



**School leaders’
Parliamentary briefing on
Relationships Education,
Relationships and Sex
Education (RSE) and
Health Education
Tuesday 11 June 2019**

#equalitiesineducation

Introduction

Paul Whiteman General secretary NAHT



Over the past few months, a small number of schools have found themselves at the centre of high-profile protests against the teaching of equality and diversity.

LGBT+ inclusion has been the focus of these protests.

Protesters have argued that this learning should not happen in primary schools and parents should be able to withdraw their children from it. The secretary of state, the Head of Birmingham City Council, the head of the police in Birmingham, and now the schools minister, have all backed NAHT's calls for these protests to stop.

The truth is, without meaning to, the government has put school leaders in an extremely difficult position. They and their staff have had to endure threats against their careers and their personal safety.

The government is encouraging schools to adopt the new regulations on Relationships Education from September 2019, but I have concerns that some will think twice about doing this unless the government issues immediate, clear and public assurances in three key areas.

To start, the government must make it clear that Relationships Education in primary schools must be inclusive of all protected characteristics and treat the different types of relationships in our society equally, reflecting their equal status under the law and so promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

Following on from this, we need a clear message that Relationships Education in all schools will include LGBT content as set out in the statutory guidance that has already been published.

In addition to that guidance, the DfE has said: "Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so", which is not helpful to school leaders. NAHT believes the correct wording should be: "Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content when they consider it age appropriate to do so".

Finally, school leaders and their teams should receive the full support of the government and the full protection of the relevant authorities when delivering Relationships Education and fulfilling their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

We are calling on MPs to support the teaching of equalities and ask the government to provide the clarity and assurances school leaders so desperately need.

Contents

> Policy update from NAHT

> What needs to happen next?

> Contributions

> Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson

Head teacher, Anderton Park Primary School, Birmingham

> Hazel Pulley

Chief executive officer, Excelsior MAT, Birmingham

> Nazir Afzal

Former chief prosecutor in the North West, CPS

> Andrew Moffat

Assistant head teacher, Parkfield Primary School, Birmingham

> Simon Kidwell

Head teacher, Hartford Manor Primary School, Northwich

> Rob Partington

Head teacher, New Moston Primary School, Manchester

> Steve Edmonds

Director of advice and guidance, National Governance Association

> Jonathan Baggaley

Chief executive, PSHE Association

> DfE FAQs on Relationships Education

> Additional document: DfE draft statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (February 2019)

> Contacts

Policy update

The Equality Act and Relationships Education in primary schools NAHT policy team May 2019

What is the issue?

Primary school leaders in some areas of the country have been the targets of campaigning, protests and abuse relating to their commitment to equality and diversity. LGBT+ inclusion has been the focus of these protests.

Protesters have argued that this learning should not happen in primary schools and parents should be able to withdraw their children from it.

Are these protestors right?

No – the parental right to withdraw is from sex education only. The learning which has been taking place relating to equality and diversity in affected schools has not been part of a sex education curriculum.

Schools have the responsibility to determine what their pupils need to be taught about equality and diversity in the important context of other requirements, such as British Values, SMSC and their duties under the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This is part of a whole-school approach in most schools and a strong part of their ethos. It involves learning about equality, diversity, British laws and society, tolerance and respect. It should involve children learning about the community and world they live in, in an age-appropriate way.

What are schools' responsibilities under the Equality Act?

The Equality Act 2010 and Schools provides non-statutory advice from the Department for Education to help schools to understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act.

Of particular relevance is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that applies to maintained schools and academies and extends to all of the protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity,

gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership.

As part of this duty, schools have a responsibility to consider the need to foster good relations across all characteristics. Promoting good relations between people and groups of all kinds is inherent in many things which schools do through, for example, aspects of the curriculum which promote tolerance and friendship or through assemblies dealing with relevant issues.

Importantly, the Equality Act states that the content of the school curriculum is excluded from discrimination law. The guidance states that excluding the content of the curriculum ensures schools are free to include a full range of issues and ideas, however challenging or controversial, without fear of legal challenge based on a protected characteristic. But schools do need to ensure that the way in which issues are taught does not subject individual pupils to discrimination.

How does schools' responsibility to promote SMSC and British values support this learning?

The DfE published **Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools** in 2014. This non-statutory advice states:

“It is expected that pupils should understand that while different people may hold different views about what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, all people living in England are subject to its law. The school’s ethos and teaching, which schools should make parents aware of, should support the rule of English civil and criminal law and schools should not teach anything that undermines it. If schools teach about religious law, particular care should be taken to explore the relationship between state and religious law. Pupils should be made aware of the difference between the law of the land and religious law.”

Can parents withdraw their children from this learning?

These elements of learning are not part of sex education. There is, therefore, no parental right to withdraw as such; a right only applies to sex education, religious education and collective worship.

How is Relationships Education different?

Relationships and Health Education will become compulsory for all primary children from 2020, although early adopter schools, and other schools who choose to do so, will start teaching from September 2019. The DfE’s **Teacher Voice Omnibus survey** data suggests that Relationships Education is already taught through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in at least 85% of schools and NAHT supports this approach. The new guidance makes clear the distinction between “relationships” and “sex” education which will help primary schools in their delivery of appropriate Relationships Education to all pupils.

The new statutory guidance outlines content for primary schools. The draft guidance covers “Families and people who care for me”, “Caring friendships” and “Respectful relationships”.

Once schools are using the new statutory guidance, the content is clearly set out by the DfE, and schools have a responsibility to deliver it.

Can parents withdraw their children from Relationships Education?

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education.

Will the new Relationships Education be LGBT+ inclusive?

The draft statutory guidance states that in teaching Relationships Education, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

It goes on to say that schools should ensure all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT relationships, they should ensure this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

NAHT has sought further clarity on the situation for primary schools. In Damian Hinds’s letter to Paul Whiteman, he states:

“We have been clear that pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years - we expect secondary schools to include LGBT content. Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so.”

So how can primary schools decide what content is age-appropriate?

The outcomes for Relationships Education contained in the new statutory guidance are expressed as “by the end of primary school pupils should know...”. They are not allocated to a particular key stage or year group. Therefore, schools can decide what is appropriate for each key stage and year group in their school.

The DfE does signpost suggested resources in Annex B of the statutory guidance including those from the PSHE Association, Stonewall, NSPCC PANTS and the Catholic Education Service. These organisations have particular expertise and experience and so their resources can help schools in planning a curriculum which is age appropriate.

The DfE regularly signposts to the PSHE Association, the national body for PSHE education, and has funded the Association in recent years to develop guidance for schools on topics such as consent, mental health and character education.

The PSHE Association publishes the programme of study for PSHE Education (key

stages 1-5). This programme is available for schools to follow when planning their PSHE provision and is signposted to by the DfE, in the new statutory guidance on Relationships and Health Education.

This programme includes three core themes – relationships, health and well-being and living in the wider world. At primary level, the relationships theme includes a focus on how to respect equality and diversity in relationships, and there are specific outcomes related to this. The PSHE Association also publishes a PSHE education planning toolkit for key stages 1 and 2 which expands on these learning aims detailing how to address these issues in lessons.

What role do parents play in these decisions about the curriculum content of Relationships Education?

The draft statutory guidance says that all schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering Relationships Education. Schools should ensure parents know what will be taught and when. Most schools have existing mechanisms in place to engage parents and should continue to use these as their means of engaging parents with Relationships Education – there is no requirement that this should involve additional mechanisms.

NAHT has sought clarity from the DfE about the role of parents in deciding curriculum content. Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, wrote in his letter to Paul Whiteman:

“What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school. Central to the government’s entire education policy is trust for professionals - and we trust and support head teachers to make decisions that are in the best interests of their pupils.

I want to reassure you and the members you represent that consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content. We want schools to consult parents, listen to their views, and make reasonable decisions about how to proceed (including through consideration of their wider duties) - and we will support them in this. We trust school leaders and teachers to make the right professional choices and act reasonably when considering consultation feedback and are clear that dedicated public servants faithfully discharging their duty have an absolute right to feel confident and safe.”

What about sex education in primary schools?

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools.

It is for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. However, the Department for Education continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. Where a maintained primary school chooses to teach aspects of sex education (which go beyond the national curriculum for science), the school must set this out in their policy and all schools should consult with parents on what will be covered. Primary

schools that choose to teach sex education must allow parents a right to withdraw their children. Head teachers must comply with a parent's wish to withdraw their child from sex education which goes beyond the national curriculum for science.

What needs to happen next?

NAHT is calling on the government to give absolute clarity on the following:

- Relationships Education in primary schools must be inclusive of all protected characteristics and treat the different types of relationships in our society equally, reflecting their equal status under the law and so promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Relationships Education in all schools will include LGBT content as set out in the statutory guidance that has already been published.
- In addition to this guidance, the DfE has said: "Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so" which is not helpful to school leaders.
- The correct wording should be: "Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content when they consider it age-appropriate to do so."
- School leaders and their teams should receive the full support of the government and the full protection of the relevant authorities when delivering Relationships Education and fulfilling their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

NAHT policy team
May 2019

Contributions

Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson

Head teacher

Anderton Park Primary School, Birmingham

The Equality Act 2010 is a law many countries should envy. But it has become the not-so-equal Equality Act.

How has this happened?

I am reminded of a quote from Pastor Niemöller:

“First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

The Equality Act speaks for us all and yet we see women beaten up on a London bus because they won't perform for a group of school-aged British boys. Actors attacked in Southampton because they are gay.

Homophobia is on the rise despite there being a Public Sector Equality Duty placed on all school staff to promote understanding of all aspects of equality and tackle discrimination. We are clearly failing to do this.

The attackers on the bus and many of the protesters outside my school have been educated in the British education system yet they have a shocking, abhorrent attitude towards LGBTQ people.

Public Sector Equality Duty - is it being implemented or ignored?

I hear, “They don't teach this down the road in my nephew's school“ or “Catholic schools don't teach this“.

How can this be if the PSED applies to all schools?

Damian Hinds says, “I'll leave it up to head teachers“. This fuels inequality, protests, accusations of a 'gay ethos', 'paedophile' and 'hater of Islam'.

How on earth is this allowed to happen, when we have a law, not a new law, but one that's nine years old, that tells us sexual orientation is a protected characteristic? Were the women on the bus protected? If you were a gay teacher in my school, would you feel protected?

Protesters have cited this from the Education Act: ‘Pupils are to be educated in accordance with parents’ wishes.’ It does say that but is qualified with this: ‘... so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training’.
In other words, so long as it works and is lawful.

Parents have been led to believe that they tell schools what to do. This would be educational anarchy. The thin end of a very sinister wedge. ‘Get rid of all books with brown people, Jewish people, women who work, white staff’ How would it end?

The re draft policy 2020 is good and was designed to give all children the same deal, the same high-quality, non-negotiable education.

There are six paragraphs dedicated to the Equality Act. Great.
There is explicit content for primary schools: ‘pupils should know that other families sometimes look different from theirs. Single parent, LGBT...’ Great.
And primary children should know that marriage includes same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Great.

But, there is a whole section dedicated to LGBT relationships. Is there a section about disability? Race? Religion? Age? Does it say, is it ok for people of different religions to be in a relationship? Or different skin colours? Or different ages? Can an able-bodied person be in a relationship with a disabled person? No. None of the protected characteristics are given a mention at all. Singling out one protected characteristic for special consideration is discriminatory.

DfE, this has to change. It’s fuelling homophobia

And then in March 2019, the DfE produced a set of FAQs:

‘Q: Will these subjects promote LGBT relationships?’

A: Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years. We expect secondary schools to include LGBT content and whilst there is no specific requirement to teach about LGBT in primary schools, they can cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so. This would be delivered, for example, through teaching about different types of family, including those with same-sex parents.’

It does not say this in the policy and has, without doubt, fuelled the protests outside my school. I am accused of being a paedophile because we tell children that some people have two mummies. I am accused of sexualising children. The phrase ‘mum and dad’ is never associated with sex. For the protesters, ‘mum and mum’ is only about sex and is seen as a grubby, lesser kind of relationship. Yet in law the relationships are equal.

Educators cannot be subject to months of protests, intimidation, harassment and psychological harm because they use the phrase ‘two mums’. They cannot.

Women beaten up on a bus. Actors beaten up on their way to a theatre in Southampton.

This cannot continue.

I suggest our policy states:

‘We are proud to be a British school. Equality is a non-negotiable for all who live and work in this amazing country. All our schools are proud to live and breathe our Public Sector Equality Duty, laid down in law since 2010. It ensures an unwavering commitment to eliminating discrimination and the promotion of all aspects of equality which help us all flourish. Equality is always age appropriate. Every bit of this law is precious. We leave nothing out.’

DfE: you must address this and urgently. If schools don't educate on this matter, who will?

Hazel Pulley

Chief executive officer

Excelsior Multi Academy Trust, Birmingham

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Excelsior MAT, which includes Parkfield Primary School in Birmingham, there are four areas that I ask for MPs' support to improve:

1. Lack of robust guidance in policy documents for head teachers

There are too many documents, eg the new RSE and health education document, which provide ambiguous ways forward: Page 20 MUST "that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different..." versus on page 15 POSS "At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT...Schools should feel free how to do this ...". A clear way forwards is then often counteracted by the following statement.

2. Lack of overt support from the DfE with respect to the legal position for schools

We have a legal position to raise our pupils' awareness of all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, yet the government does not speak out here to support schools: "The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public servants when making decisions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act..." and for academy schools as Parkfield, too, under the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, ensure that the school actively promotes principles which encourage respect for other people, having particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

3. Lack of stamina by the government to make the debate a national debate, rather push the debate to schools individually

Continual lines in the media from ministers and in letters to myself swing from autonomy for head teachers regarding curriculum to having respect for religions in the community. The challenge is impossible.

4. An expectation that schools will consult with their community, which is a much wider brief than simply the parents of the school

Schools should not be expected to consult with the community, only their parents, as there are possibly too many outside political and agendas being pedalled by agitators, as we are experiencing at Parkfield Community School. As schools, we can not take on the issues in communities that are developing from a lack, of clear and well-supported direction for schools from the government.

Nazir Afzal

Former crown prosecutor, North West CPS

Firstly, my apologies that I cannot join you in person. I'm travelling abroad right now to do some work for the Department for International Development on the rule of law programmes that they have around the world.

Secondly, I want to pay tribute to NAHT for the support it has given the head teachers on this issue, which until recently our leaders, including our parliamentarians, refused to talk about for fear of losing votes.

We have long known there are tensions between protected characteristics under the Equality Act. For example, appointing a black man or a white woman can leave you open to either race or gender discrimination. But we've always found a way. Belief in sexual orientation, however, is a tension that we seem to have the most trouble with. I, however, have never shied away from the things that are most difficult.

Parliament has decided that Relationships Education should be mandatory up to 11 and that sex education should be mandatory beyond. The primary schools in question are doing no more than making children aware that different types of relationships exist and should be respected. Children don't have a problem with that.

Some parents, agitated by non-parents, extremists or politicians, are trying to push back on the respect agenda, and they must be challenged.

I have said the government has been cowardly because they could mandate the correct approach in guidance, taking the heat off the schools. But no, they say: "We don't mandate."

Let me remind you that until 16 years ago, under Section 28, the government did mandate that LGBT education should not be taught. So the principle of mandating can be used to feed homophobia, but not challenge it.

I've seen some agitators deliberately presenting material that they've pulled off the internet as if it's part of the school's teaching. These shameless lies need to be called out.

Parents and schools are having healthy conversations about individual learning plans - when certain books, for example, should be made available to our children. That is only right. We would not give a five-year-old, a maths student, a book on calculus.

So, age-appropriateness is already in play. It's the right approach. The extremists, including politicians, need to get out of the way so that we can continue to educate our children for this century, not the last one.

Andrew Moffat

Creator of the 'No Outsiders' programme

Parkfield Primary School, Birmingham

What is 'No Outsiders'?

A whole-school ethos through which we teach children to recognise and respect difference and diversity. We prepare children for life in modern Britain by talking about the diversity that exists in our community and beyond.

Is there an LGBT focus?

No. There are 35 picture books used in the scheme and four have an LGBT focus. Each book has a lesson plan, the scheme teaches children from four to 11 (five books in each year group, or one book per half term). The aim is to teach children about all aspects of equality and to teach a message of community cohesion so that everyone is welcome.

Is it age appropriate?

Ofsted says it is age appropriate. There are 10 books used for four and five-year-olds. These are all regular picture books to be found in Waterstones, they are:

Book	Focus
You Choose	We all like different things
Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly	We all like different things and we can be friends
Blue Chameleon	You don't have to change to be a friend, you can be you
The Family Book	All families are different
Mommy, Mama and Me	Some families have two mums (then we draw our own families)
Elmer	Be yourself, it's OK to be different
Ten Little Pirates	Boys and girls can play together
My Grandpa is Amazing	People of different age are still welcome
Max and Me	Max wears a hearing aid, uses an inhaler. He is not an outsider.
My World, Your World	Some things about us are the same, some are different

Why use lesson plans?

So teaching is consistent. I believe just having books in the school is not enough; we need to be teaching a consistent ethos where all adults are giving the same message, particularly where issues are potentially controversial. Many of the lesson plans give a basic script for staff to use in the plenary.

Do we consult with parents?

A whole chapter in the No Outsiders guidance is given to parent consultation meetings. My advice is to get in front of potential backlash by holding meetings with parents where all the books are shown before delivering the ethos. At Parkfield, we held 11 parent meetings before starting and since then we have held 28 No Outsiders open lessons where parents joined their children for a No Outsiders class in school.

How can I find out more?

See: www.equalitiesprimary.com which also includes plans for assemblies.

Simon Kidwell

Head teacher

Hartford Manor Primary School, Northwich

Hartford Manor Primary School and Nursery in Northwich, Cheshire, serves a diverse community and has 400 children from a range of different backgrounds that includes Christians, Jehovah Witnesses and a small number from Muslim and Jewish families.

I first came across the work of Andrew Moffat and his “No Outsiders”, two years ago. No Outsiders is essentially about that Great British value: tolerance. At our school, we teach children that tolerance is where we accept people who are different to us and we respect people who disagree with us. Many of those in the school protests in Birmingham could learn a lot from our children.

At the heart of the No Outsiders programme are 35 picture books that teach children about difference. Books like Under the Same Sky and Mommy, Mama and Me teach children about equality in a child-friendly way.

Since we introduced the No Outsiders work, over 60 primary schools in West Cheshire have started the programme and interestingly, none of our schools are facing protests or requests to remove children from lessons.

So why are the protests happening in Birmingham? I have heard some people claim that they must be doing something wrong. This assertion could not be further from the truth. Both Anderton Park and Parkfields are beacons of outstanding practice. Ofsted said this about Anderton Park:

“An outstanding feature of the school is the drive to ensure equality for all. The school challenges stereotypes and strives for community cohesion both inside and out of school.”

Parkfield’s recent Ofsted stated:

“Pupils talk knowledgeably and perceptively about how individuals and groups of people may be different to them in terms of their disability, age, race, religion, belief or no belief, gender, and sexual orientation.”

Both schools have been deliberately targeted by agitators who are not parents at the school.

Threats and protests are growing. I invited Sky News into our school for a day where they filmed lessons and interviewed staff and parents. When the news item was broadcast we received a number of threatening messages and I received a death threat on the school answer phone.

So what can our MPs do?

Firstly, find out what is happening your constituency and ask to visit a school you know well and familiarise yourself with a typical lesson. Sadly, ignorant comments by a small number of MPs on both sides of the house are fuelling the protests and lies.

Secondly, reach out to religious leaders and your constituents to inform them about the law and challenge any misinformation.

And thirdly, we need the guidance from the DfE to be crystal clear. The term “age appropriate” is too vague and open to challenge and interpretation. All of our teaching is age appropriate, for example, we use the book ‘Mommy, Mama and Me’ in the first year of school and we teach our oldest pupils about Alan Turing’s life. We need the full backing from the DfE, backing that unequivocally states that teaching our youngest children that some families have two mums or two dads is age appropriate.

Finally, the protestors are becoming more organised. There is a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to overturn the injunction at Anderton Park, campaigners are reaching out to Christians and different faith groups, and the extremist Muslim group Hizb-ut-Tahrir is visiting mosques across the country delivering lectures and leaflets.

Our school has a number of families with traditional religious beliefs and we teach our youngest children about relationships. Both can coexist harmoniously if we stop extremists spreading lies and targeting school leaders. I look forward to strong and informed political leadership to help resolve the tensions in our schools.

Rob Partington

Head teacher

New Moston Primary School, Manchester

The research

- **70% of LGBT+ people avoided being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of a negative reaction.**
- **40% have experienced an HBT incident by someone they didn't live with in the past 12 months.**

Source: Government Equalities Office – National LGBT Survey – July 2018

- **22% of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people and forty-five per cent of trans young people have tried to take their own life at some point.**
- **61% of LGB young people and 84% of trans young people have deliberately harmed themselves.**

Source: Stonewall School Report – July 2017

Take a moment to think about those statistics and do some very rough maths.

There is a range of evidence out there that can justify between 5% and 10% of the population being LGBT+. Take your average secondary school of about 1,500 students; go a little above the 22% for LGB but well below the 45% of trans young people who have tried to take their own life, and estimate 25% - 1,500 students; 10% of that is 150, 25% of that is 37 of 38.

Worst case is there are approximately 38 students in every secondary school in the country who have tried to take their own life, before the age of 18, because they are LGBT+; best case is 19 students. Do the same for a two-form intake primary of 480 children and the figure is 6 to 12 children, in every primary school in the country. There are over 23,000 schools in England. This is an epidemic.

Why is this the case? Why are children trying to kill themselves in mass numbers?

We live in a hetero-normative, cis-normative society, ie it is normal to be heterosexual and cis-gendered. That is never going to change, due to the majority of people being heterosexual and cis-gendered. But if the 5%-10% never learn about people like themselves, when they come to realise that they don't fit in with what society expects of them, which is usually around adolescence, when they have all sorts of other pressures to deal with at the same time, it is going to have a massive impact on their mental health, leading to a range of issues that could ultimately end up with a young person trying to take their own life. The answer is simple, teach children from a young age, in an age-appropriate manner about LGBT+ people, so when they begin to realise that they might be LGBT+ they don't feel abnormal and ashamed. Let them know that there are a lot of LGBT+ people who are happy and successful and that they can be also.

I believe every school in the country is doing its best to eradicate other forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and ableism. My question to schools when I go and train staff is, what do you do to combat racism? Do you have a range of different types of people portrayed in books and on displays? Do you look at different role models like Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks? Do you use names from a range of cultures and backgrounds when giving examples? Do you ensure that any racist behaviour or language is tackled? Now, do you do the same for LGBT? Are different families represented? Do you look at role models like Alan Turing?

If the answer is yes, then great, if the answer is no, then start doing it.

This is not just about LGBT+ young people. If our children grow up and do something racist, it's a hate crime. If they grow up and do something homophobic, it's a hate crime. If we do not teach about LGBT+ inclusion, we are failing all our pupils, LGBT+ and non-LGBT+, and the consequences of that are horrific.

Steve Edmonds

Director of advice and guidance

National Governance Association (NGA)

NGA is a national membership organisation for state-funded school governors and trustees with a charitable objective that supports the development and well-being of children and young people through promoting outstanding governance.

We are an organisation which lives by its values and champions fairness and opportunity for all young people. Our values stand for the rights of all children, celebrate diversity and difference as a strength. We believe that democracy, equality and the rule of law are central to the school's ethos and that all groups protected by the Equality Act must be respected.

It has been as distressing to witness the targeting by extreme fringe groups of children, parents and staff at schools that are doing no more than their public duty to tackle prejudice and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who don't. NGA utterly condemns this behaviour and anyone who seeks to undermine a school's relationship with its community.

School governors and trustees are an important part of the civil fabric of our country and ensuring the voices of the school's stakeholders are heard is a fundamental part of school governance. Often this is in danger of getting lost under the huge workload of compliance. It should come as no surprise therefore that NGA supports the requirement upon schools to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for RSE. However, we also recognise the challenge some schools have consulting with parents because of totally unrealistic expectations, divisive rhetoric and deliberate misrepresentation.

There is no easy way of meeting this challenge and addressing those complex issues that invoke religious and cultural beliefs. It would be disappointing though if governors and trustees were deterred from leading the way in engaging stakeholders by allowing concerns to be shared and ways forward to be established in a climate of mutual respect and tolerance.

It's frustrating that the legal obligation upon schools to tackle prejudice has been hamstrung by government guidance that is too vague and, in some cases, has made governing boards and school leaders fearful of meeting their moral responsibility because of the potential implications. We hope the department will look at again at this guidance and support schools to teach their pupils about the diversity of modern life in Britain without fear of a backlash.

NGA would welcome the opportunity to work with partners and stakeholders over how we best support those who govern to ensure that the content of RSE at their schools is fully inclusive.

Jonathan Baggaley

Chief executive

PSHE Association

- Relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education are part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.
- PSHE education is an established curriculum subject and most schools have been delivering a PSHE programme for years. A 2018 Teacher Voice Omnibus survey suggested that PSHE is taught in 93% of schools, despite being non-statutory.
- Relationships and health and well-being are two of the three core themes of the PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education (KS 1-5). Therefore, teaching about health and relationships is nothing new for schools.
- Neither is the content included in the new statutory Relationships Education, RSE and health education guidance – which the PSHE Association has mapped against the PSHE programme of study.
- However, while most schools teach PSHE – it has often suffered from inconsistency of quality or squeezed curriculum time. Its non-statutory status has led to it being in a precarious position, despite high-quality PSHE being overwhelmingly popular with school leaders, teachers, parents and pupils.
- Therefore, the main potential of making health and relationships education (RSE in secondary) statutory, is the chance to ensure consistency of high-quality PSHE provision in all schools, for all pupils. And most importantly the chance to ensure safe, effective delivery in all cases.
- It is about a levelling up of standards so that all schools can deliver what the best schools already do. In a lot of cases, it is about building on what schools are already doing well.
- This also means that schools will already have been engaging with parents – through parental meetings, letters, website information etc – so they have existing, successful mechanisms that they can continue to use when communicating about Relationships Education requirements.
- The PSHE Association is supporting members with best-practice advice on how to engage with parents, and the NAHT's recent statements and policy briefings will prove invaluable to schools.

i https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687010/Teacher_Voice_report_Summer_2017.pdf

ii <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/news/updated-programme-study-pshe-education-key-stages>

iii <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/mapping-pshe-association-programme-study-new>

DfE's FAQs on Relationships Education

Information from the DfE about the introduction of compulsory Relationships Education and RSE from September 2020

Source DfE website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

Q: Will my child's school have to consult with me before teaching these subjects?

A: Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. Effective consultation gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parents' views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

A school's policies for these subjects must be published online, and must be available to any individual free of charge. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use, for example the books they will use in lessons.

Q: Will my child be taught sex education at primary? This is too young.

We are introducing Relationships Education at primary, to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

Some primary schools choose to teach sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), and in those instances we recommend you discuss this with the school to understand what they propose to teach and how. If you continue to have concerns, you have an automatic right to withdraw your child from these lessons.

Q: Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take account of my faith?

A: The subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain.

In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled. Schools with a religious character can build on the core content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching.

In developing these subjects, we have worked with a number of representative bodies and faith organisations, representing all the major faith groups in England. Several faith organisations produce teaching materials that schools can choose to use

Q: Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

A: Parents will have a right to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as we believe the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Q: Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?

A: A thorough engagement process, involving a public call for evidence and discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance, has informed the key decisions on these subjects. The consultation received over 11,000 responses from teachers, schools, expert organisations, young people and parents – these responses have helped finalise the statutory guidance as well as the regulations that have been laid in Parliament.

Q: Will these subjects promote LGBT relationships?

A: No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate.

Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing

sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years - we expect secondary schools to include LGBT content. Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so, but there is no specific requirement for this. This would be delivered, for example, through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents.

Q: Will teachers receive training before delivering these subjects?

A: The department is committed to supporting schools to deliver these subjects to a high standard. We know that training is a priority for teachers and we will be consulting with teachers, trade unions and other key stakeholders over the coming months on how we structure the training.

In addition, we are encouraging schools to act as early adopters for this curriculum and to start teaching the subjects from September 2019. To help early adopter schools, we will provide further advice on how they can improve their practice. Lessons learned from the early adopters and best practice from schools will be shared with all schools from September 2020.

Department for Education
April 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

> Please see the additional document: DfE Draft statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (February 2019)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781150/Draft_guidance_Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education2.pdf

Contacts



Rob Kelsall

NAHT national secretary

e: robert.kelsall@naht.org.uk

t: 07739 325 649

Sarah Hannafin

NAHT senior policy advisor

e: sarah.hannafin@naht.org.uk

t: 01444 472 472

NAHT

1 Heath Square | Boltro Road
Haywards Heath | West Sussex
RH16 1BL | www.naht.org.uk
t: 01444 472472 f: 01444 472473
e: info@naht.org.uk
General secretary: Paul Whiteman