



durex committed to RSE in schools



Work in
collaboration



Aim

To put in place methods of gaining support and input from parents and carers, young people and other relevant parties to help ensure the acceptance and success of your school's new RSE programme

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The importance of gaining support for your RSE programme

RSE in schools is an issue that has been raised on many occasions – it is vital that relevant parties are jointly canvassed for their opinion to properly inform the debate¹

RSE affects more than those involved in RSE lessons. This is why gaining the support and endorsement from other parties is important.¹ In order to revisit your RSE provision and tailor it so that it is the most beneficial to everyone involved, you should involve a number of parties, including:

- Parents and carers
- Teachers
- Young people
- School leadership teams and governors
- Local health practitioners

Consulting with these parties will help build trust between you, your school and the young people and families you serve in the local community.



PARENTS AND CARERS:

In 2013, NAHT reported that 88% of parents of school-aged children wanted RSE to be compulsory. So, with such strong opinion from parents towards RSE in school, it's more important than ever that they have a voice about how it is provided. Engaging and consulting with parents and carers about what you teach and when, as part of RSE, is key to success.¹⁻³ They must understand that your relationships and sex education programme will complement and support their role as parents, and that they can be actively involved in the development of your school's policy.

Parents and carers are essential for:⁴

- Teaching their children about relationships and sex beyond what they learn at school
- Helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up
- Maintaining the culture and ethos of the family
- Preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings

If your school has an active Parent Teacher Association, this could be an effective way to communicate and garner support.

TEACHERS:

Ultimately, the delivery of your RSE programme will happen through your teachers. It's widely acknowledged that teachers find RSE a difficult subject to teach for a number of reasons, including lack of training, lack of clarity over what should and shouldn't be taught and a lack of dedicated lesson time.

These barriers are an exceptionally important reason why your teachers should be consulted about RSE in your school; they can help identify needs and concerns to help ensure RSE reaches its full potential. If teachers in your school feel that they have been listened to and have been a part of the decision-making process, you can begin to look into identifying and encouraging those who are interested in becoming your RSE champions. The **DO... Inspire great teachers** resource can help you do this.



YOUNG PEOPLE:

Young people have often said that RSE doesn't cover all of the topics they want and need to know.⁵ That's why it's essential to involve them in the development of your RSE programme. Only by knowing what information and advice will truly benefit them will you be able to offer them RSE that most effectively supports them. Consulting the young people in your school will help you gauge their opinions, ideas and agreement on what their RSE should and shouldn't include. This also means that you might capture issues that are specific to your school and local area, enabling you to tailor your provision accordingly.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND GOVERNORS:

School leadership teams and governors will already be aware of the need to include statutory RSE topics within their school curriculum, but the DO... Programme can push the boundaries even further to build a new approach to RSE. To make these decisions, school leadership teams and governors will need information – share the **DO... Discover the evidence** and **DO... Enhance your content** resources. By consulting with them about the importance of a new, broader approach to RSE, together, you can ensure that RSE is high quality and able to meet the needs of young people and the local community.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, IN SCHOOL AND IN THE LOCAL AREA:

Many schools work closely with health professionals, such as GPs and nurses, and the benefits of this kind of partnership are numerous. They might include:

- Providing links between school and other relevant professionals such as family planning clinics⁴
- Helping young people develop the confidence and skills to make good use of services in the local area⁴
- Providing up-to-date and specific knowledge about sexual health and wellbeing⁴

It must be noted that health professionals involved in RSE as part of your school's programme are expected to work within your RSE policy.⁴ However, when working within their professional role, they follow their own professional codes of conduct.⁴

Additional support from the following parties may also enhance your RSE provision:

SOCIAL WORKERS:

Social workers can work in partnership with foster carers and parents, as well as your teachers, to help improve RSE for young people in public care.⁴

YOUTH WORKERS:

Youth workers can assist young people in your school in many contexts. Whether it's in youth clubs or via street and outreach work, they have a unique role to play. Because of their closeness in age, they are often able to develop open working relationships with young people, which makes them a very effective source of RSE and sexual health advice.⁴

How to get all parties involved

In addition to sharing and discussing the DO... Programme with all parties, there are a variety of tools you can use to help get everyone involved:

- Interactions such as questionnaires (both school-wide and amongst your local community), focus groups and dedicated meetings are all very useful for listening to opinions and gauging what should and shouldn't be included in your RSE provision
- One-to-one sessions can be extremely valuable for people who have specific concerns – for example, meeting parents with particular religious convictions
- Sharing your policy online, as well as directly with parents and carers, can help increase awareness of what your school will be teaching young people – this will also help parents and carers recognise where their role as an educator fits in
- Invite parents and carers to reflect on their own experiences of relationships and sex education – this can often lead to a productive discussion in which teachers and parents can tailor the planning of relationships and sex education for their children⁴
- Offer an RSE stand at all parents' evenings to give them the opportunity to meet with the team, discuss policy and view all the materials



What to do if parties disagree

“The consensus in support of good quality sex and relationships education (RSE) from young people, teachers, parents and carers, teaching unions, the voluntary sector and government is stronger than ever”

Brook, PSHE Association, Sex Education Forum – Sex and relationships education (SRE) for the 21st century, 2014⁵

In some cases, you may encounter parents or carers who disagree with the teaching of RSE in schools. If you are consulting with parents and carers who feel that their opinion or religious conviction is not being listened to, then disengagement and potentially withdrawal is more likely.⁴

Alleviating concerns through provision of accurate research can go a long way towards getting, and keeping, all parties on board. For example, some people are concerned that RSE at an early age contributes to sexualisation – there is no evidence to support this and parties should be made aware of this.⁶

It's important to remind concerned parents or carers why RSE has become statutory, including the many and far-reaching benefits of open and honest RSE. For more information about the benefits of quality RSE, take a look at the **DO... Discover the evidence** resource.



Further support from the DO... Collaboration

DO... Resources for teachers

The **DO... Resources for teachers** have been specially developed by dedicated and experienced sexual health trainers and educators. They encourage a new approach to RSE that helps make it more relevant and approachable for students, and more comfortable for teachers to deliver.

Consisting of innovative lesson plans, unique teaching activities and a new focus on skills, values, emotions and critical thinking, the DO... resources for teachers will help them facilitate really engaging lessons that empower young people to learn for themselves and from each other.

Training for teachers

Many members of the DO... Collaboration provide quality training for teachers who want to develop their skills further.

Brook has been providing training to adults working with young people for more than 50 years.

www.brook.org.uk

FPA have a broad range of online training courses for teachers.

www.fpa.org.uk

Justin Hancock (Bish) offers a number of training courses on Relationships and Sex Education.

www.bishtraining.com

SEF offer a range of training opportunities (available both locally and nationally) to support the continued professional development of anyone involved in teaching RSE.

www.sexeducationforum.org.uk

RSE Hub offer a wide range of full day, half day or twilight training courses.

www.rsehub.org.uk

Brook, FPA, Bish and The Mix can also provide young people with free information, confidential advice, great sexual health services and emotional support.

www.brook.org.uk

www.fpa.org.uk

www.bishuk.com

www.themix.org.uk



Further information

- **Brook** – the UK’s leading sexual health charity for young people under 25
www.brook.org.uk
- **Bish websites** – online advice and information for both professionals and young people, created by Justin Hancock, an experienced relationships and sex educator
www.bishtraining.com (for professionals) & www.bishuk.com (for young people)
- **Sex Education Forum** – a membership organisation that works together with its members for quality relationships and sex education
www.sexeducationforum.org.uk
- **RSE Hub** – a membership organisation that believes that relationships and sex education (RSE) should be an entitlement for all children and young people
www.rsehub.org.uk
- **Family Planning Association** – a UK registered charity working to enable people to make informed choices about sex and to enjoy sexual health
www.fpa.org.uk
- **National Aids Trust** – the UK’s leading charity dedicated to transforming society’s response to HIV
www.nat.org.uk
- **NAHT** – an independent trade union and professional association of over 28,500 members occupying leadership positions across a broad spectrum of educational institutions and settings, providing an effective voice in educational policy-making across all phases
www.naht.org.uk
- **The Mix** – the UK’s leading support service for young people, helping them take on any challenges they’re facing and providing young people with free, confidential help and advice
www.themix.org.uk

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