



Southampton SACRE

Advice document for Schools
and Community groups



Revised January 2020





Southampton SACRE

(Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education)

Advice from Southampton SACRE for parents with concerns regarding Relationships Education (Rel. Ed) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in Southampton schools

Southampton SACRE has worked with a range of stakeholders to draw together an appendix to the advice document for schools on faith related matters that has been widely adopted and helpful for schools since 2016. This appendix will offer advice to schools on the statutory duty regarding the Relationships and Sex Education that schools MUST teach from September 2020 regarding possible or actual parental queries raised from a faith perspective. It is not an exhaustive document, and it is advice that schools can follow if they choose to do so and may use to support their own policy development and with stakeholders. It is likely that there may be additional issues or questions that arise that may not be covered even though wide ranging stakeholders have contributed.

It is recommended that parents, schools and governors have opportunities for constructive dialogue in spring term 2020, so there is plenty of time for views to be listened to and taken into account, mindful of the statutory duty placed on schools from September 2020.

It is important to be aware that whilst people may share a faith, the ways in which each individual or family follow their faith can be different. So whilst this document brings broad advice and information, it cannot provide guidance for every question or difference that exists. It will be important for clarity to recognise that not all people who follow a faith should be presumed to believe, follow or practice their faith in the same way. Therefore the use of some, many, few or most will be important when teaching information.

Parents with concerns or questions may want to consider reading the following documents to ensure they are aware of the facts for themselves. Schools can support this by signposting or providing copies of the following documents:

- Read the statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education: www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education
- Read the parental engagement leaflets produced by DfE: www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools
- Read the myth buster FAQs produced by DfE: www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs



All members of the working group, including SACRE members, have agreed that they wish to encourage schools to offer opportunity for open discussion to aid understanding and that parents with concerns speak directly, without worrying, to their schools for themselves.

The group asks that school's publicise, well in advance, times and dates for when they are planning to offer discussion and consultation about new, or updates to, school policies that have to be in place from September 2020, and timeframes such as when the lessons will be taught as well as if there will be a chance to view any teaching materials before the teaching occurs.

Other useful documents and information are included in the appendix.

This document will be reviewed spring term 2021 following the introduction of the statutory guidance for schools. The statutory guidance is for Relationships education (primary phase – Rel Ed), Relationships and Sex education (Secondary phase- RSE) and it also includes health education. This advice focusses on Relationships education, and Relationships and Sex education queries from a faith based perspective.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
What is and is not statutory?	Parents may not have seen the statutory guidance so be unclear about what is statutory. The guidance can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-rse-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education Parents may also not have seen the FAQ document for parents produced by the DfE. www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools	The statutory guidance sets out what pupils must know by the end of Primary and Secondary phases of education. Primary phase is Relationships education (Rel Ed), Secondary phase is Relationships and Sex education (RSE). As the guidance explains (paragraph 68), when a primary school chooses to teach sex education beyond the science curriculum (i.e. a non-statutory addition) they must consult with parents. Parents can withdraw from this additional content and this should be clearly set out in a school's policy. Published curriculums should clearly indicate any additional and therefore non-statutory content.
Does the DfE recommend that Primary Schools teach Sex education even though it is not statutory?	Parents are having to understand what schools have to teach and what many choose to include in their curriculum provision and it can be confusing for them.	Yes – the DfE does recommend that Primary schools teach Sex education – at an age, and developmentally appropriate time having offered consultation with parents. Schools should listen to parents views, and pupils views, then take their own reasonable decision on the basis of these discussions, their school and cohort context.
How will parents know what is being taught and to what extent?	Parents may want to know exactly what is being taught, when it is being taught and with what resources as they may be worried that this may conflict with their family or the child's religious beliefs. For example, for some Muslim or Christian parents will be anxious about how and when teaching covers same sex relationships or marriage.	It is important that the school has a clear long-term plan for Rel Ed and RSE so parents can see which aspects are being taught within each half term and be clear about the content of that and any planned resources. Schools should work closely with parents as to when and how aspects of relationships, sex and health education will be taught. However, within the guidance the school has some flexibility in year groups or within the school year and is ultimately a decision for the school, so while parental views have been sought, this cannot impact statutory curriculum content. A school is unlikely to be able to anticipate where questions may arise in other subjects and lessons, this should be made clear to parents.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Can I see the materials in advance?	Parents may be concerned about the nature of any resources the school may be using. Some parents believe some resources are too old or too explicit or may go against the beliefs of their faith. For example, resources may include information about same sex relationships that may not be compatible with a parents or families belief.	Most primary schools offer the opportunity for parents to attend a meeting where this is all discussed and main resources to be used are shared. This would be considered excellent practice and would offer parents the chance to gain greater understanding of this curriculum area whilst providing reassurance and clarity first hand. Secondary colleagues are recommended to make the offer so that the national media information, and any myths or misunderstandings can be clarified first hand. A published plan identifying termly/ half termly content is recommended to be shared well in advance with parents – i.e. at least half a term ahead of planned delivery where possible. Schools are likely to manage this with the information published for their wider PSHE curriculum information.
Are there national or statutory resources that will be used?	Some parents may have heard, in the media or online, that there are specific resources that schools must use that they may feel are not in line with their own faith beliefs.	It would be helpful to detail, on a long term plan or published curriculum information, any main resources / schemes that are to be used. Parents will need clarity around the intention and aim of this aspect of the curriculum so as to understand the ways in which the school may organise its delivery. There are national associations such as the PSHE association who offer example schemes of work and resources that schools can use. There is no recommendation that schools must use a particular resource.
How will lessons be adapted for my child's Special Educational Need?	Parents may be concerned that their child may struggle to access the Rel Ed or RSE or that it is not developmentally appropriate. This is unlikely to be as a result of faith-based concerns and more specifically regarding an identified educational need. Although the child's SEN may impact on their ability to engage with what is indicated as primary or secondary specific expectations - of what a child should know by age 11 or 16.	Learning should be accessible therefore teachers, in line with other subjects, will need to ensure that the resources used support access to the content appropriately. A head teacher may also consider withdrawal of a child and would discuss this with parent/carers. See paragraphs 33-35 of the guidance. From GOV FAQs: “We are investing in a central support package to help teachers introduce these subjects well and with confidence. This will include a new online service, featuring access to high quality resources, innovative training materials, case studies and an implementation guide, available from Spring 2020.”

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Will my child be taught about contraception?	Some parents, e.g. some of Catholic or Muslim faith, do not believe this would be necessary to be taught as it is against their Catholic or Muslim beliefs.	Contraception is part of the KS3 science curriculum and therefore is statutory (no withdrawal allowed). Part of Biology content - "hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception." If contraception is taught in KS2 as additional content (therefore non-statutory) – parents should be informed, and this should clearly be stated in the policy and long-term planning. Parents have the right to withdraw from this as it is not statutory. Schools must provide a suitable alternative at this time.
How can I support my child's learning in this area?	Parents of faith and non-faith backgrounds may want to follow up Rel. Ed and RSE discussions at home. Particularly those from a faith background may want to share with their child the beliefs of their faith which may differ to what the child has learnt at school through statutory or non-statutory content and provide a space for a child to further develop their own understanding.	Schools are encouraged to communicate with parents and could signpost resources useful for parents who wish to support this aspect of their child's learning.
What terminology will be used in RSE lessons?	Parents may be concerned about all the different language, including slang used around this subject. Also, they may be worried that they do not know all the correct terminology themselves.	It would be helpful to append a glossary to the long-term plan to ensure that the parents have the same understanding of the vocabulary as their children are being taught. The use of correct scientific vocabulary should always be encouraged.
Will my child be taught that it is ok to be gay?	Some people will follow their faith in a way that will not promote acceptance of same sex relationships. There is difference between faiths and within faiths regarding single sex relationships. Parents will need to discuss with teachers about their concerns so teaching can be sensitive, but there is no right to withdraw from relationships education at any key stage.	Some parents may need reassurance around this and schools are advised to try and meet parents and discuss any concerns they may have as early as possible. Parents will need to understand that schools are obligated under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 to ensure that anyone with any protected characteristics are not prejudiced against and that it is set out that children need to learn that healthy relationships exist in many forms. This aspect will be taught through relationships education – there is no right to withdraw from relationships education at any key stage. Schools will need to clarify for parents what is taught in sex education. They will need to state clearly where there are aspects that can be withdrawn from.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
How will visitors helping in the delivery of RSE/ Rel. Ed know what the school policy is – as they could all be different	Different organisations may be invited to support the schools provision and parents may be anxious that they won't have a good understanding of their child's needs or faith context	Schools will need to ensure external agencies and their staff have read and understood their policy. There will need to be thorough preparation by the school in meeting and discussing the plans for the session, any relevant information about school/ class/ individual contexts that might impact on planning. Ensure that how to report any safeguarding concerns is shared and what supervision there will be, by school staff, as organisations input should always support the schools provision - not be offered in place of it.

Parents: Practical delivery

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
How will lessons be adapted to take account of the beliefs of my child's family?	Faith groups have differing opinions around some of the content areas of Rel. Ed and RSE, particularly pertaining to marriage or same sex relationships. Many faith groups believe marriage is solely between man and woman. This differs to the law of the country expressing that marriage can be between either same or mixed sex couples. Some parents will be keen to withdraw their children from areas of RSE that go against the beliefs of their faith – however there is no right to withdraw from the statutory Relationships Education, only sex education.	It is important to note that a child and their family may have different beliefs or faith background and that these will differ widely within a class. Staff should be made aware of any faith context for their pupils if they are not already. A school could consider using representatives from the family or child's faith group engaging in discussions regarding some of the content but should ensure a balance is achieved and this may make this more difficult as there are so many different ways different people practice their faith and live their lives.
How will lessons be adapted to take account of the beliefs of my child?	"My faith" is sometimes mixed with "my cultural belief" - a discussion with all parties will help to build understanding of differing faith, cultural thinking and experiences.	The lesson will need an ethos where each child will need to be free to express their viewpoints, taking into account their beliefs and understanding. They need to be taught how to do this in a respectful manner especially where there are different points of view and understanding.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Practical delivery

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
How will the school manage derogatory or prejudicial language?	Parents may be concerned that if their child has a faith that is in the minority in class that others will target prejudicial or derogatory comments towards their child as a result of Rel. Ed / RSE lessons.	Schools have to ensure they meet the Public Sector Equality duty 2010 – protected characteristics within this include faith. The school will have processes that may need to be communicated to parents so they can be reassured that any prejudicial language, behaviours or bullying can be dealt with effectively as they would at any other time and according to the school's behaviour policy. Schools could use the resources available from the prejudicial language and behaviours toolkit to support them when discussing issues of this nature with parents.
Will girls and boys be taught separately?	Some Muslim parents may be concerned about aspects of decency, modesty and knowledge that within their faith may not be shared by both boys and girls as early as it may be for other groups in society.	It is very unlikely that schools will deliver all lessons to boys and girls separately, but they may decide so, or deliver some. Schools will need to set out their plans for delivery in their policy and curriculum map/ communication with parents.
How will my child be taught about respect and tolerance?	For many parents it is important that their child is taught about other viewpoints and ways people in our society live their lives differently in order for them to develop their ability to respect others. Parents may want to know how these skills will be developed and if tolerance means agreement with or promotion of certain aspects of relationships that may be different from their own beliefs.	It may be helpful to define these in the Rel. Ed and RSE policy and in any meetings with parents. As well as ensuring all staff understand the sensitivities for some people with the term tolerance in particular.
What can my child do if they do not feel comfortable or agree with what is being taught during the lesson?	This may be because the lesson covers something that their faith has a particular position on that differs from what others may believe.	It is advised that teachers communicate what to do if a pupil feels uncomfortable. This may be an agreed signal from a child or place to sit if they feel uncomfortable.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Practical delivery

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Will my child be forced to talk about issues that they are not comfortable with?	This may stem from a parent who is uncomfortable with their child learning about something that may be different to their own beliefs.	In Rel Ed and RSE lessons teachers should engage all children, ensuring they are informed of individual circumstance or context which they may need to take into account for their organisation and management of the lesson/s. It will be important for the school and each teacher to agree a signal/ place to sit if a child feels uncomfortable with something in the lesson and the teacher will need to follow this up.
Will my child be encouraged to address others in the way they choose, e.g. nickname or a chosen pronoun?	Some people of a faith group may feel that their faith does not enable them to accept a transgender child or adult. Some nicknames may also be deemed inappropriate in a faith context.	All children will be taught to address each other in a tolerant and respectful manner, in line with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. They will be encouraged through teaching to act respectfully – from all points of view.
Which genders will be addressed during RSE teaching?	Many people will say that their faith will only recognise male and female heterosexual relationships.	Schools will need to detail this in their Rel. Ed or RSE policy and where teaching links to transgender this will need to be communicated in planning or information to parents.
How will issues of equality be covered in RSE?	Particularly in an environment of multi-faiths and beliefs it is important to parents that equality between all is taught. This will include non-faith parents also.	Schools will need to reference the Equality Act and the public sector duty 2010 when dealing with issues relating to this. As it is recommended that long term plans/ half termly topics or communications to parents should include content and delivery plans

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
What do I do if I am not happy with what my child has been taught?	The child may have spoken at home about something they have been learning about at school and this may raise concerns with a parent.	Detail should be clearly communicated in policy and website/curriculum information/newsletters – schools should take steps to ensure parents are informed on what is going to be taught, enough in advance for the parent to know –plus the school will need to speak or meet with the parent to discuss what has been taught. This can be undertaken by following agreed policy in school for speaking to staff and then, if needed, by following the school complaints policy.
Can I withdraw my child from RSE lessons?	Faith groups have differing opinions around some of the content areas of RSE, particularly pertaining to marriage. Many faith groups believe marriage is solely between man and woman. This differs to the law of the country expressing that marriage can be between either same or mixed sex couples. Some parents may be keen to withdraw their children from areas of RSE that they feel go against the beliefs of their faith.	Responses taken directly from GOV FAQs: “Parents will continue to have a right to request 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.” The PSHE association recommends that a senior leader meets parents to ensure there is understanding that the responsibility is the child's from three terms before they turn 16. It is also recommended that a record of the child's wishes and the parental meeting is held by the school. “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.” If sex education is taught at primary, beyond the science curriculum, a parent has the right to withdraw from this as it is additional, non-statutory content. Schools should meet with parents to discuss the reasons for withdrawal and keep a record of this. All adults should be made aware as indicated in the schools own policy. Schools will need to clearly identify the difference between content of relationships education and sex education.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
If the school is teaching more than what is statutory, can my child be withdrawn from the additional content?	Faith groups have differing opinions around some of the content areas of Rel. Ed and/or RSE. Some parents may wish to withdraw their children from areas of Rel. Ed and / or RSE that go against the beliefs of their faith – at primary level, additional content is the only area they are able to request to do so in.	Yes. If sex education is taught at primary, beyond the science curriculum, a parent has the right to withdraw from this as it is additional, non-statutory content. The school should meet with the parent to discuss what will be taught and check that parents know what will be missed and what other children will be taught that may be discussed for example at playtimes and on ad hoc basis in other lessons if a pupil raises it. At Primary the head teacher must comply with the parent/carer wishes regarding any sex education. At Secondary the parent has the right to withdraw from sex education aspects (all or some), but not statutory science curriculum. It is widely accepted that many aspects of PSHE learning and other subjects overlap and in particular with relationships. It is unlikely, and not recommended, that schools offer one unit of relationships education aiming to cover every aspect of relationships. This would undermine the knowledge and understanding that relationships underpin and permeate all aspects of life. As relationships education cannot be withdrawn from, there is less need to determine relationships education content. But schools must make it clear for parents and pupils what is going to be taught and when in sex education (that can and cannot be withdrawn from) is to be taught. A child, three terms before their 16th birthday can indicate their wish to now receive sex education, even if their parent had previously requested their withdrawal. The school will need to organise this for the child before they turn 16. At all times primary and secondary – the school should keep a record of reasons for withdrawal and reasons the child wishes to overturn if applicable. The PSHE association recommends a senior leader meets parents to ensure all are aware of the child's rights. A record of the reasons and the meeting should be kept. All adults should be clear which children are withdrawn and why.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
What alternative provision will be made for my child if I withdraw them from RSE?	Parents want to know what will be happening to their child during that time. They will want the withdrawal to be done in a sensitive manner.	2 things to consider: 1-School: It is not appropriate for this to be requested simply so that it is time when a child for example has extra maths or English, withdrawal has to be only about the subject withdrawn from and a record of reasons for withdrawal should be kept. Children do need to be given a purposeful alternative, judged as suitable by the school, to complete in another location. This is likely to be alternative PSHE learning or learning set out in policy. 2- Parental responsibility – ensure parents are aware what content their child is missing, ideally the learning missed through withdrawal can be mitigated if parent takes on the responsibility to educate their child on these areas. It should be acknowledged in discussion with parents that children are likely to talk about their learning in unstructured times such as break. If a parent chooses to withdraw, there needs to be discussion and acknowledgement that the school will not be able to avoid this situation arising. If one parent wishes to withdraw the school should meet both adults with Parental responsibility for a discussion with the aim to reach a mutual agreement. Staff may need support from senior leaders, governors or Local Authority/ SACRE or their trust if an agreement cannot be reached. School will need to make all adults aware of which pupils are withdrawn from any RSE and why.
Will children be taught the same material regardless of gender?	For some parents within religious groups (for example Muslims), some will educate girls and boys in different ways and at different times regarding sex education and so may want similar from the school. Some parents may feel it is appropriate for different genders to be taught different information at differing times and additionally may worry that the children may find it embarrassing to be taught together.	The statutory guidance does not determine learning for separate genders so yes pupils will be taught the same material. Schools may make judgements about some single sex teaching and this should be clearly outlined in the policy but content will be the same. This is the school's professional decision that should be agreed through discussions with parents and governors. Statutory content must be taught.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Parents: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Can I observe an RSE lesson?	There are many reasons a parent may want to do this, it may be anything from a genuine curiosity or worry as to how the school approaches these issues to wanting to check up that only what is stated in the policy and long term planning is being taught.	Consider why the parent is asking this, meet with them to discuss any concerns they may have – provide reasonable opportunities for parents to view resources etc before-hand to avoid this as it would not be practical to offer this for all parents and could be disruptive to the sequences of learning and practical arrangements for the timetabling of the subject. Provide an up to date overview of what is planned to be taught, and when, by half term in line with other aspects of the school curriculum. Reassure parents of the oversight of the subject – teaching, planning and content and any pupil voice activities relating to Rel. Ed or RSE.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Schools: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Do I have to teach RSE?	For faith or non-faith reasons a teacher may not agree with some of the content of RSE (for example many faith groups believe marriage is solely between man and woman which differs from the law) and therefore may not be comfortable teaching it. It does not mean that teachers who do teach RSE or Rel. Ed agree or abide by any cultural, religious or statutory content in their private lives. They must meet the expectations of a teacher when teaching, to teach it impartially in line with statutory content and any content additional to the statutory that is agreed within the school's own policy.	A teacher may feel uncomfortable or not well trained to teach RSE or a certain aspect effectively. A school must ensure that teachers are trained well enough to deliver the subject effectively. Training must include understanding of the schools policy and what this means in practice, how to manage difficult questions and what support the teacher could reasonably expect to ensure they can teach and manage this effectively. A teacher must be aware that unavoidable conversations of this nature may crop up outside of the specific lesson times and questions may be asked of them by pupils. Schools should ensure that any CPD provided should cover what staff should do if a difficult question arises out of Rel. Ed and RSE, and also outside of these lessons. Parents should be made aware that a teacher answering a genuine question from a pupil is unlikely to constitute an issue against policy, as to not answer is more likely to break trust between the teacher and pupil which could have a more detrimental future effect on the child, depending on the question and circumstance.
How do I know that a resource is appropriate to use?	With the introduction of the new RSE guidance there are many new resources being developed. Teachers will need time to ascertain if resources are appropriate for their own school policy, class and individuals.	It is important for schools to spend time considering resources as they are developing their new policies and long-term plans and to communicate any governor or teacher decisions with parents. The most appropriate resources will vary from school to school, class to class and between individuals just as is the case for other curriculum subjects. It is important to take into account both ages and developmental / maturity levels when considering what is most suitable and ensure that any adjustments are made in line with policy and needs.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Schools: Practical delivery of RSE

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Can a teacher talk about their own sexuality or gender?	A parent may be concerned that a teacher may press their own individual views or experiences over the statutory content. That a balanced discussion of different ways some people live their lives in a broad range of relationships may not occur, or promotion of one way of holding a relationship is the only acceptable way. This may be for example, within their own religion, same sex relationships are not supported.	Schools should consider within their training for staff how to address questions that may be raised by staff about this, but also questions that may be raised by pupils within or outside of Rel. Ed or RSE lessons. Responses should be based upon facts not opinions, and the recognition that some people will think, believe or behave differently to others and that to respect someone else's opinion, behaviour or relationship, including friendships does not mean that you agree or accept it or it is any better than any other relationship. Schools should consider setting out how they might respond to a query from a teacher or pupil within their policy or subject communications.
How will a teacher manage personal questions?	Parents or teachers may be concerned about children asking questions delving into their own personal sexuality or views on relationships. This may particularly concern them if they know they hold a religious view that may differ from the opinions of others and will worry that their view may be given less worth in the classroom.	Some teachers will be more adept at managing personal questions. CPD for staff should include the opportunity to explore how to do this effectively and enable staff who are less experienced to do so confidently. Ensuring any discussion is balanced with facts and acknowledgement that no one lives their life exactly the same as another, in line with the Equality Act and protected characteristics, will enable pupils to develop breadth in their understanding about the range of relationships that exist in modern society.
How do teachers manage questions that they, are not/ they know a parent or pupil may not be comfortable with?		
How will teachers manage to maintain a respectful environment during the sessions?	Some teachers may be apprehensive about RSE sessions and different views of pupils or pupils with different faiths if they are not familiar with how some people may follow their faith. Others may be worried that pupils will ask questions that may be personal to others and offend.	Clear boundaries should be set and these can be agreed as a staff or year group, for example, so that pupils are having equal access to the content within a safe and supportive environment. Set clear rules and follow the school behaviour policy if needed. Pupils should be clear that prejudicial language or behaviours will be challenged and worked through within and likely beyond the lesson also.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Schools: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
What do I do if a parent wants to see lessons in school?	There are many reasons a parent may want to do this, it may be anything from a genuine curiosity as to how the school approaches these issues to wanting to check up that only what is stated in the policy and long term planning is being taught.	Consider why the parent is asking this – provide reasonable opportunities for parents to view resources etc before-hand to avoid this as it would not be practical to offer this for all parents and could be disruptive to the sequences of learning and practical arrangements for the timetabling of the subject.
Will children be allowed to leave if they feel uncomfortable?	A school may anticipate a particular child or situation that may become uncomfortable following discussion with parents or a child themselves.	Yes, for a short time with a clear expectation set as to when they will return. An agreed signal or place to sit should be identified before lessons. Supervision for the child who has left the room, if needed, will need to be available and should be in line with any other such practices the school already has. If a school is aware of an individual circumstance this should be communicated to those who need to know, especially to the teacher so that planning can take this into account, and any pre-lesson discussion can be held. Parents will be reassured that their child's need, including faith understanding will be taken into account and planned for within the statutory guidelines. This is not withdrawal but sensitive management especially for children that may find this content harder than others for social or emotional reasons.

Southampton SACRE advice for Schools and Community Groups - Relationships and Sex Education

Governors: Content

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Do all staff have to teach RSE?	A member of staff may have asked not to teach RSE as there is conflict between their beliefs and the content. Or staff may feel uncomfortable teaching it as they know some of the issues will be controversial due to the faith groups represented in the class and they feel ill equipped to manage it effectively. A parent may request a certain person does not teach RSE to their child (for a variety of reasons – for example: maybe differing views on faith, marriage, sexuality or gender).	RSE, due to its potentially sensitive nature, in most cases is best taught at primary by the class teacher and at secondary by a teacher that knows the children well and has a good understanding of the content to be taught and the sensitivities that can arise from it. Timing will be important, ie not taught at the start of a school year when a teacher may be new to a class and not have as good an understanding of individuals as they would by later in the year. All staff expected to teach Rel. Ed or RSE should be provided with the CPD to enable them to do so effectively, and any concerns staff have must be supported to enable them to develop their confidence and effectiveness over time as with any other subject that a member of staff is required to teach. CPD should be offered to staff teaching Rel. Ed and RSE to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the subject effectively. It may be that there is just one aspect of RSE that a teacher does not want to teach/ feel confident in – it is important to discuss with staff members so the best, agreed outcome is reached for the benefit of all the pupils.
What will happen if the school does not meet its statutory duty?	Due to parental pressure or other reasons a school may feel they do not want to teach everything set out in the RSE statutory guidance.	A school must meet its statutory duty. This will likely be monitored within Ofsted inspections, LA visits, governor monitoring and, if applicable, diocesan visits to schools.
How do we know that a resource is appropriate to use?	With the release of the new RSE guidance, lots of new resources are being developed. Parents of faith and non-faith will have seen in media and will hear things as more become available. Parents may not know how these resources relate to the statutory content.	It is important for schools to spend time considering resources as they are developing their new policies and long-term plans. The most appropriate resources will vary from school to school and class to class. It is important to take into account both ages and developmental / maturity levels when considering what is most suitable. A good resource should set out any issues impacted by faith in a balanced, factual way, promoting respect and tolerance for all beliefs in line with the statutory duty of schools to meet the public sector duties outlined within the Equality Act.

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Governors: Practical delivery of RSE

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
Can teachers talk about their own sexuality or gender?	Some teachers may have a particular religious viewpoint relating to gender or sexuality and parents may be concerned about personal information being discussed with pupils that may not follow school policy.	Respect will be of utmost importance when discussing any information about any personal relationships. Teachers will need clarity in their school policies, training in how to manage personal conversations with students and factual information will be central to all discussions. Schools will need to have given consideration to how to support pupils and staff to reduce the potential for any discriminatory or prejudicial language and behaviours.
How will governors monitor RSE?	Governors often have specific subject areas that they are responsible for monitoring and have schedules of how often and what should be done.	Include this in your policy. RSE should be monitored like other subjects, particularly ensuring content is being covered as per the long-term plan and to see policy in action – in order to meet their responsibility to hold the school to account.
Who externally will be monitoring RSE?	Some parents will need reassurance that the school is doing the right thing.	This will likely be monitored within Ofsted inspections, LA visits, governor monitoring and if applicable diocesan visits to schools.

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Governors: Withdrawal

Questions that have arisen or could arise	Explanation of why the request / question may be being made – religious context	Consideration for schools/ those discussing queries with parents
How will governors manage complaints about RSE?	There has been much coverage in the media of disagreement surrounding RSE; many faith groups do not agree with all the content. It is a contentious issue which if not prepared for and managed well may lead to complaints. Children will often not fully grasp everything that is taught or hear misunderstanding of peers in playground talk. Parents may need to check with teachers what has been taught and discuss any misunderstandings with the child and teacher so this can be planned for.	Clear policies and long-term plans available for parents is imperative, as will be open discussions about parent's concerns or queries. Ensuring, before agreeing any policy, that a suitable level of consultation has taken place – remembering that parents have no say on the statutory content but do need to develop their understanding of what , when and how content will be covered. Schools should offer clear ways for parents to communicate any concerns or queries in the first instance with teachers. This should be clearly set out in policy. All staff should be made aware of this and how they would be expected to respond. Any complaints should be dealt with using the school's complaints policy. If differing religious views are at the root of a complaint it may be helpful to involve a leader of a faith group or contact SACRE for advice – whilst statutory content needs to be taught, views of different faith groups, and individuals should have a place to be expressed and acknowledged to provide greater understanding of the differing ways people follow their faith or live their lives enabling the school to take into account anything pertinent to context.

Southampton SACRE

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