



What is RSE Day?

RSE Day celebrates positive work around relationships and sex education in schools and the wider community. It is a day for everyone to think about their role in promoting healthy relationships and positive sexual health to children and young people.

RSE Day started in Nottingham City in 2018 and 2019 was the first national RSE day in partnership with Sex Education Forum.

With statutory RSE starting from 1 September, RSE Day 2020 is the perfect time to put the spotlight on good practice and highlight the consensus of support for RSE.

This year's theme is 'Books I love about love.' We are asking people nationwide to share a book, story or poem that they love about love on social media on RSE Day (**25th June**) as a way to talk about relationships and sexual health – highlighting the importance of RSE.

How can I get involved?

25th June 2020 - RSE Day

Share a book you love about love:

- Share a selfie or photo holding or reading a book that you love about love – if you don't have your book to hand the cover displayed on an iPad or tablet also works.
- With your photo include the reason for your chosen book eg. 'I love this book because.....' and why RSE and RSE Day is important to you.
- Please post on twitter and Instagram at breakfast time, **around 8am** using #RSEday #RSEtogether

Share the 'RSE evidence' infographic:

- 96% of MPs voted in support of the updated RSE guidance in March 2019 and the research evidence in support of RSE is very clear. Share the 'RSE evidence' infographic to draw attention to that consensus of support again now.

Suggested tweets on RSE day – 25 June

Support for updated, inclusive Relationships & Sex Education is overwhelming & the evidence shows what a difference it makes to health and wellbeing. I'm supporting #RSEday #RSEtogether

<http://bit.ly/2F4U847>

I'm celebrating #RSEday 2020 just weeks away from the new subjects Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education becoming mandatory in schools across England. #RSEtogether

<http://bit.ly/2F4U847>

Excellent #RSE educates children and young people about healthy relationships and positive sexual health. Join in celebrating #RSEday <http://bit.ly/2F4U847>

Good relationships and sex education helps keep children and young people safe – that's why I'm supporting #RSEday! @RSE_day <http://bit.ly/2F4U847>

Children and young people want relevant and reliable #RSE from school and their families – that's why I'm supporting #RSEday #RSEtogether <http://bit.ly/2F4U847>

Briefing

1. Why do children and young people need high quality RSE so urgently?

Children and young people report that the RSE they receive is very patchy:

- 41% of young people rate the quality of their RSE as 'good' or 'very good'
- 17% of all young people rate the quality of their RSE as 'bad' or 'very bad'
- 18% of young people learnt nothing about LGBT+ issues at school (a further 28% said they had not learnt all they needed to)
- 19% had not learnt about recognising grooming or sexual exploitation
([Independent poll of 1000 young people aged 16 and 17, Sex Education Forum, 2019](#))

Bullying and poor mental health affects LGBT young people at alarming rates. Nearly half of LGBT pupils (45 per cent) – are bullied for being LGBT at school (Stonewall, 2017). The risk of grooming and sexual exploitation online is heightened as children are spending more time online during school closures and offenders are also online in greater numbers.

Young people say that school is their preferred main source of information about sex, followed by parents, then health professionals (Tanton 2015).

2. Could RSE damage children?

No, the reverse is true:

- A large study in United States found young people who had received RSE were less likely to describe first sex as unwanted, and female respondents who had received RSE were less likely to have a partner with a big age difference (Lindberg, 2012).
- Young people citing school as their main source of information about sex are less likely to contract an STI or (for young women) to be pregnant by 18 or experience an unplanned pregnancy in later life (Tanton 2015)

- Young people who have had high quality RSE are more likely to start having sex at an older age and more likely to use condoms and contraception if they do have sex (Kirby 2007 and UNESCO 2018)

3. Involving parents

RSE is more effective when both home and school are involved. Young people say that they would like more input from their parents than they are currently getting.

The statutory guidance on RSHE requires that schools consult with parents regarding RSE provision specifically, and explains that a relationship with parents on these subjects develops over time.

Effective RSE is a partnership between parents and schools. Parents need to be given adequate information about what is taught and when. School-home communication about RSE should start early so that parents can anticipate topics covered at school and make their own timely input or follow up at home.

4. Do teachers have adequate training to teach high-quality RSE?

A survey of teachers of RSE in 2018 found that 29% had never had any training in RSE. Parents and pupils alike should expect RSE to be taught to a high standard, just like any other subject on the curriculum.

Government announced investment of £6m to support implementation of the new subjects, stating that this would include face-to-face and online training for all schools, not just early adopters and a support package including some additional guidance. This is yet to be published and the training is yet to be rolled out.

5. Have school preparations been disrupted by Covid-19?

Every school will be at a different point in their journey towards high quality RSE that meets the new statutory requirements, but all schools have had access to the statutory guidance since July 2019. It is very important that school leadership addresses timetabling, staffing and resourcing of the subject without delay. These steps are not subject to parental consultation and should already be underway in all schools.

6. What about LGBT issues and RSE?

Statutory guidance, approved by Parliament with strong cross-party support, states that 'we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum'.

It is crucial that schools are supported to implement inclusive RSE. Bullying and poor mental health affects LGBT young people at alarming rates. Nearly half of LGBT pupils (45 per cent) – are bullied for being LGBT at school (Stonewall, 2017). Nearly one in ten trans pupils (nine per cent) are subjected to death threats at school (Stonewall, 2017).

LGBT inclusion in RSE helps tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. It does not encourage any particular lifestyle. In primary school, when learning about families and ‘how they care for us’, children learn about the diverse range of families, so it is easy to include families with same-sex parents. Challenging gender stereotypes is important throughout primary and secondary school, and contributes to tackling sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and in society.

There are lots of resources that schools can choose from to ensure their teaching about relationships is inclusive and clear about equality.

7. Are faith perspectives included in RSE?

Government guidance provides flexibility for faith perspectives to be included in RSE alongside information about the law and medical facts. It is important that different types of information are identified as such. There are lots of faith schools already providing high quality and inclusive RSE.

A schools’ RSE policy is a good place to explain how their RSE programme contributes to the ethos and values of the school. The importance of respectful behaviour and positive, caring relationships is integral to the ethos and values of perhaps every school in the country.

8. What needs to happen to ensure that high quality RSE is implemented?

With substantial cross-party support, the Government took the bold and necessary step, through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, of requiring all schools to provide Relationships Education in primary, and Relationships and Sex Education in secondary. Updated statutory guidance was published in July 2019. Statutory provision starts from 1 September, with schools supported to take a ‘phased approach’ if they are not fully prepared due to the impact of Covid-19.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be needed to ensure that:

- High quality training is rolled out as soon as possible – to all schools, not just the 1560 ‘early adopters’
- Ofsted comment on the quality of RSE during inspection
- RSE is accessible to pupils with SEND in mainstream and special schools
- That dialogue between schools and parents relating to withdrawal from RSE are documented and that Government keeps under review how children’s entitlement is met
- That the standard of RSE provided in all types of schools in England is indeed improving
- That the RSE guidance is updated regularly, for example every 3 years

9. What are the principles of RSE Day

- RSE helps keep children safe – this is based on evidence
- RSE lessons should be enjoyable and useful / relevant
- RSE happens in school and at home
- RSE involves communication between people
- RSE involves people of different ages and starts young to support life-long learning

What if we fail to teach RSE.....?

“I was sexually abused and no one told me what was done to me was wrong. We got stranger danger and how to cross the road and that was it. He was my granddad. I didn’t like it but didn’t know it was wrong but thought I should be embarrassed as I thought it was my fault. If I had known it was wrong and that I could say something and someone had listened, it might have stopped earlier than it did if I had known more or I might have told before I did.” (Female, 16 years old, respondent to Sex Education Forum ‘Heads or Tails’ survey, 2016)

““We weren’t taught about what sex is so how would we know if we were assaulted or raped” (Young person aged 16 or 17, respondent to Independent poll, 2018, Sex Education Forum)

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