

### **What does RSE look like.**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.<sup>1</sup>

### **WHAT CHANGED?**

In September 2020, relationships and sex education became statutory in all secondary schools in England. In line with government guidance, we recommend that age-appropriate sex education is also taught in all primary schools. Health Education also became statutory in all state-funded schools.

### **WHAT DOES MY SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO PREPARE FOR STATUTORY RSE?**

## **Primary schools: relationships education**

### **WHICH SCHOOLS NEED TO TEACH IT?**

All schools providing primary education must teach relationships education. This includes:

- all through schools and middle schools
- local Authority maintained schools
- independent schools
- academies
- free schools
- special schools
- faith schools
- pupil referral units.

### **CAN PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM LESSONS?**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from relationships education.

### **DO WE NEED A POLICY?**

Yes. The policy should:

- be up to date and made available, for free, to parents and others
- define relationships education
- set out the content and benefits of RSE

- describe how the subject is evaluated
- explain a parent's right to withdraw their child
- confirm when the policy will be reviewed.
- pupil referral units.

## Primary schools: sex education

### WHICH SCHOOLS NEED TO TEACH IT?

Primary schools are not required to teach sex education.

However, the Department of Education recommends that all primary schools have a sex education program of work.

Children have the right to comprehensive sex education and FPA strongly recommends that all primary schools teach age-appropriate sex education.

### CAN PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM LESSONS?

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education.

This does not include what is taught as part of the science curriculum.

All children have the right to comprehensive sex education and most parents support the teaching of sex education in schools. Schools should engage with parents and have a clear policy in place which explains the benefits of school based RSE.

### DO WE NEED A POLICY?

If a primary school teaches sex education, it is required to have a policy. The policy should:

- be up to date and made available, for free, to parents and others
- define sex education
- set out the content and benefits of RSE
- describe how the subject is evaluated
- explain a parent's right to withdraw their child
- confirm when the policy will be reviewed.

## Primary schools: health education

### WHICH SCHOOLS NEED TO TEACH IT?

All state schools must teach health education. This includes:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- schools with a sixth form
- academies
- free schools

- non-maintained special schools
- alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

Guidance on Health Education does not apply to independent schools.

### **CAN PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM LESSONS?**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from health education.

### **DO WE NEED A POLICY?**

No

## **Secondary schools: relationships education**

### **WHICH SCHOOLS NEED TO TEACH IT?**

**All schools** providing secondary education must teach relationships and sex education. This includes:

- all-through schools and middle schools
- local authority-maintained schools
- independent schools
- special schools
- faith schools
- free schools
- academies
- pupil referral units.

### **CAN PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM LESSONS?**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some aspects of sex education. This does not include what is taught as part of the science curriculum.

Before granting a request to withdraw a child, the head teacher should discuss the value and importance of RSE with parents.

A child can request sex education without their parent's consent from three terms before their 16th birthday.

### **DO WE NEED A POLICY?**

Yes. The policy should:

- be up to date and made available, for free, to parents and others
- define relationships and sex education
- set out the content and benefits of RSE
- describe how the subject is evaluated

# FPA Factsheet

## Relationships and Sex Education

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- explain a parent's right to withdraw their child
- confirm when the policy will be reviewed.

## Secondary schools: health education

### WHICH SCHOOLS NEED TO TEACH IT?

All state schools must teach health education. This includes:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- schools with a sixth form
- academies
- free schools
- non-maintained special schools
- alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

Guidance on Health Education does not apply to independent schools.

### CAN PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM LESSONS?

Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from health education.

### DO WE NEED A POLICY?

No.

## WHAT IF MY SCHOOL ISN'T IN ENGLAND?

Please review government guidance for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

To order more copies of this booklet go to [fpa.org.uk/shop](http://fpa.org.uk/shop)

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