

**Briefing notes on responding to the
Department of Education consultation on:
“Changes to the teaching of
Sex and Relationship Education and PSHE”**

- **The Children and Social Work Act 2017 made Relationship Education a compulsory school subject in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education a compulsory subject in all secondary schools. This legislation applies to England only.**
- **On 19 December 2017 the Government launched a consultation on what should be taught in these new compulsory subjects.**
- **All concerned citizens, and especially parents, grandparents and those working professionally in schools are encouraged to take part in this consultation.**
- **This consultation closes at 11.45 pm on 12 February 2018.**

What is included in this briefing:

- How to make your submission
- A summary of the new legislation
- Why it's important to participate in this consultation
- A note on religious faith
- A note on answering the questions
- The seven consultation questions with suggested points to make in your responses to the government
- A sheet with the consultation questions and spaces for you to write in your responses and submit by post



Society for the Protection of Unborn Children
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How to make your submission:

- Online at: www.education.gov.uk/consultations (Note: this is the preferred method to respond.)
- By email to PSHE-RSE.consultation@education.gov.uk
- By post to: RSE and PHSE Team, Department for education, Sanctuary Buildings, 2nd Floor, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT (Note: please only use email or post if you have difficulty accessing the consultation online.)

This consultation closes at 11.45 pm on 12 February 2018

A summary of the new legislation

- Relationships Education is now compulsory in all primary schools, including faith schools, free schools, independent schools and academies. Parents may not withdraw their children from these lessons.
- Sex education in primary schools remains non-compulsory, so that parents may withdraw their children from these lessons. However, there is no safeguard against sexual content being transferred to the compulsory Relationships and Sex Education lessons, in much the same way as explicitly sexual materials are often used in primary school science lessons, even though the science curriculum does not require this.
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) has been made compulsory in all secondary schools. The Government claims it is committed to retaining the parental right of withdrawal from 'sex education' within RSE. However, it has also stated that it intends to make a decision on the age at which children have the right to make their own decisions on attendance at sex education — effectively allowing children to override their parents' wishes.

Note: A fundamental concern about making Relationships and Sex Education compulsory, is that the government is now the lead educator in a child's social, moral and sexual development. Many parents will of course continue to engage with their children on these sensitive aspects of their child's growth to maturity. But parents are now denied the freedom to introduce these topics at the time and in the manner they feel is best for their child. Sir Edward Leigh MP said in the House of Commons that many would see these new compulsory school subjects as "a state takeover bid for parenting".

Why it's important to participate in this consultation

This consultation is an opportunity to set out a positive vision of how children could be taught about relationships and sexual matters in school. While these sensitive topics should not be compulsory school subjects at all, now that schools are compelled to teach these on the same basis as any other curriculum subject, this consultation is at least a chance to shape what is taught for the better.

A note on religious faith:

If you have a religious faith, please give your answers in line with your beliefs, since the Government has stated that it is also interested to know how this new subject can be accommodated into a faith context.

A note on answering the questions:

1. Please see the following table with reference to Key stages and the ages of pupils:

Age	5-7	7-11	11-14	14-16	16-18
Key Stages	1	2	3	4	5

2. Where you see the term 'considerations and evidence' in questions you may simply give your reasons for the points you make. If you have any specialist knowledge or information e.g. references to studies or statistics, you can include those.
3. We have offered suggestions for responding to the questions, but it is best if you can include your own ideas and experiences in your responses. We have suggested broad subject areas which we feel should be prioritised, with some examples of what could be covered. Please include your own thoughts and ideas wherever possible.
4. Each response must not be any longer than **250 words**.

Question 1. Thinking about relationships education in primary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught for different age groups/key stages and why. Please include any considerations or evidence which informed your choices.

Special note on Relationships Education: The rationale behind this new compulsory subject is to introduce children at the earliest possible age to the idea of diversity of relationships. Indeed, the Government has stated clearly that the new subject will be LGBT inclusive. Very young children will be told that two men or two women in a relationship or marriage is as valid and natural as a man and a woman. The promotion of same-sex relationships opens up the scope to introduce gender issues, with children encouraged to question their gender and the very idea of there being two distinct sexes.

There is already a plethora of young children's story books, resources and teaching programmes to enable teachers to deliver this content.

A further aspect of this new subject is the emphasis on keeping children safe from sexual abuse. Many schools already invite groups such as the NSPCC to give classes or assemblies on staying safe from sexual abuse. But talking to children about staying safe from sexual abuse is not the same as talking about matters like road safety. However child-friendly the approach may be, there are risks attached to introducing the subject of child sexual abuse to young children. A child's sexual innocence may be disturbed or children may worry unduly that they might be victims of abuse. Children may become suspicious of normal interaction with their parents. A very worrying aspect of class lessons on children's sexual safety is that children are encouraged to by-pass their parents and to contact organisations like Childline or confide in an adult other than their parents on any issues that concerns them. The overwhelming majority of children are not being abused and classroom discussions on sex abuse can undermine the relationship between children and their parents.

Suggested priority subject areas

1. Basic social skills which support parental teaching and discipline, such as:
 - Kindness towards friends
 - Telling the truth
 - Respectful behaviour towards parents, teachers and others in authority
2. Value of human life
 - Every child is special to their mother and father, who are the most important people in their lives
 - No child's life is a mistake
 - Every child has a purpose or vocation in life
 - Some children have special needs and are equally valued
 - Everyone's body is precious and to be protected, with an emphasis on the home as the primary place where children learn to look after their bodies.
3. Value of family
 - The importance and value of marriage between a man and a woman and the natural family
 - The different gifts and talents that men and women can bring to marriage and the family
 - Age-appropriate presentation of the uniqueness of the sexes and how they complement each other
 - The courtesies and respect due to each of the sexes (for example, men taking on harder physical tasks etc.)

Question 2. Thinking about relationships and sex education in secondary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught for different age groups/key stages and why. Please include any considerations or evidence which informed your choices.

Special note on Relationships and Sex Education: As with primary schools, the LGBT agenda is being promoted in Secondary schools, especially as part of anti-bullying programmes and initiatives. However, in secondary schools, this agenda is more aggressive and explicit.

Stonewall, a homosexual pressure group, has a wide outreach to schools, including faith schools.

Secondary schools are becoming increasingly sexualised and this is likely to get worse now Relationships and Sex Education is a compulsory subject.

Suggested priority subject areas

1. The purpose and nature of male and female sexuality in relation to natural marriage
 - The uniqueness and complementary nature of the sexes.
 - The benefits of saving sex for the right person in marriage.
 - The gift of new life.
 - The importance of natural marriage for raising and nurturing children.
2. The dangers of abusing sexuality
 - The mental and physical health risks of promiscuity and homosexual practices.
 - The long-term consequences of relationship decisions.

3. Natural marriage as the fundamental building block of society

- The positive benefits to individuals and to society of natural families.

Question 3. Are there important aspects of ensuring safe online relationships that would not otherwise be covered in wider Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, or as part of the computing curriculum?

Special note: The emergence of new digital sexual threats since the last Government guidelines on sex education in 2000, has been one of the main justifications for making RSE compulsory in all schools. Whilst it is right that we are all concerned about online dangers, a major concern is that parents are not seen as at all relevant to the safeguarding process. Indeed, the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, in her 2017 report, *Growing Up Digital*, stated that "parents are always going to be on the back foot, which is why we need to take greater action to shift the balance of power towards children".

Many schools are tackling issues such as pornography, but many parents will not be aware of exactly how this topic is presented. Pupils do not necessarily get strong messages that pornography is dangerous and damaging. Instead, the widely accepted approach is to be non-judgmental and simply to encourage children to be more critically discerning and self-aware consumers of pornography. In other words, school children are told pornography is fine as long as you don't confuse it with real life. For example, a resource for a lesson on pornography is the card game "Planet Porn" where pupils decide whether images come from planet porn or the real world. Playing a game is not an appropriate way to protect children from the scourge of pornography.

Approaches to ensure safe online relationships

1. Schools working with parents to safeguard children from online threats

- Parents are best placed to monitor and control their child's use of the internet, especially mobile phones, in order to ensure online safety.
- Schools can advise and work with parents on strategies to keep internet use safe and to an acceptable level, for example via workshops and other initiatives.
- Parents running workshops to help other parents tackle these issues.

2. Setting digital sexual threats within the context of the true meaning of human sexuality

- Children and young people will only be equipped to resist and avoid online threats if they have a proper understanding of the purpose and nature of human sexuality. Only then will they see how the abuse of sexuality is destructive.
- Leaving digital sexual threats in the non-judgemental vacuum proposed by the sex education lobby, offers no real guidance or boundaries for children and young people
- School pupils need guidance to navigate the moral challenges of the world they are growing up in and, in most cases, parents are the best guides for their own children.

Question 4. How should schools effectively consult parents so they can make informed decisions that meet the needs of their child, including on the right to withdraw? For example, how often, on what issues and by what means?

- It is essential that parents are consulted firstly on the school's policy on Relationships and Sex Education. Schools should make it possible for all parents, who wish to do so, to give their input.

Parents should also be consulted with regard to the finalised policy, which, thereafter, should be easily available online for all parents to view. For instance, panels involving parents, teachers and governors are one way of facilitating this.

- Parents should be fully involved when decisions are made about which teaching resources are to be used.
- Parents should be the ones to determine what is age-appropriate regarding teaching materials. Many sex education resources aimed at primary school children contain sexually explicit content which most parents would not use when talking about this topic to their children.
- Where parents want to withdraw their child from sex education, the school should have a clear, easily accessible system for achieving this.
- Regarding Relationships and Sex Education, parents should have full disclosure of what is going to be taught.
- Parents must be able to determine which aspects of relationships education they consider are sexual and from which they should be able to withdraw their child.
- Parents should also be consulted about the way in which human relationships are presented in the classroom. Teaching children about subjects such as same-sex relationships and transgenderism are inherently sexual and therefore the parental right to withdraw must be respected and applied in such cases.

Question 5. Thinking about PSHE in primary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught and why? Please include your reasons for choosing each subject area or evidence to support your suggestions.

Question 6. Thinking about PSHE in secondary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught and why?

Special note: PSHE stands for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education. Until now topics have typically included, for instance: alcohol, smoking and drugs, personal health, bullying, citizenship, democracy and human rights, careers and the world of work, personal finance, family and relationships, sex education. The last two topics now constitute the new compulsory subjects.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 did not automatically make PSHE a compulsory subject, but instead gives the decision on whether or not it should be compulsory to the Secretary of State for Education, stipulating only that this will be after consultation with 'such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate'.

We expected that a question on whether PSHE should be compulsory would be included in this consultation. But there is no such question. The questions are about the content of PSHE.

The concern about the topics included in PSHE is that seemingly sensible subjects like citizenship or combatting bullying have been hijacked to promote homosexuality and transgenderism. This is particularly the case because of the obligation on schools to promote so-called Fundamental British Values, which include a distorted notion of 'tolerance' with regard to homosexual behaviour. This is exacerbated by the 2010 Equality Act, in which schools and other public institutions must take 'positive action' on 'discrimination' against people with 'protected characteristics' which include 'sexual orientation', 'gender reassignment' and 'marriage and civil partnership' (which now includes same-sex marriages).

We suggest that you offer your own ideas about what kind of topics you think would best prepare children for life in the adult world eg. practical advice on financial planning, health and safety, etc. In particular, we suggest that you propose topics which do not subject young people to ideological indoctrination.

Question 7. How much flexibility do you think schools should have to meet the needs of individual pupils and to reflect the diversity of local communities and wider society in the content of PSHE lessons in schools?

Special Note: This question is really about encouraging schools to promote the LGBT agenda within PSHE lessons. A typical situation would be the presence of one pupil questioning his or her 'gender' or declaring his or her 'sexual orientation' giving rise to the promotion of these issues to the whole class. While it is important that any young person facing difficulties with such personal matters should be properly cared for, we should question whether the correct pastoral care for such a person is to affirm and encourage harmful lifestyle choices. This can be troubling and potentially harmful for other young people in the class.

Schools should not be able to use PSHE lessons to:

- Undermine the faith values of students and their families
- Promote diverse sexual orientations
- Denigrate natural marriage
- Encourage children and teenagers to question their sexuality or gender
- Present sexually provocative materials in the classroom

Schools should have the flexibility and scope to teach PSHE in line with their ethos and, in the case of faith schools, according to the tenets of their religion. Headteachers should not be put under pressure to deliver content at odds with the school's values and which many parents would find objectionable.

If have any queries or would like any further information, please contact Antonia Tully on 020 8407 3463 or email Tom Rogers at education@spuc.org.uk

11 January 2018

**Submission to the Department of Education consultation on
“Changes to the teaching of Sex and Relationship Education and PSHE”**

Your name and address:

Question 1. Thinking about relationships education in primary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught for different age groups/key stages and why. Please include any considerations or evidence which informed your choices.

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Please post your submission to: RSE and PHSE Team, Department for education, Sanctuary Buildings, 2nd Floor, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

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