Department for Education

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

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

Content

Secretary of State Foreword 4

Summary 6

What is the status of this guidance? 6

About this guidance 6

Who this guidance is for 6

What this guidance updates 7

Introduction 8

Summary of requirements 10

Developing a policy 11

What is required? 11

Religion and belief, including teaching in schools with a religious character 12

Use of materials 13

Equality 13

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) *15*

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) *15*

Governors 16

Working with parents/carers and the wider community 17

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw) 17

Working with external agencies 18

Relationships Education (Primary) 19

By the end of primary school: *20*

Managing difficult questions 23

Sex Education (Primary) 23

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Secondary 25

By the end of secondary school: *27*

The Law 30

Physical health and mental wellbeing 31

Menstruation 31

Physical health and mental wellbeing: Primary 32

Physical health and mental wellbeing: Secondary 35

Delivery and teaching strategies 39
National curriculum subjects: citizenship, science, computing and PE 39
Pupil Referral Units/Alternative Provision 40
Senior leadership and whole school approach 40
Flexibility 41
Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality 42
Assessment 43
Accountability 44
Annex A Regulations 45
Annex B Suggested resources 46
Annex C Cross-government strategies 49

Secretary of State Foreword

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools. The key decisions on these subjects have been informed by a thorough engagement process, including a public call for evidence that received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts and a public consultation where over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education.

The depth and breadth of views is clear, and there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention. Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. Schools complement and reinforce this role and have told us that they see building on what pupils learn at home as an important part of delivering a good education. We agree with this principle and congratulate the many schools delivering outstanding provision to support the personal development and pastoral needs of their pupils. We are determined that the subjects must be deliverable and give schools flexibility to shape their curriculum according to the needs of their pupils and communities.

In primary schools, we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy. At secondary, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects, especially as a priority for parents is their children's happiness. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, and that young people are at particular risk of feeling lonely. The new subject content will give them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise.

All of this content should support the wider work of schools in helping to foster pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society. Central to this is pupils' ability to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve those goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; and to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives.

This should be complemented by development of personal attributes including kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty. We have endeavoured to ensure the content is proportionate and deliverable. Whilst we are not mandating content on financial education or careers, we want to support the high quality teaching of these areas in all schools as part of a comprehensive programme, which complements the national curriculum where appropriate and meets the ambitions of the Careers Strategy. We know that many schools will choose to teach the compulsory content within a wider programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education or similar. Schools are encouraged to continue to do so, if this is right for them, and build on established, high quality programmes.

These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.

Summary

What is the status of this guidance?

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996 – further details are in Annex A.

Schools[1] must have regard to the guidance, and where they depart from those parts of the guidance which state that they should (or should not) do something they will need to have good reasons for doing so.

About this guidance

This document contains information on what schools **should** do and sets out the legal duties with which schools **must** comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

Unless otherwise specified, 'school' means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

Who this guidance is for

This statutory guidance applies to all schools[2], and is therefore aimed at:

- governing bodies of maintained schools (including schools with a sixth form) and non-maintained special schools;
- trustees or directors of academies and free schools;
- proprietors of independent schools (including academies and free schools);
- management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs);
- teachers, other school staff and school nurses;
- head teachers, principals and senior leadership teams;
- Diocese and other faith representatives; and
- for reference for relevant local authority staff.

---

[1], [2] Guidance on Health Education does not apply to independent schools, which must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. However, they may find the sections on Health Education helpful. It does, however, apply to academies and free schools.

What this guidance updates

This guidance replaces the Sex and Relationship Education guidance (2000). This guidance will be reviewed three years from first required teaching (September 2020) and every three years after that point.

The guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- National Citizen Service guidance for schools

Introduction

1. To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

2. High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society. The duties on schools in this area are set out in legislation.[3]

3. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.[4] They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

4. This guidance also sets out both the rights of parents/carers[5] to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that head teachers should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

5. Schools are free to determine how to deliver the content set out in this guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. 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 embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real life situations.

---

[3] Maintained schools and academies are required to provide a curriculum, which is broad and balanced in accordance with Section 78 of the Education Act 2002. Part I of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requires independent schools other than academies to make provision for PSHE (paragraph 2(2)(d)), and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(2)(i). Part 2 of the Schedule requires independent schools (including academies) to meet the standard relating to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils.

[4] For ease of reference, this guidance refers to primary schools and secondary schools, but the statutory requirements refer to pupils receiving primary/secondary education.

[5] Parents used henceforth to mean both parents and carers.

6. Many schools are choosing to deliver relationships or sex education as part of a timetabled PSHE programme, with good outcomes. Where that provision meets the requirements of this high level framework of core content they are free to continue with this model. Other schools may choose different curricular models for delivery.

7. The lead teacher will need to work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement, and do not duplicate, content covered in national curriculum[6] subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE. It is important to check prior knowledge and build this into the planning process to ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary. Further information on links to national curriculum subjects can be found on page 39.

8. Schools should be aware that for many young people the distinction between the online world and other aspects of life is less marked than for some adults. Young people often operate very freely in the online world and by secondary school age some are likely to be spending a substantial amount of time online. Where topics and issues outlined in this guidance are likely to be encountered by pupils online, schools should take this into account when planning how to support them in distinguishing between different types of online content and making well-founded decisions.

9. More broadly, the internet and social media have other important characteristics which young people should be aware of in order to help them use them discriminatingly. For example, social media users are sometimes prepared to say things in more extreme, unkind or exaggerated ways than they might in face to face situations, and some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. Some platforms attract large numbers of users with similar, sometimes extreme, views, who do not welcome dissent or debate. Young people should be aware that certain websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (i.e. to enable targeted advertising). In addition, criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. Schools should take these factors into account when planning teaching of these subjects and consider the overlap with their wider curriculum to ensure pupils know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

10. In this guidance where topics occur equally on and offline they are accommodated in the core content under the most applicable theme with the assumption that teachers will deliver them in a way that reflects that pupils will be negotiating issues and opportunities in these areas in all contexts, including online. Where there are topics with exclusively online content or implications this is drawn out explicitly.

[6] The national curriculum does not apply to academies or independent schools.

Summary of requirements

11. The subjects are part of the basic school curriculum (as previously for sex education in maintained secondary schools), which allows schools flexibility in developing their planned programme, integrated within a broad and balanced curriculum.

12. The guidance applies to:

Relationships Education	**Relationships and Sex Education**	**Health Education**
All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.
		The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Independent schools, however, may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum.
The statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges[7], although we would encourage them to support students by offering these subjects. These settings may find the principles helpful, especially in supporting pupils in the transition to FE.		

[7] Sixth form colleges and other 16-19 institutions that provide education for 14-16-year olds under an agreement with the Department for Education or its agencies are required by that agreement to follow guidance which covers a number of areas including the curriculum. The current guidance sets out the need to include the teaching of sex and relationship education in accordance with sections 403 and 405 of the Education Act. From September 2020, these institutions will need to teach the new subjects of Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and to follow this guidance.

Developing a policy

13. All schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and RSE. Schools must consult parents 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.

14. There are many excellent examples in which schools have established clear sex education policies in consultation with parents, governors and the wider community, and where they are already delivering effective programmes. Schools should build on that good work in adapting to these new requirements.

What is required?

15. All schools must have an up-to-date policy, which is made available to parents and others. 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[8].

16. The policy should:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Policies for mandatory subjects</th><th>Policy for non-mandatory subjects</th></tr>
<tr><td>For primary education[9]</td><td>For secondary education</td><td>For primary schools that may choose to teach sex education</td></tr>
<tr><td>Define Relationships Education</td><td>Define Relationships and Sex Education</td><td>Define any sex education they choose to teach other than that covered in the science curriculum.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Set out the subject content, how it is taught and who is responsible for teaching it.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Describe how the subject is monitored and evaluated.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Include information to clarify why parents do not have a right to withdraw their child.</td><td>Include information about a parent’s right to request that their child be excused from sex education within RSE only.</td><td>Include information about a parent’s right to request that their child be excused.</td></tr>
</table>

[8] If a school does not have a website, they should ensure that the policy is available by other means.
[9] The regulations apply to the teaching of all primary and secondary pupils respectively. This includes all types of schools to which the regulations apply.

Confirm the date by which the policy will be reviewed.
Typical policies are likely to include sections covering: • details of content/scheme of work and when each topic is taught, taking account of the age of pupils • who delivers either Relationships Education or RSE • how the policy has been produced, and how it will be kept under review, in both cases working with parents • how delivery of the content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND • explanation of the right to withdraw • requirements on schools in law e.g. the Equality Act (please see The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice) • how often the policy is updated • who approves the policy

17. In secondary schools, RSE will often address aspects of relationships and sex education in an integrated way within a single topic. Schools should develop programmes of teaching which prioritise effective delivery of the content, and do not need artificially to separate sex education and Relationships Education.

18. The policy should also reflect the views of teachers and pupils. Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils.

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

19. A good understanding of pupils' faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the school and local faith communities help to create a constructive context for the teaching of these subjects.

20. 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 core content in this 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

Use of materials

23. There are a lot of excellent resources available, free-of-charge, which schools can draw on when delivering these subjects. Schools should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, and sensitive to their needs.

24. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult with parents, they provide examples of the resources that they plan to use as this can be reassuring for parents and enables them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

25. In addition, there are varieties of resources targeted at young people that can be helpful to use to complement teaching in the classroom. Public Health England, for example, have produced a website for young people which covers a broad range of health issues in a format which is accessible for young people, targeted at secondary-age pupils. This includes Rise Above resources for lessons linked from the PSHE Association website.

26. A list of some of the resources, which are available free-of-charge, can be found in Annex B.

Equality

27. Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Further guidance is available for schools in The Equality Act 2010 and schools advice. Schools[10] should pay particular attention to the Public sector equality duty (PSED) (s.149 of the Equality Act).

28. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership[11], or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make

[10] Equality Act provisions in relation to schools are in Part 6, Chapter 1. Independent schools are not subject to the PSED.
[11] In the rest of this guidance, references to marriage should be read as marriage and civil partnership.

reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

29. Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic. This should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects. A school, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence that they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

30. Schools should consider the makeup of their own student body, including the gender and age range of their pupils, and consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk). Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.

31. Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours. School pastoral and behaviour policies should support all pupils.

32. Schools should refer to the Department's advice, Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. The advice sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment are, the current evidence on their preponderance in schools and colleges, how to minimise the risk of them occurring and what to do when they do occur or are alleged to have occurred. Schools should be aware of the importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously; staff should be aware that statistically it is more likely that females will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment than males, and that it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by males. However, males can also be the victims of sexual violence and it can also happen in same-sex relationships. It is, however, essential that assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male; most young men are respectful of young women and each other. An understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

33. Relationships Education, RSE and Health 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,[12] as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

34. Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

35. 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.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

36. In teaching Relationships Education 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. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, (please see The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

37. Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is 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 we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum.

[12] “Preparing for adulthood” outcomes are set out at section 7.38 of the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years.

Governors

38. As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing boards or management committee should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn; and,
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

39. 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.

Working with parents/carers and the wider community

40. The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

41. All schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

42. Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum.

43. Many schools build a good relationship with parents on these subjects over time – for example by inviting parents into school to discuss what will be taught, address any concerns and help support parents in managing conversations with their children on these issues. This can be an important opportunity to talk about how these subjects contribute to wider support in terms of pupil wellbeing and keeping children safe. It is important through such processes to reach out to *all* parents, recognising that a range of approaches may be needed for doing so.

44. Many schools will have existing mechanisms in place to engage parents and should continue to draw on these as they respond to the new legal framework.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

45. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.

46. Good practice is also likely to include the head teacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the

detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

47. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes 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.

48. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. The approach outlined above should be reflected in the school's policy on RSE.

49. Head teachers will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum.

50. If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Working with external agencies

51. Working with external organisations can enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with young people.

52. As with any visitor, schools are responsible for ensuring that they check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials. Schools should also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with their planned programme and their published policy. It is important that schools discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. Schools should ask to see the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan in advance, so that they can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs). It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy. Further information for teachers in handling potential safeguarding or child protection reports is on page 35.

53. 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.

Relationships Education (Primary)

54. The focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

55. This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary.

56. Respect for others should be taught in an age-appropriate way, in terms of understanding one's own and others' boundaries in play, in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.

57. From the beginning, teachers should talk explicitly about the features of healthy friendships, family relationships and other relationships which young children are likely to encounter. Drawing attention to these in a range of contexts should enable pupils to form a strong early understanding of the features of relationships that are likely to lead to happiness and security. This will also help them to recognise any less positive relationships when they encounter them.

58. The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet. When teaching relationships content, teachers should address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives. Teachers should include content on how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways they might not expect.

59. Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; e.g. looked after children or young carers.

60. A growing ability to form strong and positive relationships with others depends on the deliberate cultivation of character traits and positive personal attributes, (sometimes referred to as 'virtues') in the individual. In a school wide context which encourages the development and practice of resilience and other attributes, this includes character traits such as helping pupils to believe they can achieve, persevere with tasks, work towards long-term rewards and continue despite setbacks. Alongside understanding the importance of self-respect and self-worth, pupils should develop personal attributes including honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely.

61. Relationships Education also creates an opportunity to enable pupils to be taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing.

62. Through Relationships Education (and RSE), schools should teach pupils the knowledge they need to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. In primary schools, this can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online. Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong. At all stages it will be important to balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects complement Health Education and as part of a comprehensive programme and whole school approach, this knowledge can support safeguarding of children.

By the end of primary school:

Families and people who care for me	Pupils should know • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • 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. • 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.

	• 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. • that marriage[13] represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	Pupils should know • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • 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. • 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.
Respectful relationships	Pupils should know • 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. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • 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.

[13] Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

	• 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. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	Pupils should know • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • 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. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	Pupils should know • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • 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. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. • how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Managing difficult questions

63. Primary-age pupils will often ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out for Relationships Education. The school's policy should cover how the school handles such questions. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.

64. Meeting these objectives will require a graduated, age-appropriate programme of Relationships Education. Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of these differences (including when they are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities) and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Schools should consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting, as teachers may require support and training in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class.

Sex Education (Primary)

65. The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in this guidance therefore focuses on Relationships Education.

66. The content set out in this guidance covers everything that primary schools should teach about relationships and health, including puberty. The national curriculum for science also includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. 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, although it is not a requirement.

67. It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born. As well as consulting parents more generally about the school's overall policy, primary schools should consult parents before the final year of primary school about the detailed content of what will be taught. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school. Meeting

these objectives will require a graduated, age-appropriate programme of sex education. Teaching needs to take account of the developmental differences of children.

68. Where a maintained primary school chooses to teach aspects of sex education (which go beyond the national curriculum for science), the school must set this out in their policy and all schools should consult with parents on what is to be covered. Primary schools that choose to teach sex education must allow parents a right to withdraw their children. Unlike sex education in RSE at secondary, in primary schools, head teachers must comply with a parent's wish to withdraw their child from sex education beyond the national curriculum for science. Schools will want to draw on the good practice for conversations with parents around the right to withdraw as set out in paragraphs 45 and 46. Schools must also ensure that their teaching and materials are appropriate having regard to the age and religious backgrounds of their pupils. Schools will also want to recognise the significance of other factors, such as any special educational needs or disabilities of their pupils.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Secondary

69. The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

70. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

71. Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This should be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

72. RSE should provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education. Teachers should build on the foundation of Relationships Education and, as pupils grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils should also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

73. Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

74. As in primary, secondary Relationships Education can be underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. These should include character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility,

kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth. There are many ways in which secondary schools should support the development of these attributes, for example by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely.

75. 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.

76. It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

77. Schools may choose to explore faith, or other perspectives, on some of these issues in other subjects such as Religious Education.

78. Pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

79. Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly. Schools should address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). They should also be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM. As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. Schools should also be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

80. Internet safety should also be addressed. Pupils should be taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Pupils should have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

81. Some pupils are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

By the end of secondary school:

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families	Pupils should know • that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. • how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. • what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. • why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. • the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. • the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. • how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
Respectful relationships, including friendships	Pupils should know • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.

	• practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). • 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. • that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
Online and media	Pupils should know • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. • about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. • not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them. • what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. • the impact of viewing harmful content. • that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. • that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail. • how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
Being safe	Pupils should know

	• the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. • how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	Pupils should know • how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship. • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause. • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. • that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex. • the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available. • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. • that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help). • how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing. • about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. • how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour. • how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

The Law

82. It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- 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
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism/radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

Physical health and mental wellbeing

83. The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

84. Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.

85. It is important for schools to promote pupils' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so. This will enable them to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. This integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing has a potential positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

86. Effective teaching should aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular those to do with mental wellbeing. Schools should engender an atmosphere that encourages openness. This will mean that pupils feel they can check their understanding and seek any necessary help and advice as they gain knowledge about how to promote good health and wellbeing.

87. Schools have flexibility to design and plan age-appropriate subject content, but this guidance sets out core areas for health and wellbeing that are appropriate for primary and secondary aged pupils.

88. Puberty including menstruation should be covered in Health Education and should, as far as possible, be addressed before onset. This should ensure male and female pupils are prepared for changes they and their peers will experience.

Menstruation

89. The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products. Schools will need to consider the needs of their cohort of pupils in designing this content.

Physical health and mental wellbeing: Primary

90. The focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

91. This starts with pupils being taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and giving pupils the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences. This should enable pupils to articulate how they are feeling, develop the language to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate for the situations that they experience.

92. Teachers should go on to talk about the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own and others' health and wellbeing, including simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and wellbeing problems and basic first aid.

93. Emphasis should be given to the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing, and the benefits to mental wellbeing of physical exercise and time spent outdoors.

94. Pupils should also be taught the benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities. This teaching should make clear that people are social beings and that spending time with others, taking opportunities to consider the needs of others and practising service to others, including in organised and structured activities and groups (for example the scouts or girl guide movements), are beneficial for health and wellbeing.

95. Pupils should be taught about the benefits of rationing time spent online and the risks of excessive use of electronic devices. In later primary school, pupils should be taught why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions and should be equipped to manage common difficulties encountered online.

96. A firm foundation in the benefits and characteristics of good health and wellbeing will enable teachers to talk about isolation, loneliness, unhappiness, bullying and the negative impact of poor health and wellbeing.

By the end of primary school:

Mental wellbeing	Pupils should know • that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. • 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.

	• 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. • how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate. • the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness. • simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests. • isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support. • that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing. • 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). • 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.
Internet safety and harms	Pupils should know • that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits. • 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. • 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. • why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted. • 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. • how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted. • where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.

Physical health and fitness	Pupils should know • the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle. • 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. • the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity). • how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.
Healthy eating	Pupils should know • what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). • the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. • 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).
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	Pupils should know • the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.
Health and prevention	Pupils should know • how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body. • about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist. • about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing. • the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.
Basic first aid	Pupils should know: • how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary. • concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.

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.

Physical health and mental wellbeing: Secondary

97. It is important that the starting point for health and wellbeing education should be a focus on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves. In secondary school, teaching should build on primary content and should introduce new content to older pupils at appropriate points. This should enable pupils to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable pupils to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

98. Teaching about the impact of puberty, which will have started in primary school, should continue in secondary school, so that pupils are able to understand the physical and emotional changes, which take place at this time and their impact on their wider health and wellbeing.

99. Emphasis should continue to be given to steps pupils can take to protect and support their own health and wellbeing. They should know that there is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and that this can also influence their ability to learn. Teachers should cover self-care, the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors. This should be linked to information on the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.

100. Pupils should know the contribution that hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities can make to overall wellbeing. They should understand that humans are social beings and that outward-facing activity, especially that with a service focus (for example, work, volunteering and participation in organisations such as the scouts or the girl guiding movements, the National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award) are beneficial for wellbeing. This can also contribute to the development of the attributes for a happy and successful adult life. Pupils should be supported to recognise what makes them feel lonely. Self-focused or isolating lifestyle choices can lead to unhappiness and being disconnected from society for those who have greater need for companionship and relationships.

101. Pupils should also be taught about problems and challenges. This should include factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions. Schools may also choose to teach about issues such as eating disorders[14].

102. Teachers should be aware of common 'adverse childhood experiences' (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence) and when and how these may be affecting any of their pupils and so may be influencing how they experience these subjects. The impact of time spent online, the positive aspects of online support and negotiating social media, including online forums and gaming, should also be included. Teachers should understand that pupils who have experienced problems at home may depend more on schools for support.

103. Pupils should be taught how to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This should include details on which adults in school (e.g. school nurses), and externally can help.

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required <u>and in addition</u> cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Mental wellbeing	Pupils should know • how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • that happiness is linked to being connected to others. • how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns. • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression). • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health. • the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
Internet safety and harms	Pupils should know • the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and

[14] Eating disorders and extreme weight loss are a specialised area and schools should use qualified support or advice as needed. Schools may consider accessing support from the NHS or local specialist services who may be able to provide advice and CPD for teachers.

	information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. • how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
Physical health and fitness	Pupils should know • the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress. • the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health. • about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	Pupils should know • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	Pupils should know • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions. • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood. • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency. • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks. • the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
Health and prevention	Pupils should know • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist. • (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.

	• the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination. • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
Basic first aid	Pupils should know • basic treatment for common injuries. • life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.[15] • the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
Changing adolescent body	Pupils should know • key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing. • the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

[15] Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation is usually best taught after 12 years old.

Delivery and teaching strategies

National curriculum subjects: citizenship, science, computing and PE

104. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education complement several national curriculum subjects. Where schools are teaching the national curriculum, they should look for opportunities to draw links between the subjects and integrate teaching where appropriate. There continues to be no right of withdrawal from any part of the national curriculum.

105. The national curriculum for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 aims to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education should foster pupils' awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the knowledge to explore political and social issues, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. It should also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

106. At key stages 1 and 2, the national curriculum for science includes teaching about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. At key stage 3 and 4, it includes teaching about reproduction in humans; for example, the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and HIV/AIDS.

107. The national curriculum for computing aims to ensure that all pupils can understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including logic, algorithms and data representation. It also covers e-safety, with progression in the content to reflect the different and escalating risks that young people face as they get older. This includes how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely, how to keep personal information private, and where to go for help and support.

108. The national curriculum for PE aims to ensure that pupils develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in competitive sport and activities and lead healthy, active lives.

109. Schools need to consider how they can ensure that Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education complement existing national curriculum subjects and whole school approaches to wellbeing and health. For example, health education can complement what is taught through PE by developing core knowledge and broader understanding that enables people to lead healthy, active lives and citizenship can

complement all of the new subjects in the coverage of law. Schools should tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils.

Pupil Referral Units/Alternative Provision

110. Pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP) academies and free schools and independent schools that provide AP are required to make provision for Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education in the same way as mainstream schools; and they must have regard to this guidance in delivering their programme. In teaching these subjects in PRUs, AP academies and free schools, and independent[16] AP schools, specific thought should be given to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils.

Senior leadership and whole school approach

111. Schools which demonstrate effective practice often ensure clear responsibility for these subjects by a senior teacher in leadership position with dedicated time to lead specialist provision, e.g. a subject lead or co-ordinator.

112. All of these subjects should be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. For example, the curriculum on relationships and on sex should complement, and be supported by, the school's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying and safeguarding (including handling of any reports pupils may make as a result of the subject content). The subjects will sit within the context of a school's broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system. This is also the case for teaching about mental health within health education. The curriculum on health education should similarly complement, and be supported by, the school's wider education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science, sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

113. Schools should consider how their teaching can help support the development of important attributes in pupils, such as honesty, kindness, tolerance, courtesy, resilience and self-efficacy, as well as how those attributes are also developed by other aspects of the school's provision. The curriculum should proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional and sexual development. This should be in line with pupil need, informed by pupil voice and participation in curriculum development and in response to issues as they arise in the school and wider community.

[16] Independent schools do not have to have regard to the guidance on Health Education, although they may find it helpful in planning.

Flexibility

114. Schools will retain freedom to determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people, is developed in consultation with parents and the local community. Schools must also comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act as noted earlier. Where appropriate this may also require a differentiated curriculum. Schools have specific duties to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.

115. Flexibility is important as it allows schools to respond to local public health and community issues, meet the needs of their community and adapt materials and programmes to meet the needs of pupils (for example in teaching about gangs or high local prevalence of specific sexually transmitted infections).

Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

116. At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

117. Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

118. KCSIE is clear that all staff should know what to do if a pupil tells them that they are being abused or neglected or are witnessing abuse. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

119. Good practice would be to involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) in anything that is safeguarding-related in the context of these subjects. They will potentially have knowledge of trusted, high quality local resources that could be engaged, links to the police and other agencies and the knowledge of any particular local issues which it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

120. Where a school invites external agencies in to support delivery of these subjects, they must agree in advance of the session how a safeguarding report should be dealt with by the external visitor. It is important that children understand how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report.

121. There are some important points for teachers in terms of how they approach this content and how they consider their planning. When teaching the new subjects, schools should be aware that children may raise topics including self-harm and suicide. In talking about this content in the classroom, teachers must be aware of the risks of encouraging or making suicide seem a more viable option for pupils and avoid material being instructive rather than preventative. To avoid this, they should take care to avoid giving instructions or methods of self-harm or suicide and avoid using emotive language, videos or images. *Teacher Guidance: preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing*[17] provides useful support for teachers in handling this material.

122. If teachers have concerns about a specific pupil in relation to self-harm or suicidal ideation or attempts, they must follow safeguarding procedures.

---

[17] Teacher Guidance: preparing to teach about mental health and wellbeing, PSHE association

Assessment

123. Schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. A strong curriculum will build on the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress.

124. Lessons should be planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Teaching should be assessed and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention.

125. Whilst there is no formal examined assessment for these subjects, there are some areas to consider in strengthening quality of provision, and which demonstrate how teachers can assess outcomes. For example, tests, written assignments or self-evaluations, to capture progress.

Accountability

126. Key aspects of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education are in scope for Ofsted inspection; for example, through inspectors' consideration of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare; and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Annex A Regulations

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and provide that pupils receiving primary education must be taught Relationships Education, pupils receiving secondary education must be taught RSE and that all primary and secondary pupils must be taught Health Education. 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, and non-maintained special schools. All schools, except independent schools, must make provision for Health Education.

To give effect to the duty in section 34 of the 2017 Act and the power in section 35 of that Act, the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 amend existing provisions in the Education Act 1996 and the Education Act 2002 and insert new provisions into the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (England) Regulations 2007, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. The new provisions include a requirement for the Secretary of State to publish guidance on Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education; require schools to have regard to that guidance; require schools to make a statement of policy on their provision of Relationships Education and RSE; and set out the circumstances in which a pupil is to be excused from RSE.

The regulations and guidance in relation to Health Education do not apply to independent schools – they will continue to make provision for the health education element of PSHE under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Annex B Suggested resources

Teaching resources

There are many excellent resources available, free of charge, which schools can draw on when delivering these subjects. Schools should assess each resource that they propose to use carefully to ensure it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils and sensitive to their needs, where relevant, schools should use resources that are medically accurate. Schools should also consider drawing on the expertise of the main subject associations who often quality assure third party resources. We also recognise that schools use resources from representative bodies (e.g. many Catholic and other schools draw on the model curricula provided by the Catholic Education Service.)

Schools should also ensure that, when they consult parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use, as this can be reassuring for parents, and enables them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

This is for illustrative purposes and is not an exhaustive list.

Relationships Education

Safeguarding: NSPCC PANTS rule with film.

Example of model primary curricula from Catholic Education.

Relationships and Sex Education

Sexual health and relationships: up to date information on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health available on Sexwise's website which teachers may find helpful for their knowledge.

Abuse in relationships: Disrespect NoBody from the Home Office and Government Equalities Office.

Consent: PSHE Association lesson plans from the PSHE association.

LGBT inclusivity: Stonewall lesson plans and materials for primary and secondary.

Resources covering all contexts, including online, and specifically relationships and bullying, alcohol, smoking, stress, body image from Public Health England website with videos made by young people and resources tested with teachers.

Example model secondary curricula from Catholic education.

Mental health

Mental health and emotional wellbeing lesson plans from PSHE Association.

MindEd educational resources on children and young people's mental health.

Online safety

Education for a Connected World is the UK Council for Internet safety (UKCCIS) framework of digital knowledge and skills for different ages and stages.

Sexting advice from UKCCIS for schools on preventative education and managing reports of sexting.

Thinkuknow is the education programme from National Crime Agency (NCA) and Child Exploitation Online Programme (CEOP), which protects children both online and offline. The site offers materials for parents, teachers and pupils on a wide range of online safety issues and facts about areas such as digital footprints, recognising fake websites and checking URLs.

PSHE

PSHE Association Programme of study for KS1-5

Drugs and alcohol

Teacher training on drugs, alcohol and tobacco - a training module for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff to teach about drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Extremism and radicalisation

Practical advice and information from Educate Against Hate for teachers, teachers in leadership positions and parents on protecting children from extremism and radicalization.

Curriculum

Non-statutory framework for Citizenship KS 1 and 2 (Non-statutory programme of study). Schools may wish to draw on the Citizenship programme of study in their planning.

Data to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the local school-age population

Public Health England's Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network brings together a range of publicly available data, information, reports, tools and resources on child and maternal health into one easily accessible hub.

It includes school-age health profiles and young people's health profiles.

The indicators allow areas to see how they perform against the national average and against other local areas. These tools, accompanied by local health intelligence, will be useful in supporting schools to identify and respond to the particular health and wellbeing needs of their local school-age population.

There are also early years health profiles.

Annex C Cross-government strategies

These subjects support many cross-government strategies of which schools will want to be aware. Whilst we have not referenced all strategies or supporting documents, we have included some of the key areas below.

- Transforming children and young people's mental health provisiongreen paper. The green paper announced new support in and near schools and colleges to support children and young people with their mental health.
- The drug strategy 2017 sets out how the government and its partners, at local, national and international levels, will take new action to tackle drug misuse and the harms it causes.
- Internet Safety Strategy green paper sets out steps towards developing a coordinated strategic approach to online safety.
- The Children's Commissioner Digital 5 A Day provides a simple framework that reflects the concerns of parents as well as children's behaviours and needs.
- Government aims to significantly reduce England's rate of childhood obesity within the next ten years. The childhood obesity plan sets out the approach to reduce childhood obesity.
- Guidance from the Chief Medical Office (CMO) on how much physical activity people should be doing, along with supporting documents.
- Over the last 18 years, the teenage pregnancy rate has reduced by 60%. However, a continued focus is needed to maintain the downward trend and narrow inequalities in rates between and within local authorities. The Teenage Pregnancy prevention framework provides evidence based guidance for local authorities, including the important role of RSE and links to local sexual health services.
- Sustaining the downward trend and making further progress is one of the key objectives of the Department of Health and Social Care's Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England. These subjects provide a key opportunity to strengthen support for young people to develop healthy relationships and prevent early unplanned pregnancy.
- Reproductive health - a public health issue. A consensus statement, data and women's experiences, covering reproductive health through the life course, from menstruation to menopause. (PHE. 2018)
- The cross-government loneliness strategy, which sets out the Government's vision for supporting individuals, businesses and communities to build and maintain strong relationships.

Department for Education

© Crown copyright 2019

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:
visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3
email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:
enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus
download www.gov.uk/government/publications



Follow us on Twitter:
@educationgovuk



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk