
Appendix 2

Parental Checklist (Primary) for Relationships (and Sex) Education School Policies

From September 2020 there will be a new requirement to teach Relationships Education in every primary school in England (with schools encouraged to teach the subject from September 2019). According to the guidance, “all schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy. Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community they serve.”

Therefore, all parents and carers of primary years children should have the opportunity to engage with the school as they prepare their written policy for the new syllabus. Here is a short checklist to help you understand what might be covered in the policy and what questions you can consider asking.

- Find out when your school will be consulting (and how) on the new written policies it is required to have in place before September 2020 when it becomes required to teach Relationships (and Sex) Education.
 - Find out if your school is planning to use both/either parental surveys or parental meetings as part of the consultation and encourage other parents to participate. [This can include which topics will be covered and in which years.]
- Find out whether your school is planning to teach Sex Education (outside of the national curriculum in Science). Your school is not required to, but the Government does recommend that primary schools teach Sex Education.
 - If your school is electing to teach Sex Education, check that the topics are detailed in the school’s written policy. This Sex Education policy should also state that

parents have a right to withdraw their children from these lessons and the school cannot refuse this.

- [The school may ask you to attend a meeting where they can tell you why they think these lessons are a good idea, but attendance of this meeting cannot be made a requirement of being able to withdraw your child.]

When reviewing the school's proposed Relationships Education policy, you may wish to consider (and ask the school):

- If the school will be using particular pre-packaged curriculum(s) (and if so which).
- If the examples of content the school has included give you a good idea of what will actually be taught. You can ask for examples of content around particular topics given their sensitivity (but the school doesn't have to agree to make these available). This could include:
 - How the school proposes to teach about different types of family and which different types of family (for example, adoptive, grandparents, single parents, same-sex couples) it will be teaching about and at what ages.
 - What it will be teaching about boys and girls and male and female.
- Whether the school considers it appropriate to teach about LGBT topics and at what age? (Schools are not required to teach LGBT content in primary as part of Relationships (and Sex) Education but they are allowed to.)
 - If the school does elect to cover LGBT topics, ask what content this entails, and at what age.
 - You could also ask who will be teaching it and whether any external organisations will be involved, and if so, which.
- Find out whether, as required by the RSE guidance, the policy mentions that the religious background of all pupils is taken into account when planning teaching and how specifically the school proposes to do this (for example, parental surveys or internal school checks on the suitability and sensitivity of teaching).
- Find out if the school will use external providers for the delivery of some of these lessons.
 - If it does plan on using external providers, check whether the policy explicitly

states that parents and carers will be notified beforehand about the name of the organisation and the specific content and topic that organisation will be teaching on.

- If it does not mention these specific things, you can ask them to be included. You could possibly suggest something along the lines of:
 - “Regarding the school’s policy about external providers or organisations coming in as part of Relationships and Sex Education, I think it would be helpful if the policy noted that the school would notify parents ahead of time about which organisation and what content external providers might be teaching. This way we can better help complement the teaching my child is receiving at school.”
- If the school is an independent, academy or free school (which are not required to follow the national curriculum) check at what stage the following issues covered in the national science curriculum are covered by the school (note: content in brackets when these topics are covered in the national curriculum).
 - Main external parts of the body (you can clarify which parts) [KS 1&2]
 - Changes to human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) [KS 1&2]
 - Reproduction in plants and animals (which can include humans) [KS 1&2]

If you have any concerns about the policy or the school’s answers to your enquiries, you may want to talk with other parents about these concerns and together think about how you can positively respond to the school regarding these issues, including by suggesting alternative options and content. But remember the school is ultimately responsible for the content of its curriculum.