

Relationships, Sex and Health Education: Secondary Policy Guide and Template

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About this document

This document is intended for use in secondary schools in England, as a guide for school leaders when they are developing their school's RSHE policy (now compulsory across all schools). The document has been developed by School of Sexuality Education in line with the statutory government guidance, [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education](#) 2019. It builds on that guidance using a rights-based and inclusive lens.

Schools should use this document as the basis for developing a bespoke policy, tailored to their school and student needs. Throughout the guide, there are [questions in green](#) which are designed to prompt school leaders to think about their own approaches to RSHE in line with the government guidance. There are also [links in red](#) to further resources to support policy and curriculum development.

Evaluation checklist: compliance with statutory requirements on RSHE policy

Page 11 of the [statutory RSE guidance](#) (2019) explains that 'all schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and RSE'. It also details that:

- Parents must be consulted when developing and reviewing this policy.
- The policy should provide information about parent or carers' right to request that their child be excused from Sex Education within RSE.
- The policy should be made available via the school or institution's website.
- All policies must define Relationship and Sex Education and any sex education that is not covered in the science curriculum.
- The policy should detail the subject content, how it is taught and who is responsible for teaching it.
- The policy should describe how and when the subject will be reviewed.

- ❑ In developing the policy, schools should listen and respond to the voices of all students and their needs.

The statutory guidance also states that in line with the [The Equality Act 2010](#), schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristics. Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning and delivering RSE.

Exploratory evaluation checklist: RSHE curriculum

This list comprises principles for high-quality RSHE. In addition to using this checklist to review your RSHE curriculum, any teachers delivering RSHE should also be familiar with what these principles look like in practice. See also the Sex Education Forum's [12 Principles of good RSE](#).

- ❑ Rights-based
 - ❑ Does the curriculum ensure that young people have access to accurate information which centres young people's rights?
- ❑ Inclusive
 - ❑ Are all student experiences taken into account in the planning of the RSHE curriculum? Would any aspects cause marginalised young people to feel excluded? Does the curriculum comply with the Equality Act 2010?
- ❑ Responsive to young people's needs
 - ❑ How will students be engaged in meaningful curriculum consultation and feedback?
- ❑ Covering the full breadth of RSHE topics
 - ❑ Are there any key topics that need further attention?
- ❑ A spiral curriculum
 - ❑ Are there any topics that would be more impactful to cover at an earlier stage? Have you outlined what would be most appropriate and effective for each year group in each key stage and ensured that topics are linked, at the right stage, to young people's needs?
- ❑ Evidence-based and scientifically accurate
 - ❑ What are the sources of information and how are they evidence based?
- ❑ Contemporary and relevant
 - ❑ How does the curriculum build on the experiences of today's learners?
- ❑ Encourages critical thinking
 - ❑ How does the curriculum encourage young people to interrogate social injustices? Does it refer directly to gender inequality?

A selection of possible resources for curriculum development:

- AGENDA - agendaonline.co.uk
- [*Great Relationships and Sex Education: 200+ Activities for Educators Working with Young People*](#), Alice Hoyle and Ester McGeeney
- Sexwise - www.sexwise.org.uk
- FSRH-RCOG [Abortion care factsheet to support RSE lessons](#)
- School of Sexuality Education - [Online Sexual Harassment guidance and resources](#)
- Stonewall [Best practice toolkits and resources](#)
- Sex Education Forum [Curriculum Design Tool](#)
- [PSHE Association](#)
- AMAZE - amaze.org

Exploratory evaluation checklist: a whole-school approach to RSHE

- Wider curriculum
 - Are there opportunities to take a cross-curricular approach to the themes covered in RHSE? For example, could Physical Education be used to reinforce the RSE principles of body positivity and act as an opportunity to create self-care practices?
- Supporting policies
 - Have other school policies (SEND, online safety, bullying and cyberbullying, uniform) been created or amended to align to the principles outlined for RSHE?
- Support systems
 - Have pastoral and support staff been trained in line with the principles of the RSHE policy?
- Physical environment
 - Have school buildings and facilities been adapted as much as possible to ensure the school is an inclusive place for all young people?
- Leadership
 - Do senior leaders model key principles of inclusivity and avoid victim-blaming across all school communications and approaches? Do senior leaders ensure all staff receive comprehensive training on RSHE?
- School culture
 - Are inclusive principles embedded in the school culture as a whole? For example, is Black history included across the curriculum, rather than just in Black History Month?

Template

Background and scope

Comprehensive Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) aims to empower young people with evidence-based information. Fact-based knowledge enables young people to make well-informed decisions about their own health and well-being. Rights-based RSHE builds empathy through developing a better understanding of other people's experiences, and provides young people with the opportunity to understand their own rights and those of others. Through the critical thinking skills that this subject provides, students can be encouraged to work together to build positive relationships and inclusive communities.

[Insert your school's approach to RSE here and how it has an impact on student lives]

The policy has been developed in line with the government's [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education statutory guidance](#) 2019.

Aims of the RSHE Curriculum at [insert school name here]

- Provide information and support for students and their parents or carers
- Provide accurate and evidence-based information on a range of RSHE topics
- Support students in understanding their own rights and those of others within the context of the law
- Empower students with information to enable them to develop positive relationships and improve relationships
- Create safe, non-judgemental spaces for young people to discuss and explore RSHE topics
- Support students to confront stigmas relating to relationships, sex and health education
- Empower students to build more equitable spaces through analysis of historical power structures (this is an advisable starting point for embedding RSHE across the curriculum)
- [Insert any further aims specific to your school]

Content

Relationship, Sex and Health Education forms part of the curriculum throughout Years 7 to 11 [or 13]. This section outlines the topics that are covered through the RSHE curriculum [insert any other relevant subjects or programmes e.g. 'and PSHE'].

The member of staff with overall responsibility for RSHE across the school is [insert staff name]. RSHE is also planned, delivered and reviewed by [insert names or roles, e.g.

Safeguarding Lead / Pastoral Teams / Form Tutors / Heads of Year / Relevant Subject Leaders / specialist external experts].

[Other detail that could be included here: **What is the approval process for the RSHE policy within your school? How will students be consulted on the RSHE curriculum, e.g. through feedback or focus groups?**]

By the end of secondary school

The table below outlines the subjects that will be covered in each year group. This aligns with the statutory [Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance](#), which details what pupils should know by the end of secondary school.

[Insert your RSHE scheme of work below.]

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Delivery method:				

The school will always seek to provide high quality RSHE by responding to topical events, and delivery will be tailored to the needs of the students.

Confidentiality and safeguarding

Confidentiality will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. **[Insert any additional information, procedures or links to further policy.]**

Withdrawal of students from RSE

Under the government guidance 2019, parents or carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme, except for those compulsory aspects taught as part of the Science National Curriculum.

The School will encourage parents or carers wishing to exercise this right to make an appointment with the Deputy Head or the Head to discuss matters before making a

final decision. Any requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Head of PSHE. [Insert school procedure here]

Even if a student has been withdrawn by a parent at some stage during their time at school, when they are three terms before their 16th birthday, students can decide for themselves whether they wish to take part in RSE. At that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide sex education during one of those terms. [Insert how the school will do this here]

In addition to the aspects indicated, biological and ethical issues may well arise in relation to other subjects. When this occurs, as long as any discussion takes place within the context of that subject, it will not be deemed to be part of the RSE curriculum and therefore not subject to the parental right of withdrawal.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually, or as events or legislation change dictates, by [insert relevant staff member] in consultation with [insert relevant staff member(s)].

[Detail: how will any reviews be based on students and parent/carer consultation?]

Useful resource: Sex Education Forum [Monitoring, evaluating and assessing RSE - the basics](#)

All teaching staff and relevant stakeholders will be informed of any changes in the current legislation as they affect the policy.

[Edit the below information, in line with your review procedures]

Review period	[12 months]	Next review	[May 2021]
Author	[Head of PSHE]	Approver	[Board of Governors]
Category	[Public]	Key updates in this version	[Added links to resources]