

Interim Statement:	Relationship Sex Education
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Context

From September 2020 all schools are required to teach Relationships Education (Primary schools), Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary schools) and Health Education (all schools). Primary schools can decide whether to teach Sex Education that goes beyond the content outlined within the Science curriculum, which is already compulsory. The Relationships and Health aspects of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) will be the only part of the PSHE curriculum that will be compulsory in all schools from September 2020.

Schools are free to determine how to deliver the compulsory content but should deliver these new statutory requirements as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Parents will have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education (all or some) until the age of 16, at which point pupils can choose for themselves. Parents will not have the right to withdraw their children from Relationships Education, Science or Health Education.

Church of England Context

The Bishop of Ely, Stephen Conway, (the Church of England's lead Bishop for Education) issued a statement in April 2019 which clearly set out the position of the Church of England regarding RSE. Nigel Genders (CE Chief Education Officer) also made his position clear. [See appendices 1 & 2]

'Valuing All God's Children' (updated in 2019) provides further practical guidance about where Relationships Education sits within a church school.

DfE Guidance for schools with a religious character

The DfE guidance states, '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. 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 are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

All schools may teach about faith perspectives. In particular, schools with the 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'.

The current SIAMS Evaluation Schedule states:

‘Church schools should meet the statutory requirements in a way that ensures that children and young people are able to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made, and to form healthy relationships where they respect and offer dignity to others.

Plan

In line with other Dioceses, this statement has been issued on behalf of the DBE. There will be further information published shortly which will provide a clear steer for schools about how to approach the teaching of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. The Christian Distinctiveness and School Effectiveness Committee will be producing this additional guidance for schools.

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