

FAQ about Relationship and Sex Education

Sourced from Leeds School's Wellbeing Team and DfE government website.

Q. What will be the aim of Relationships Education in primary schools?

A. The aim in primary schools will be to teach the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults. This aim is to create opportunities to ensure children are taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing and how friendships can impact on this. Children will also be taught to recognise and report different types of abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual. This will include focusing on boundaries and privacy so that children understand that they have rights over their own bodies and know how to seek advice when they suspect or know something is wrong. There will also be opportunities for schools to teach children about boundaries with their peers, including when they are online, and ensuring they learn that where abuse takes place it is never the fault of the child who is abused.

Q. Will my child be taught sex education in primary school?

A. Sex education will remain non-statutory in primary schools although many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), and will continue to do so. In those instances, it is recommended parent/s and carers discuss this with their child's school to understand what they propose to teach and how. Primary schools which choose to teach sex education should match their teaching to the age and physical maturity of its pupils.

Q: Will my child be taught about LGBT relationships?

A: Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships.

Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone.

Q. Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

A. In *primary schools*, parents and carers can withdraw their child from any of the sex education delivered, other than as part of the science curriculum.

For SEND pupils, the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs into account when making decisions about whether a pupil may be excused.

The head teacher will discuss with parents and carers 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 discussed in class, rather than what was directly discussed by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if parents and carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Q. Do parents and carers have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships Education?

A. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Q. How will children and young people be supported if they have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?

A. Relationships Education and RSE must be accessible for all children. Teaching should be differentiated and personalised to ensure accessibility. Schools should also be mindful of the 'preparing for adulthood' outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

There may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. Schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, appropriate to development and delivered with reference to the law.

Q. Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take faith into account?

A. The subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain. In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled. Schools with a religious character can build on the core content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching. In developing these subjects, the DfE have worked with a number of faith organisations and representative bodies. Schools can also consider drawing on their expertise when delivering these subjects.

Q. How will children and young people be safeguarded in these lessons?

A. At the heart of Relationships Education and RSE, there is a focus on keeping children safe and the role that schools can play in preventative education.

Teachers should be aware of the risks in teaching about sensitive subjects and give particular considerations to planning around these issues and ensuring material is focused on prevention rather than being instructional. These lessons will give children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues.