**Resources including support for the Curriculum and More associated with LGBTQI+**

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+ an article entitles ‘Busting the myths about RSE’

# Introduction

**Promoting equality in schools: Equality Monitoring, Setting and Achieving Equality Objectives**

It is vital that school leaders are measuring how well schools are doing with regards to promoting equality, that they are identifying areas of need and then developing strategies in order to take an informed approach to promoting equality and eradicate the barriers, which prevent us from creating inclusive settings where everyone feels safe and able to achieve.

The public sector equality duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) states that:

All schools have a requirement to:

• Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

• Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

• Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

There are two specific duties placed on schools as part of this general duty. They are:

1. To publish information which shows they have due regard for equalities, as defined by the Act
2. To publish at least one equality objective.

Schools are expected to show proportionality in meeting these duties. More is expected from a large school than a small one.

The duties are also flexible, which means that individual schools are able to set their own objectives depending on their own individual context.

Publishing information which shows a due regard for equalities. Schools are expected to publish information every year, which shows that they are paying due regard to their duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This information should be published through the usual channels that the school uses for communicating with the public. For example: the school website, school newsletters and notice boards. Collecting this information is not only a way to demonstrate that the school takes equality seriously, but is also vital in order to be able to identify areas that the school is doing well and to identify areas for improvement, which will be used as evidence when setting equality objectives.

**Gender Equality**

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| **Outside the Box: promoting gender equality and tackling sexual harassment in schools**  A resource for those working with CYP of all ages, supporting them to promote gender equality throughout their settings and tackle sexism and sexual harassment.  [Outside the Box: Promoting Gender Equality & Tackling Sexual Harassment in Schools - EqualiTeach](https://equaliteach.co.uk/education/classroom-resources/outside-the-box/) |

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| **LGBT- inclusive RSHE: a guide for schools**  A guide from Stonewall to help primary and secondary schools deliver LGBT- inclusive RSHE lessons  [LGBT-inclusive RSHE: Putting it into Practice (stonewall.org.uk)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/lgbtq-inclusive-rshe-putting-it-practice-guide) |

**Supporting LGBTQI+ children and young people**

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| **Gender Identity**  Advice to help you understand what gender identity is and how to support a child  [Gender identity | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/gender-identity/) |

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| **An introduction to supporting LGBTQI+ children and young people**  A detailed guide for schools and colleges on supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people to thrive in education  [final\_-\_an\_intro\_to\_supporting\_lgbt\_young\_people\_-\_april2022.pdf (stonewall.org.uk)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/final_-_an_intro_to_supporting_lgbt_young_people_-_april2022.pdf) |

**LGBTQI+ Mental Health**

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| Following survey of and workshops with LGBTQI+ young people, the Anna Freud Centre has created a free resource to support LGBTQI+ young people’s mental health.  [LGBTQI+ mental health (annafreud.org)](https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/lgbtqi-mental-health/) |

**Relationships**

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| **It’s not okay lesson plans: positive relationships – Secondary**  These lesson plans encourage young people to explore the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, using videos from the NSPCC.  [It’s not okay lesson plans: positive relationships : Mentally Healthy Schools](https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/it-s-not-okay-lesson-plans-positive-relationships/) |

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| **Coercive Control lesson Plan- Secondary**  This lesson from BBC Teach is designed for use with students over 15, and explores the topics of coercive and controlling relationships  [Is this coercive control? - BBC Teach](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/is-this-coercive-control/z2bbsk7) |

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| **RespectMeans Lesson Plan- Primary**  This lesson plan explores respectful behaviour and how respectful relationships can prevent bullying.  [Learning\_Resource-respectmeans.pdf](https://respectme.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Learning_Resource-respectmeans.pdf) |

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| **Supporting children in making positive relationships matter- Primary**  [primary\_agenda\_en.pdf](https://agenda.wales/agenda_0319/primary_agenda_en.pdf) |

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| **brook: How to deliver RSE**  brook RSR lesson example: group agreement  <https://mcusercontent.com/38b7f9ecb5927031865d12bd0/files/5a4885b4-b7a6-22b2-c973-67602c8539ff/RSE_Group_Agreement.01.pdf> |

**Bullying**

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| **Getting started toolkit: tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools**  A toolkit from Stonewall for preventing and tackling homophobic bullying in primary schools  [Getting Started Toolkit (Primary Schools) (stonewall.org.uk)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/getting-started-toolkit-primary-schools) |

**Antiracism**

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| **Antiracism Resource**  **Identity, society and equality lesson plans- primary**  A series of lesson plans for Years 1,3, 4 and 6 covering topics including celebrating difference, stereotypes, discrimination and human rights.  [Anti-Racism Resources | School Wellbeing](https://www.schoolwellbeing.co.uk/pages/anti-racism-resources) |

**Support for Young People**

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| **Support for Young People from Childline**   * Childline 1-2-2 chat for young people to speal to a Childline counsellor online * Message boards- support from other people with similar experiences * Gender identity- advice for young people on gender identity and dysphoria * Coming out- support to help young people coming out * Homophobic and transphobic bullying- support if a child’s experiencing bullying because of your gender identity * Ask Sam- Young people can ask Sam about anything that’s on their mind   [Childline | Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/) |

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| **brook**  Free & confidential sexual health & wellbeing experts  [Sexuality: What’s Your Sexual Preferences? – Brook](https://www.brook.org.uk/topics/sexuality/)  [Coming Out: Am I Gay / Trans (LGBT+ Identity) – Brook](https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/coming-out/) |

**Busting the myths about RSE**

**In 2017 RSHE was made mandatory with overwhelming cross party support. The statutory guidance was informed by research evidence and shaped by extensive consultation with expert groups and was supported by 538 MPs and organisations across the youth, health and education sectors. In contrast, the conversation around RSHE in 2023 has been dominated by myths and misinformation, often from a small but vocal group of people who oppose many aspects of RSE, especially LGBT+ inclusive RSE. Some commentators have repeatedly claimed that the RSE being taught to our children is ‘taking away their innocence’ and is harmful. But is there any truth to these claims?**

**MYTH 1: RSE spoils children’s innocence**  
**FACT:**A well-planned RSE curriculum is a protective tool for children’s safety. Knowing which parts of the body are private, understanding the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, including online, and having the confidence to ask for help are essential to give every child the power to recognize abusive or harmful behaviour and to be heard. Sadly, children who are ignorant about things like correct terms for body parts and rules about touch are especially vulnerable and can even be targeted by abusers. Because RSHE is now mandatory, hundreds of thousands of children are now learning that ‘my body is my own’, and will be better placed to call out abuse and get help fast.

**MYTH 2: RSE provides too much information too soon**  
**FACT**: Children and young people routinely report their RSE lessons as being ‘too little, too late’ this includes not learning about puberty until after the onset of menstruation amongst some primary age children; in secondary school not learning about safer sex and healthy romantic relationships until after many of their year group have become sexually active; or not having an opportunity to share their concerns about pornography until years after they have been exposed to it.

A good quality RSE curriculum should provide information that is timely and prepares young people in advance for future challenges; is responsive to young people’s questions, but is developmentally appropriate and takes account of the diverse experience and understanding within a year group. There is no evidence that RSE encourages young people to become sexually active. The evidence tells us that RSE helps delay onset of sexual activity, reduce the age-gap between partners at first sex and increase the likelihood of safer sex practices.

**MYTH 3: RSE lessons introduce children to the idea of being LGBT+**  
**FACT:** We are all living in a society that includes LGBT+ people and enshrines their equality in law. RSE lessons should be inclusive of all protected characteristics, and reflect the anti-discriminatory ethos and equalities duties expected of every school.   
It is not possible to teach a child to be LGBT+ but it is possible to ensure that every child feels that their family is respected and to learn about families that are different to their own.

To keep children safe it is necessary that children learn that sexist, homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic discrimination and bullying are wrong. Young people nationwide expect RSHE which recognises LGBT+ people in our communities and is inclusive of and relevant to LGBT+ young people in schools. 

**MYTH 4: External organisations are controlling what is taught in RSE lessons at school**  
**FACT**: When planning their RSHE curriculum teachers can draw on a wide range of resources and expert organisations to support their RSHE planning and teaching. Sex Education Forum guidance sets out that schools need a clear process for choosing to use external visitors e.g. how the external input will add value to their curriculum, whether their work draws on reliable sources of information and the robustness of their safeguarding practice. Teachers who are trained and confident rely less on external visitors and have more capacity to select the most appropriate resources or organisations to complement their work.Young people often appreciate having some lessons delivered by outsiders who offer a different style of teaching, may bring specific subject knowledge that teachers lack, or connection to local young people’s services. However, they also want their teachers to be trained, confident and less embarrassed to teach RSHE.

**MYTH 5: What is being taught in RSE lessons is being hidden from parents**  
**FACT:** The RSHE guidance requires schools to share their RSE policy and curriculum information with parents and carers. As a result there have been thousands of communications about RSE shared with families since 2019. Most parents and carers understand that no two RSE lessons will be identical, as children will ask different questions and will have different levels of knowledge before the lesson begins. However, they are reassured when they understand the overall plan for the curriculum, and when to expect RSE lessons to take place. This involvement needs to continue, in part because it helps parents  take a greater role in providing RSE at home too. Parents are largely supportive of RSE and want schools to address the complex issues facing their children and young people.

**MYTH 6: Teachers are imposing their own beliefs through RSE**  
FACT: All teachers must comply with the Teachers Standards, which are a strict set of rules about how teachers’ must behave throughout school life. Because RSHE became mandatory without an adequate training programme to upskill teachers, many teachers report that they lack confidence with areas of RSE. There are other subjects on the curriculum, like religious education, in which pupils learn about a range of beliefs and perspectives, with teachers skillfully facilitating discussion and not imposing their own views.  The same high expectations around teacher competency and skills will lead to better quality and consistency in RSE.

**MYTH 7: Parents are the most reliable source of RSHE for their children**  
FACT: Most parents and carers want to be a key source of RSHE information for their children alongside schools. However, in reality around 1 in 4 young people report that they received no RSE from their parents at all. Often, young people say that they would like their parents to be more involved in their RSE than they are in reality. Families can help to embed key values that will support their children to have healthy relationships throughout their lives, for example:  kindness, self respect, responsibility, sharing, helping others and more. When school and home work together to provide RSE the benefits for children and young people are greatest. Much abuse takes place within the family home so we cannot assume that it is always a safe place to ask questions relating to sex or sexuality; or that we can rely on all parents to support their children with vital RSHE education.

**MYTH 8: Relationships and Sex Education should be a major cause of concern**  
FACT: despite worrying reports there is no evidence that there is a widespread problem with RSE.  Recent adverse reports have sometimes been found to be exaggerated or even invented. Where there are problems they are largely attributable to the inexperience of untrained teachers not to any malicious intent.    
There is no room for complacency. There has been scant investment in training or support for teachers; and the delayed roll out of RSHE as a mandatory topic due to Covid has resulted in slower progress than hoped. However we are seeing schools striving for improvement, and pockets of excellent practice.

The only way to ensure consistent, high quality delivery of RSHE will be to invest in initial teacher training and continuing professional development, and to treat RSHE as the complex and specialist subject it is.

**MYTH 9: The RSHE guidance is not fit for purpose**  
FACT: The 2019 RSHE guidance (updated 2020) was informed by research evidence and shaped by a robust process of consultation with expert organisations across health, education, safeguarding and faith communities. The vast majority of MPs voted for the guidance and it was supported by a huge consensus of organisations across children and young people’s sectors. To date the implementation and roll out of statutory RSHE (delayed by Covid) has not been evaluated. Research commissioned by the DfE to support teaching about sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools is still to be published. We do have feedback from a poll of 1000 young people (SEF, 2023) that some of the mandatory RSHE topics are not yet being taught, so there is clearly further to go to see through the implementation.    
  
Most schools find the guidance to be a useful basis for planning RSHE, and find it gives flexibility to shape their curriculum to the needs of their students. The plan was always to update the guidance every few years and this review is a welcome opportunity to make some improvements that build on the existing framework. Any improvements to the RSHE guidance should be made through consultation with teachers, children and young people.  
Further information

* This myth buster was developed by Sex Education Forum in collaboration with Brook.
* ['RSE - the evidenc](https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/evidence/relationships-and-sex-education-evidence)e' (Sex Education Forum, 2022) provides an accessible summary of the research evidence on RSE
* For more support with delivering high quality RSE and involving parents, carers and the wider school community explore our [training calendar](https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/training-and-consultancy/calendar) and [become a member](https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/membership).

https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/busting-myths-about-rse