

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)

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Current requirements for PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

Type of school	SRE	PSHE
Maintained primary	Not mandatory	Not mandatory
Maintained secondary	Mandatory	Not mandatory
Academy / free school primary	Not mandatory	Not mandatory
Academy / free school primary	Not mandatory	Not mandatory
Independent school primary	Not mandatory	Mandatory
Independent school secondary	Not mandatory	Mandatory

- National Curriculum for science also includes some elements of sex education.
- Where PSHE and sex education are not mandatory, a number of schools have chosen to teach either the full subject, or elements therein.
- Sex and Relationships Education guidance (2000).

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a duty on the Secretary of State to make the new subjects of Relationships Education mandatory in all primary schools, and Relationships and Sex Education mandatory in all secondary schools through regulations at a later date. (RSE will replace the existing subject of sex education).

The duty on Relationships Education (in all primary) and RSE (in all secondary) includes that:

Regulations to make the subjects compulsory must include:

- A requirement to produce guidance that all schools must have regard to;
- A requirement on schools to publish policies on these subjects; and
- Details of a parental right to withdraw their child from RSE, or elements of it.

The guidance on Relationships and RSE must ensure:

That pupils are taught about:

- Safety in forming and maintaining relationships;
- The characteristics of healthy relationships; and
- How relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- That the education is appropriate to the age and religious background of the pupils.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also provides a power for the Secretary of State to make PSHE (or elements therein) mandatory in all schools through regulations at a later date if wished.

The power on PSHE (in all schools) includes enabling:

- The Secretary of State to produce guidance that all schools* must have regard to; and**
- The regulations to require schools to publish policies on PSHE.**

*** independent schools already have to teach PSHE and follow existing standards in doing so**

Considering change – a rationale

- Repeated challenges to reflect on role of PSHE and SRE in preparing pupils for transition to adult life.
- Education Select Committee (2015) inquiry into PSHE and SRE.
- Increasing concerns about child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Navigating growing risks associated with growing up in a digital world.
- 2013 Ofsted report suggested PSHE education required improvement in 42% of the primary and 38% of the secondary schools surveyed at that time.
- Calls for statutory status from a wide range of organisations including the PSHE Association.

Engagement programme

- We have conducted thorough and wide ranging engagement.
- Roundtable meetings, bilateral meetings and public call for evidence.
- Considered subject content, school practice and quality of delivery to determine content of regulations, statutory guidance and support for schools.
- Significant involvement of the teaching profession.
- We engaged with, and sought evidence from:
 - schools and teachers
 - parents and pupils
 - experts in safeguarding and child wellbeing
 - subject experts e.g. PSHE teachers, Sex Education Forum
 - faith groups
 - voluntary organisations and other interested parties
 - other government departments and public sector bodies

Next steps

- The Department for Education has been assessing all the evidence that has been submitted through the stakeholder engagement and call for evidence, which received 23,000 responses.
- The Department for Education plans to launch a consultation on draft regulations and accompanying statutory guidance shortly.
- Regulations and guidance will be debated in both Houses of Parliament.