

Call for Evidence on changes to the teaching of Sex and Relationship Education and PSHE



Christian Concern guidance for responding

How to respond

You can access the online consultation at the following link:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/life-skills/pshe-rse-call-for-evidence/>

Responding online is encouraged. There are seven questions in the consultation. The answer to each question can be no longer than **250 words**. The number of words used in our answers to each question is indicated in square brackets at the end of the answer.

The deadline for responding is **midday on Monday 12th February**.

Our answers are suggested responses. We encourage you to phrase things in your own words and to make your own points in response to each of the questions. There is no requirement to answer every question in your response. The response form will not accept hyperlinks, so we have included full URLs for links that we have referenced.

General Background

The Department for Education proposes to introduce the new subject of Relationships Education as a statutory requirement into the curriculum, following an amendment to the Children and Social Work Bill 2017. You can read the policy statement here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-rse-and-pshe>

A call for evidence is currently being conducted by the DfE, as they want to understand the range of parental views on the proposals before drafting the policy statement and guidelines.

The policy and guidelines will then go to a public consultation - that is expected sometime later this year. It will be discussed in Parliament before becoming statutory. The latest statement from the DfE says that it is 'working towards' this becoming statutory in schools in September 2019. Until that point, it remains non-statutory, although many schools are already working towards their own interpretations of what Relationships Education will look like.

Sex education is not compulsory in Primary schools, except for teaching about human development, reproduction and puberty in the science curriculum - parents cannot remove their children from this curriculum, although they can request to view all materials and be informed before lessons are delivered. As things stand at the moment, when Relationships Education is introduced, there will be no parental rights over what is taught or right to opt out.

Relationships education is not currently statutory in schools. Schools are informed by this guidance published in 2000, but it is guidance and not statute.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130403224457/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0116-2000%20SRE.pdf>

In primary phase, relationships education should relate to friendships, bullying and self-esteem. There is no current requirement to teach about sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity.

The problem with the new Relationships Education proposals is that the lines between relationships and sex education are blurred, particularly in the primary phase. There is a prevalent view that sex and sexuality can be taught as separate things, the latter being about Relationships. This is one of the issues which is being called into question on a regular basis during this stage of the process, both by individuals, organisations and in Parliament.

Schools are currently required to deliver a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, although how that is done is entirely in the remit of each individual school. They also have to satisfy Ofsted that they are delivering spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, although again, it is up to each school to determine how this happens. Schools are also required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. All of these requirements are being conflated in order to justify the active promotion of an LGBT agenda.

The issue of 'age appropriate' is also significant - only a parent can determine this, which is why parents must remain involved in what is taught to their child on all matters of morality and personal identity.

Prime Minister [Theresa May has said](#) "we are pressing ahead with inclusive relationships and sex education in English schools, making sure that LGBT issues are taught well."

Under current proposals, it could become mandatory to teach children about same-sex relationships and transgenderism from five years old.

The following table explains what ages each Key Stage refers to.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Age | 5-7 | 7-11 | 11-14 | 14-16 | 16-18 |
| Key Stage | KS1 | KS2 | KS3 | KS4 | KS5 |

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.

Background: The government intends to use this compulsory subject to introduce children at a very early age to diverse relationships. Same-sex relationships will be promoted as just as valid as heterosexual relationships. The concept of someone being transgender will also be introduced, with children being told that gender is different to biological sex and being encouraged to question their gender. Books targeting young children which introduce transgenderism and LGBT relationships are already widely available.

Christian Concern's view is that it is harmful for children to be introduced to these ideas at a very early age. It only leads to confusion about gender identity and the difference between the sexes. A child's sexual innocence may be disturbed and talk of sexual abuse can lead to children worrying about becoming a victim. A further concern is that encouraging children to by-pass their parents when reporting issues like this can undermine the relationship between children and their parents.

Relationships:

- How Christian values inform how should treat other people. We are accountable to God for our treatment of others.
- Characteristics of good friendship: honesty; loyalty; trustworthiness; sharing; caring; kindness.
- Dealing with peer pressure; having the confidence to be myself.
- How I am different from other people. Strengths and weaknesses.
- Knowing what bullying is/why people bully; what to do if I see or experience bullying.

Family:

- Why my family is important to me. Every child is special to their parents who are the most important people in their lives.
- The complementarity of the sexes which is epitomised in marriage between a man and a woman.
- Every child has a father and a mother even though they may no longer be together.
- Respect and support for those who do not live with their mother and father.
- The value of stable marriages and families and their benefit to society.

Community:

- How Christianity has shaped our culture and provided a moral foundation for society.
- Keeping safe within my school and home communities.
- Respect for parents, teachers, and others in authority.
- Some people have special needs and they are equally valued.

Learning should be contextualised. Indoctrinatory programmes such as 'Educate and Celebrate' should be eschewed. Nor is it appropriate for schools to impose transgender ideology on young children, particularly given the complete lack of scientific evidence or medical evidence about the

impact of puberty blockers and hormone treatments and the potential for treatments to [render young people infertile](#).

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/schools-rushing-on-whisper-to-label-pupils-as-transgender-0d8zm53qs>

[245 words]

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.

Relationships:

- How Christianity provides a moral framework for assessing relationships and how we should treat others.
- The importance of marriage for raising and nurturing children and establishing strong families. The benefits of marriage to society.
- The benefits of saving sexual relationships for marriage.
- The mental and physical risks of sexual promiscuity and homosexual practices.
- Respect for my body and expecting those I am in relationship with to also respect my body.
- True love wants to commit, and not to rush into sexualising the relationship.
- Accountability to God and the benefits of holiness and purity in relationships.

Identity:

- An understanding that we are created male and female and that gender identity is not distinct from biological sex.
- Understanding developments in puberty and how this may affect my relationships.

Community:

- Understanding the dangers of online communities: the addictiveness of pornography; grooming; sexting; revenge porn.

A Government [report](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf) in 2012 concluded that [marriage is the best environment](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9139483/Marriage-is-best-for-raising-children-Government-says.html) for raising children.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9139483/Marriage-is-best-for-raising-children-Government-says.html>

Studies have shown that [teen pregnancies increase](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1456789/Teen-pregnancies-increase-after-sex-education-classes.html) with more sex education, and [decrease with less sex education](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sex-education-funding-cuts-drive-decline-in-teenage-pregnancies-n67v6mnr). Therefore, it is false to assume that more sex education will help reduce teen pregnancies.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1456789/Teen-pregnancies-increase-after-sex-education-classes.html>
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sex-education-funding-cuts-drive-decline-in-teenage-pregnancies-n67v6mnr>

This [review of evidence](https://www.heritage.org/education/report/evidence-the-effectiveness-abstinence-education-update) on the benefits of teen sexual abstinence and the costs of teen sexual activity is helpful.

<https://www.heritage.org/education/report/evidence-the-effectiveness-abstinence-education-update>

The proposal to teach about consent is flawed. Young teenagers lack the legal, emotional and cognitive capability to consent to sexual activity. Instead, we should be teaching about self-control and restraint.

[245 words]

3 We are particularly interested in understanding stakeholder views on Relationships Education and RSE which are specific to the digital context. 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?

Background: The government is using the emergence of internet enabled devices being owned by most secondary school pupils and the associated risks that come with them as a key justification for making RSE compulsory in all schools.

Whilst schools may talk about pornography and other digital sexual issues, the widely accepted approach is to be non-judgemental about moral practices except where they clearly breach the law, and then to warn that certain practices are illegal.

1. Schools should partner with parents to ensure safe online relationships.
 - Run training sessions with parents on how to monitor and restrict online activity of children, especially on mobile phones.
 - Inform parents of the health and emotional risks of too much internet activity and the need for children to have time offline to help develop self-understanding and relational abilities.
 - Advise parents on strategies and software that can be used to restrict internet use and keep it safe.

2. Schools should provide clear moral foundations for digital interaction.
 - Non-judgemental approaches leave children with no clear boundaries or moral framework to assess online activity.
 - Christianity provides a moral framework for evaluating digital interactions.
 - An understanding of the purpose of sexual relationships and the health and emotional benefits of saving sex for marriage will help them to navigate the moral challenges that the internet poses.
 - Schools should warn children about the potentially permanent nature of everything that is posted on the internet or through social media.
 - Schools should teach about fake news and how to assess whether a story is true.
 - Schools should teach about the dangers on online communication and how people might try to groom young people.
 - Schools should warn about the addictive nature of many online activities, including gambling, gaming, and pornography.
 - Schools should teach about the need for self-regulation in regard to online activity as young people take on more responsibility for themselves.
 - Schools should warn about abusive online practices such as cyber-bullying, sexting, and revenge porn.

[248 words]

4. We are also interested in understanding more about how schools communicate with parents on Relationships Education and RSE and are able to make informed decisions that best meet the needs of their children. This includes a right to withdraw their child from sex education within the RSE subject but not from sex education in the national curriculum for science. 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?

- The European Convention of Human Rights states: “In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.” It is therefore a legal requirement that schools respect, and neither undermine nor interfere with, the ability of parents to bring up their children in accordance with their own religious or philosophical worldview.
- Parents should have full access to policy documents; opportunity to view materials; and curriculum meetings annually to encourage parental discussion.
- Parents are the only people who can determine what is age-appropriate for their children.
- Schools should make clear how and when parents can withdraw their children from sex education. The opt-out should be extended out to include all relationships education and areas which need to be taught within a moral framework since this may conflict with the parent’s views per ECHR above.
- There should be flexibility in the guidelines and policy statement to allow faith schools (which parents have actively chosen) to prioritise their teaching in accordance with the tenets of their faith. Faith schools should be allowed to teach God’s design for humanity – that we are created male and female, and that marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman. This does not preclude the consideration of other relationships, it simply permits faith schools to teach from a stated perspective to which parents sign up.

[246 words]

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.

Background: PSHE stands for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education. Topics covered typically include: alcohol, smoking drugs, bullying, citizenship, careers, personal finance, and now family relationships and sex education will constitute the new compulsory subjects.

The last three questions are about this subject. The concern is that this subject is being used to bring in indoctrination about homosexuality and transgenderism. There is an obligation on schools to promote so-called British values, which includes 'tolerance' which is being used to promote alternative lifestyles as above criticism. In addition, the 2010 Equality Act requires schools to take action on any '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 you state what topics you think would best prepare children for life in the adult world. In addition, we suggest it is worth mentioning that lifestyles viewed as immoral by the world's major religions ought not to be promoted as they are likely to conflict with the views of many parents.

Citizenship: UK political participation has been declining and is [lowest amongst young people](https://assets.contentful.com/xkbace0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14_2017.pdf).
[https://assets.contentful.com/xkbace0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14_2017 .pdf](https://assets.contentful.com/xkbace0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14_2017.pdf)

The Christian foundations of our society and how Christianity provides a moral framework for our role as citizens of a democratic society.

- What is a democracy. Benefits of democracy over other systems of government.
- Importance of free speech for the proper functioning of a democratic society.
- Responsibilities of citizens living in a free and democratic society.

Physical Health: Currently 1/3 of children leaving primary school are [overweight or obese](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/01/16/britains-obesity-crisis-creating-unemployable-underclass-says/).
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/01/16/britains-obesity-crisis-creating-unemployable-underclass-says/>

- How Christianity provides a moral framework for how we treat our physical bodies.
- Importance of regular exercise. What counts as exercise.
- Importance of healthy eating. What is healthy eating. Addictive nature of some foods. Sugar and fat content of foods.
- Keeping healthy: diet, exercise, caring for myself
- Keeping safe; risk of strangers; how I can expect others to treat me.

Finance: 62% of Britons are worried about their levels of [personal debt](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/oct/30/average-uk-debt-at-8000-per-person-not-including-the-mortgage).
<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/oct/30/average-uk-debt-at-8000-per-person-not-including-the-mortgage>

- How Christianity provides a moral framework for thinking about money.
- Money management.

- Budgeting and saving.

PSHE should not be used to teach primary school children about sex and sexual relationships or about sexual orientations. Primary school children are too young to be introduced to these subjects. Nor should PSHE be used to encourage children to raise questions about their gender or to introduce the concept of transgenderism. Children should be taught that their biological sex determines their gender and that gender differences should be respected.

[242 words]

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

Citizenship: UK political participation has been declining and is [lowest amongst young people](https://assets.contentful.com/xkbase0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14_2017.pdf).
https://assets.contentful.com/xkbase0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14_2017.pdf

- The Christian foundations of our society and how many of our laws and practices are based on Biblical ideas.
- How Christianity provides a moral framework for our role as citizens of a free and democratic society.
- What is a democracy. Benefits of democracy over other systems of government.
- Importance of free speech for the proper functioning of a democratic society.
- How parliament works, how laws are made.
- How the judicial system functions.
- Different types of political engagement.

Physical Health: The UK is close to the top of the [OECD obesity charts](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/01/16/britains-obesity-crisis-creating-unemployable-underclass-says/).
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/01/16/britains-obesity-crisis-creating-unemployable-underclass-says/>

- How Christianity provides a moral framework for how we treat our physical bodies.
- Benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating.
- Health risks of early sexual activity. Dangers of STIs. No form of contraception offers guaranteed protection from pregnancy or STIs.
- Lifelong health and emotional effects of abortion.
- Health risks associated with smoking and drug use. Addiction.

Finance: Households in the UK are the [second most indebted among G8 nations](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/18/uk-debt-crisis-credit-cards-car-loans), with levels of personal debt rising.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/18/uk-debt-crisis-credit-cards-car-loans>

- How Christianity provides a moral framework for assessing our use of money.
- Money management.
- Budgeting and saving.
- How credit cards and loans work and the dangers of overspending and getting into too much debt.
- What is a mortgage. Risks associated with non-payment and declines in house prices.
- What is a pension and how pension schemes work. The need to save for a pension.
- Dangers of gambling addiction.

[249 words]

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?

Schools should not use PHSE lessons to:

- Undermine the faith values of pupils' parents and their families.
- Present all lifestyles as equally valid.
- Promote diverse sexual orientations and practices.
- Present sexually explicit materials to pupils.
- Encourage children to question their sexuality or gender.
- Criticise heterosexual marriage as the foundational relationship for a flourishing society, and children being brought up by their biological parents as the best environment for children to flourish.

If PSHE lessons are used in any of these ways, then the school is likely to fall foul of the ECHR which requires schools to ensure that parents' religious and philosophical views are respected.

Faith schools should have flexibility to teach PSHE within the moral framework of their religion. Schools should not be put under pressure to teach content which may conflict with the religious ethos of the school or which many parents would find objectionable.

[141 words]