



Communication to schools on the implementation of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex and Health Education

The Department is committed to supporting all children to grow up happy, healthy and safe, and to provide them with the knowledge they need to manage the opportunities and challenges of modern Britain. That is why, all primary age children will be taught Relationships Education and Health Education and all secondary age children will be taught Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.

We are hugely grateful to the 1,500 Early Adopter Schools who have begun teaching these subjects as well as the many more schools who have been preparing and planning their curriculum ahead of compulsory teaching. We know that many schools already deliver much of the content set out in the statutory guidance and do so very well. It has been inspiring to hear how schools have built on this existing good practice, engaging parents, and finalising curriculum plans, ahead of September.

Following the decision to close schools for the majority of pupils, the Department has been working to assess the immediate and long term impact of coronavirus on education delivery, including the implications on a school's ability to discharge their duty relating to the implementation of these subjects.

The Department remains committed to supporting all schools in their preparations to deliver these subjects. In light of these circumstances, the Department wants to reassure schools that they have flexibility over how they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching.

Schools who assess that they are prepared to deliver teaching and have met the requirements set out in the statutory guidance are encouraged to begin delivering teaching from 1 September 2020, or whenever is practicable to do so within the first few weeks of the new school year.

Schools that assess that they have been unable to adequately meet the requirements because of the lost time and competing priorities should aim to start preparations to deliver the new curriculum and to commence teaching the new content no later than the start of the summer term 2021. To ensure teaching begins as soon as possible, schools are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects. Schools should consider prioritising curriculum content on mental health and wellbeing, as knowledge on supporting your own and others' wellbeing will be important as pupils return to schools.

The subjects will still become compulsory from 1 September 2020. However, schools have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively. If a school is unable to begin teaching until summer term 2021 they will need to decide how much of the content they will be able to cover and should still be able to demonstrate how they will cover the entirety of the curriculum in the future. Furthermore, as the subjects will be compulsory from 1 September 2020 the new parental right to withdraw provision will apply.

In summary, from 1 September 2020, Relationships Education, Health Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will still be compulsory. However:

From 1 September 2020 to the end of the spring term 2021	Following an assessment of preparedness, schools should commence teaching as soon as practically possible or use the time to prepare to deliver the new curriculum. This includes engaging parents on their policy as well as planning their curriculum provision.
By the start of the summer term 2021	All schools should have begun teaching the subjects.

Ofsted’s school inspection handbook sets out that inspectors will consider the provision for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as part of a wider judgment of pupils’ personal development. Routine Ofsted school inspections are currently suspended in order to alleviate pressure on school leaders and staff at this challenging time, and there are no plans to lift the suspension this term. We will continue to work with Ofsted, schools, and the sector, and will only return to routine inspection when it is appropriate to do so.

When routine inspections do re-start, inspectors will be sensitive to, and will take account of, the context and circumstances of schools. Further information on this will be made available in advance of any re-introduction of routine inspections.

The Department will be publishing a new online service to help all schools increase their confidence and quality of teaching practice. This will feature innovative training materials, an implementation guide, case studies and support to access resources. The service has been developed extensively with schools and teachers and will be available in the summer term, with additional content added in the following months.

Useful links

- The Department’s final [statutory guidance](#) covering the requirements of schools relating to these subjects. This sets out the core content schools should cover in Relationships Education, Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education.
- Schools are required to consult with parents on the development and any subsequent renewal of their policies for Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. We published [a guide to help schools engage effectively with their parents](#).
- The Department has developed two simple [guides for parents](#) – one for parents of primary age pupils and one for parents of secondary age pupils – that can be used to communicate with a school’s parent body.
- [Teaching Online Safety](#) in schools. This non-statutory guidance outlines how schools can ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of forthcoming and existing curriculum requirements. It also includes some useful links to materials, including guidance on teaching about mental health.