of equality and legislation relating to it. Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. It is important that RSE fosters gender and LGBT+ equality, challenging all forms of discrimination and bullying. It must be respectful of how pupils choose to identify themselves, understanding that their sexual orientation and gender identity may be 'emerging'.

The policy should also set out how the school's RSE meets the needs of all pupils, with their diverse experiences, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Drafting your RSE policy

Before starting to draft your policy it is worth spending a little time considering some key questions:

- What values will underpin your school's policy?
- What will be the aims and outcomes of your provision?

Any policy must work for your school, but it is important to make sure that it is the needs of pupils (those they share with all children and young people and those specifically relevant to your pupils, school and community) that drive the policy, rather than the professional or personal comfort of the adults.

Under the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

It is therefore important to reflect on:

- the school's aims/mission statement, and the values it promotes and models through its culture and ethos
- the learning experiences that help pupils develop their own moral values, which may include reflecting on a variety of different issues, beliefs and viewpoints
- how the school enables pupils to develop the knowledge, strategies, skills, language and confidence required to behave according to their values in new situations.

Once you have thought this through (ideally through discussion with all stakeholders including pupils), you should begin to write your RSE policy. The table below provides some possible headings and prompts. In drawing up the policy you should refer throughout to the current statutory guidance on relationships and sex education.

Section heading in policy	Guidance/key questions	Possible sentence starters....
Rationale and ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is the purpose of RSE in your school?</i> • <i>What is your school's vision for safe and effective RSE?</i> • <i>How is this underpinned by your school's values, context, ethos, key principles or faith values?</i> • <i>What outcomes do you intend for your pupils as a result of RSE?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy covers our school's approach to... • It was produced by... through consultation with... • We define 'relationships and sex education' as... • We believe relationships and sex education is important for our pupils and our school because... • We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context... • Our school's overarching aims for our pupils are... • We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by.... • We ensure RSE fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality by... • The intended outcomes of our programme are that pupils will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ know and understand... ○ understand they have a right to... ○ understand they have a responsibility to... ○ develop the skills of... ○ develop the attributes of...
Roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Responsibility for the RSE policy in your school ultimately lies with the governing body. At least one representative of the governing body should be part of a working group that develops and reviews the RSE policy.</i> • <i>What is the Head teacher responsible for?</i> • <i>What is the PSHE education lead responsible for?</i> • <i>What are teachers responsible for?</i> • <i>What are the responsibilities of parents/carers?</i> • <i>What professional development opportunities will staff receive to support effective RSE delivery?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RSE programme will be led by... • It will be taught by... • It will be supported by... • A working party will be made up of... to... • Teaching staff will receive RSE training on... to support pupils with...
Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)	<p><i>Revised Department for Education statutory guidance will state that from September 2020, <u>all</u> schools must deliver relationships education (in primary schools) and relationships and sex education (in secondary schools). The parental right to withdraw pupils from</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are required to teach relationships education/RSE as part of... and this informs...

	<p><i>RSE remains in primary and secondary education, for aspects of sex education which are not part of the Science curriculum. NB. This section will be updated in response to new DfE guidance , in 2018.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education state that... • The RSE policy supports/complements the following policies... • Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Education Act (1996)</i> ○ <i>Learning and Skills Act (2000)</i> ○ <i>Education and Inspections Act (2006)</i> ○ <i>Equality Act (2010),</i> ○ <i>Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)</i> ○ <i>Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)</i> ○ <i>Children and Social Work Act (2017)</i>
Curriculum design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is RSE embedded within your PSHE education curriculum?</i> • <i>How is the RSE curriculum planned and organised?</i> • <i>What RSE curriculum content is covered in each key stage and year group?</i> • <i>How will you use local data to inform the priorities for your programme?</i> • <i>How will your school ensure inclusive RSE that is age and stage (including emotional maturity) appropriate and relevant?</i> • <i>(This will require an approach that is inclusive in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, diversity, ethnicity, culture, age, religion or belief or other life experience)</i> • <i>How will learning in RSE be differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils?</i> • <i>Which resources will be used to support RSE planning and delivery?</i> • <i>How will RSE link to other curriculum areas, e.g. Citizenship, Science, Religious Education? How will learning be assessed and evidenced in RSE?</i> • <i>How will pupils assess their own progress?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision and will cover... • Our RSE programme is inclusive of... • We will ensure RSE is matched to the needs of our pupils by... • Our RSE programme will be planned and delivered through.... • Our RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities, including... • Active learning methods will include... • Lessons will be differentiated by... to ensure... • High quality resources will support our RSE provision and will be regularly reviewed... • Selected resources, such as books and film clips, will be used which support and promote understanding within a moral/values context and underpin... • Learning about relationships and sex education in PSHE education lessons will link to/complement learning in... • Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning and progress by... • Assessment in RSE will take the approach that... • An overview of the learning in each year group can be found...

Safe and Effective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What key principles will be used to ensure high quality and effective planning and delivery of RSE lessons?</i> • <i>Key principles to include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How will teachers establish a safe learning environment?</i> ○ <i>What ground rules are needed for RSE?</i> ○ <i>Why is it important to ‘distance’ the topic from the pupil?</i> ○ <i>How will pupils’ questions be answered and how will potentially sensitive or controversial issues be managed?</i> • <i>What is the shared and agreed staff protocol for the teaching RSE?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure a safe learning environment by... • Teachers and pupils will agree ground rules by... • Distancing techniques such as... are used because... • Pupils’ questions will be answered by... • Sensitive issues will be handled by... • Pupils will be able to raise questions anonymously by... • All staff teaching RSE will be supported by...
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will child protection, safeguarding and confidentiality protocols support safe and effective RSE practice?</i> • <i>How will visitors and external agencies be informed of safeguarding protocols and be supportive of the school’s whole school approach to RSE?</i> • <i>What protocols will be in place for pupils who may be considered vulnerable or ‘at risk’?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue... • Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in his /her absence their deputy ... • Visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to... • The protocol for inviting visitors into lessons is...
Engaging stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will the school work in partnership with parents/carers?</i> • <i>What information will be given to parents/carers and how will this be shared?</i> • <i>What curriculum events will take place to support parents?</i> • <i>How will they be signposted to resources/further support?</i> • <i>How will they be empowered to follow-up and support RSE work at home?</i> • <i>Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from all or part of any RSE provided, with the exception of the biological aspects included in national curriculum science. How will you support parents who exercise this right?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents will be informed about the policy through... • The policy will be available to parents through... • We are committed to working with parents and carers by ... • We work closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being taught and provide additional resources and support through... • As part of our whole school approach to RSE, Parent Information sessions and opportunities for parents to view the materials and resources used will be... • We will notify parents when Relationships and Sex education will be taught, by...

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What arrangements will be made for the supervision of children of those parents during the relevant lessons?</i> • <i>How will the school work in partnership with governors?</i> • <i>How will they be involved in the design, implementation and review of the RSE policy?</i> • <i>How will they be kept updated of new developments?</i> • <i>How will the school engage with pupils so that they can effectively contribute to RSE content?</i> • <i>What methods of pupil voice can be used to develop the RSE curriculum?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSE content that is not part of statutory NC Science, however we... • If a parent/carer requests that their child be removed from relationships and sex education, we will... and provide support by... • Governors will be informed of the RSE policy and curriculum through... • Pupil voice will be used to review and tailor our RSE programme to match the different needs of pupils...
Monitoring, reporting and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will RSE provision and content be monitored?</i> • <i>How will it be reported on?</i> • <i>How will RSE provision be evaluated and consulted on?</i> • <i>How will the contribution of visitors and external agencies to RSE provision be monitored and evaluated?</i> • <i>What role will pupils play in evaluating RSE content?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through... • Pupils will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons... • Pupil voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities...
RSE policy review date	<p><i>As part of effective RSE provision, the RSE policy should be reviewed at least every 18 months / 2 years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy will be reviewed on... • It will be reviewed by... • This will ensure...