



Department
for Education

Introduction of statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

**Equality Impact Assessment and Public
Sector Equality Duty**

February 2019

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Introduction

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and to make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also gave the Secretary of State the power to make personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) mandatory in the future.

This document sets out the equality impact assessment that addresses the potential impact of the introduction of these new subjects on groups with “relevant protected characteristics” and records the analysis undertaken by the Department to enable ministers to fulfil the requirements placed on them by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out that any public authority must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to:

- a) **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- b) **Advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c) **Foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics for the purposes of (b) and (c) are: sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and age. The analysis below reviews the impact on groups with protected characteristics in light of the three limbs of section 149 of the Act.

Whilst age and marriage and civil partnerships are not protected characteristics insofar as schools are concerned, the section 149 duty still requires a public authority (including the Department) to have regard to the relevant needs in relation to those characteristics when exercising a function.

The Minister has been given assurance that the process for deciding on the mandatory elements of the new subjects has been carried out having regard to the three limbs of the PSED and that the equality impact assessment has addressed the potential impact of the introduction of these subjects.

The subjects of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education aim to aid schools to act in the best interests of all pupils in preparing them for life as an adult. In undertaking the analysis that underpins this document, where applicable, the Department has also taken into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Policy context

The subject of sex education became compulsory, in all maintained secondary schools only, in 1993. Some aspects of sex education also form part of the national curriculum for science for 5-16 year olds. Despite it not being mandatory, primary schools are encouraged to teach sex education and many primary schools, academies, free schools and independent schools have chosen to do so for decades.

When teaching sex education, including where primaries, academies and free schools choose to do so, schools are required to have regard to the statutory guidance for Sex and Relationships Education (2000)¹. This guidance has not been reviewed since 2000 and is viewed by many stakeholders as having been overly influenced by nervousness at the time of drafting regarding the removal of section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. It is seen as not being sufficiently balanced or positive about LGBT relationships and is considered out of date, being as it was published prior to the advent of social media, easy access to the internet and prior to the legal changes to marriage and creation of civil partnership.

To support the teaching of sex education, the Department has also endorsed the supplementary guidance *Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for the 21st Century*, published by the PSHE Association, Brook and Sex Education Forum in 2014².

PSHE is compulsory in independent schools only, but all schools are encouraged to teach it through the requirement to offer a broad and balanced curriculum as set out in the introduction to the national curriculum. (Some schools teach sex education as part of PSHE but this is not specifically required.) Although PSHE is not compulsory, according to Ofsted:

“The great majority of schools choose to teach it because it makes a major contribution to their statutory responsibilities to promote children and young people’s personal and economic well-being; offer sex and relationships education; prepare pupils for adult life and provide a broad and balanced curriculum.”³

This means that although these subjects are new, and we are for the first time setting out what should be taught in them, schools are both experienced in approaching the teaching of the broad content and have time dedicated in the school calendar.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to make Relationships Education mandatory for all pupils receiving primary

¹ [Statutory guidance on sex and relationship education](#)

² [Sex and relationships education for the 21st century](#)

³ [Not yet Good enough: PSHE in schools, 2013](#)

education and RSE mandatory for all pupils receiving secondary education. Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires, in relation to Relationships Education and RSE, that the Secretary of State gives statutory guidance to proprietors of schools and reviews the guidance from time to time. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also gave the Secretary of State the power to make PSHE mandatory, although doing so would be subject to careful consideration. Section 35 of the Act gives the Secretary of State the power to give statutory guidance in relation to PSHE.

The department conducted a call for evidence⁴, which ran from 19 December 2017 to 12 February 2018 and received over 23,000 responses, and worked with around 90 stakeholder organisations. Following this engagement, the Secretary of State made the decision to make only the health element of PSHE mandatory. This decision was made as the personal and social aspects of PSHE will be covered by the introduction of Relationships Education and RSE and the economic aspects are already covered by the maths and citizenship curriculum.

A consultation on the draft statutory guidance, draft regulations and draft regulatory impact assessment for the new subjects opened on the 19 July 2018. The consultation built upon the call for evidence (carried out between December 2017 and February 2018), which has informed the development of the policy. The Government response to the call for evidence was published at the same time. Questions on the decision to mandate only the health aspects of PSHE were included in the consultation⁵. The consultation closed on the 7 November 2018.

As part of our ongoing engagement process, the Department for Education has engaged with, and sought evidence from: schools and teachers; parents and pupils; experts in safeguarding and child wellbeing; subject experts; faith groups; voluntary organisations and other interested parties; and, other government departments and public sector bodies.

Once the new subjects are introduced, parents will continue to have a right to request that their child be withdrawn from sex education but will not have the right to request their child be withdrawn from relationships education or health education. Except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should arrange to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

⁴ [Call for evidence](#)

⁵ [Consultation](#)

The introduction of the new subjects follows years of pressure from many stakeholders (including support from teachers groups and unions) to mandate the teaching of core content related to relationships, sex and health in schools in England. Throughout the call for evidence and stakeholder engagement exercise, as well as through continued correspondence and questions in the House of Commons, we have had a clear and consistent message that there is important content relating to mental wellbeing and physical health that pupils need to be taught.

In particular, pupils need the knowledge to protect their own mental and physical health, they need to know what activities, behaviours and circumstances can risk these and they need to know when and how to seek help both for themselves and others. There have been specific calls for content on internet harms, which goes beyond that currently taught in the computing curriculum, including that which is directly relevant to Relationships Education and RSE. By making these subjects part of the basic curriculum we have the opportunity to make a step change in both the consistency and quality of relationships, sex and health teaching in schools in England.

The Department for Education recognises the diverse nature of relationships and families. We have committed to providing guidance to schools on how these areas of the subjects should be taught. The Department is also mindful of the need to take account of pupils' age and religious backgrounds. To acknowledge the importance of these factors, and the Government's commitment to them, they were included within the 2017 primary legislation.

Evidence base

This assessment draws evidence from a number of sources, including:

Schools, pupils and their characteristics. January, 2018⁶

Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools report. Ofsted, 2013 ⁷

Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. Women and Equality Select Committee, 2016⁸

Boys and young men: Developing effective sex and relationships education in schools. Sex Education Forum, 2006

Guasp, A. (2012) The School Report: The experiences of gay young people in Britain's schools in 2012. London: Stonewall

Kopels, S. and Pacey, M.S. (2012) Reducing Bullying Toward LGBTQ Youths in Schools. School Social Work Journal, 37(1).

Changes to teaching of sex and relationships education and PSHE: call for evidence government response. DfE, 2018

Relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education consultation. DfE, 2018

It is important to note that the current evidence base in this area remains partial, making it challenging to anticipate and quantify precisely the impact of this policy. There are a number of reasons for this, which include:

- 1) The current legal position is mixed. Sex education is compulsory in maintained secondary schools and section 2.5 of the National curriculum framework for key stages 1 to 4⁹ states that all schools should make provision for PSHE, although it is non-statutory. PSHE is compulsory in independent schools. Beyond this, most schools already teach these subject areas, to varying extents and standards often in combination with other subjects such as religious education and citizenship.

⁶ [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, January 2018](#)

⁷ [Not yet Good enough: PSHE in schools, 2013](#)

⁸ [Women and Equality Select Committee \(2016\) Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools](#)

⁹ [National Curriculum Framework](#)

- 2) The number and distribution of pupils with some protected characteristics, including race and gender reassignment, is unknown to the Department, as this information is currently not collected. (We do collect data on ethnicity, nationality and country of birth.)
- 3) There is little evidence that specifically focuses on the effect of the subjects on groups with particular protected characteristics. We can anticipate potential impacts based on knowledge of the impact of other changes and expert opinion, as well as the implementation of the current policy in schools.

Equality Analysis

Sex

The goal of the policy is to ensure that RSE, Relationships education and health education are equally relevant to male and female pupils. This is already central to the current provision of sex education and associated sex and relationship education guidance, and will be highlighted in the new statutory guidance. Therefore, the policy does not lead to discrimination in terms of who is required to receive, and will therefore benefit from, the education and nor does it eliminate it as there is no such discrimination at present (a).

There is a risk that these subjects will be seen as more relevant to female than to male pupils, or be seen as addressing them in particular. We have addressed this in the guidance by stressing that the sex education, puberty and menstruation and relationships content is for all pupils. This addresses feedback from the Sex Education Forum (2006) that there is a:

“tendency to see boys and young men as a problem [...] This perception has reinforced the belief that SRE needs to focus on young women as the gatekeepers of responsible sexual activity.”

We anticipate all pupils gaining an age appropriate understanding of issues such as consent, healthy relationships, mental wellbeing and physical health resulting in a positive impact on them and their lives. Schools will be encouraged to foster pupils’ self-efficacy so that they can manage risk and gain the knowledge needed to make informed decisions, form opinions and make choices about their own and others’ overall health and behaviour.

Through this clarity in the new statutory guidance for the subjects, we aim to mitigate the existing risk that these subjects are perceived as less useful for, or accessible to, male pupils. As such, the new subjects should improve equality of opportunity (b) as the policy itself and the introduction of the subjects is likely to improve the current situation.

A lack of consistent and up-to-date relationships and sex education has previously been linked to sexual harassment in schools, particularly of female pupils. A report¹⁰ by the Women and Equalities Select Committee looked at sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. Key points from the report included the following:

- almost a third (29%) of 16-18 year old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school;

¹⁰ [Women and equalities committee: sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools](#)

- nearly three-quarters (71%) of all 16-18 year old boys and girls say they hear terms such as "slut" or "slag" used towards girls at schools on a regular basis; and,
- 59% of girls and young women aged 13-21 said in 2014 that they had faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year.

As a result, the guidance emphasises mutual respect in relationships and directly addresses risks such as cyberbullying and makes links to the law surrounding harassment and other forms of abuse. Feedback from some respondents to the call for evidence and consultation conducted on the new subjects supports the view that the new subjects may help to reduce harassment and sexual violence in schools.

The guidance sets out that schools should consider how best to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on children based on their sex or any other protected characteristic, including through the new subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.

The guidance is clear on the need for schools to both teach and include in the school ethos that violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and should not be an inevitable part of growing up. It also sets out the importance of not tolerating or dismissing violence, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

In response to feedback to the consultation, we have made changes in the guidance to make clearer that staff should be aware that females are more likely to be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is more likely that this will be perpetrated by males (although males can also be the victims of sexual violence). The guidance is also clear that assumptions should not be made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they should not be made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male.

We believe that the implementation of these subjects should help foster positive, respectful relationships. Emphasising mutual respect in relationships has the potential to help to reduce harassment and sexual violence in schools. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be designed to be equally relevant and beneficial to male and female pupils. We therefore believe that the implementation of the legislation will have a positive impact (b and c).

Disability

This protected characteristic covers a wide spectrum of pupils, including those with a variety of learning disabilities, physical disabilities and complex medical needs. The new subjects will be compulsory in all schools, including special schools, alternative provision including pupil referral units and hospital schools. Therefore, young people with a

disability will have equal access to the teaching of these subjects and there is no discriminatory impact in terms of access to the subjects (a).

In order to enable all pupils to access these subjects, schools will need to ensure high-quality differentiated teaching and tailoring of content to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including taking account of any developmental differences relative to other pupils their age. Support for schools to do this is already set out in the *0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities code of practice (2015)*¹¹ and this is also referenced in the guidance. Effective teaching may also require a differentiated curriculum and there are already specific duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 (schedule 10)¹² to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum. Some pupils, including those with an identified SEND, may use assistive technology. As with all other aspects of the curriculum and school life, teachers will need to ensure that in teaching the new subjects these pupils have parity of access.

Respondents to the call for evidence and consultation highlighted the importance of access to good quality teaching resources and training, to ensure pupils with disabilities have equal access to the new subjects. In Ofsted's 2013 review of the impact of PSHE (including SRE), there was a noted correlation between weak teaching of these subjects and the casual use of disablist (and homophobic) language. The converse was also observed where teaching was judged to be good. If poorly taught, pupils with disabilities could find that the curriculum content of Relationships education, RSE and Health education does not reflect their experience or does not meet their needs fully. However, we are aware that many schools already provide excellent provision for students with additional needs and disabilities (Ofsted, 2013) and by setting out core content for the subjects, we are improving the situation even further. We will look to build on this excellent provision as part of our consideration of school support and seek to share effective practice.

Schools also need to meet their responsibilities as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 0-25 years (2015) to enable disabled pupils to access their education and prepare them for adulthood.

We believe that the core content set out in the guidance will help to improve the current situation, as will promoting best practice, inclusive teaching materials and differentiated teaching. To maximise the positive impact of the introduction of the new subjects, the school support that will accompany the introduction of the subjects in schools must be of

¹¹ [SEND code of practice](#)

¹² [Equalities Act 2010, schedule 10](#)

high quality, however by introducing these new subjects we will improve the equality of opportunity (b) for those with disabilities when compared to the status quo.

The guidance makes clear that some pupils with disabilities (and special educational needs) may be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some people have towards those who are different from themselves and the overall focus of building respectful relationships is aimed at ensuring that schools will address this both as part of these subjects and as part of their whole school approach. The guidance directs schools to look at all the policies in this area, for example school behaviour policies and anti-bullying guidance, and also provides a link to the [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) which provides helpful support for schools in embedding this approach. Pupils with disabilities may also be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation which will be directly addressed through the teaching of these subjects.

The guidance recommends that schools be mindful of these additional factors when planning their curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils and take advantage of the opportunity that these subjects offer to address them through their curriculum, including through whole school approaches. Relatedly, when delivering this content, schools and teachers need to ensure that they do not inadvertently single out pupils with disabilities from their peers by emphasising their “difference” which may have a negative impact on their self-esteem and relationships with peers. When teaching this content, they should also ensure that messages about balancing and rationing time online and excessive use of devices which are essential for all pupils, are not misinterpreted as applying to assistive technology. The core content of the new subjects should foster a greater awareness among all pupils of the potentially different and similar needs of young people with disabilities, and could also help foster better relationships (c) and this should be improved further with skilled teaching.

The guidance is clear that all pupils should be taught how to develop positive, healthy, respectful and safe relationships. Through the guidance and through the work to support schools, we are focussing on ensuring that teachers are confident in planning and delivering these subjects, for all pupils including those with a SEND.

Religion / belief

The UK is home to a variety of religious groups. This is reflected in the number and diversity of faith schools and schools serving diverse communities. The new legislation will make RSE, relationships education and health education mandatory in all schools,

including faith schools¹³; therefore, there is no discriminatory impact (a) on religious groups in terms of access to the subjects.

All schools will be required to have regard to the statutory guidance when teaching these subjects. Schools with a religious ethos may choose to reflect that in their policy. Some of the content of the new subjects, especially of RSE, may challenge the religious beliefs of some groups. The subjects cover topics where some faith communities' views on what is right can differ from what is permitted under the law, e.g. contraception and abortion. In designing a policy on the new subjects, as is currently the case, we expect schools to work in partnership with parents and the wider community. In most cases, this will enable schools to design a curriculum that meets the requirements of the guidance and the needs of each school's population. All schools, including faith schools, will be able to teach the new subjects in accordance with their school values and ethos while also having due regard to the guidance and being consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Parents will continue to be allowed to request that their child be withdrawn from sex education with the exception of those aspects included in the National Curriculum (in maintained schools), and subject to the qualification set out above regarding the circumstances in which that request should be respected. There are many reasons why parents choose to withdraw their child from sex education. These include when parents are able and willing to teach their child about sex or where they make alternative arrangements for this to be provided in line with, for example, their religious background. In addition, some pupils are withdrawn due to their or their parents' beliefs about the age that pupils should access this type of information. There is no right to withdraw from relationships or health education.

We believe the policy has the potential to advance equality of opportunity (b) for young people of a variety of faiths (including those who are not withdrawn from sex education within RSE and those with no faith) as they may gain access to more inclusive RSE, Relationships education and health education that meets the needs of everyone in their school community. This greater access may also lead to greater integration and better relationships (c) with young people of other or no faith, although there is the risk that some schools may feel that the new guidance goes too far on some topics (for example, options around pregnancy).

Sexual orientation

The call for evidence and consultation on the new subjects highlighted the opportunity for the new subjects to be fully relevant regarding sexual orientation. Schools will need to

¹³ Health education is already compulsory in independent schools as part of PSHE.

ensure that young people, whatever their developing sexuality, feel that RSE, Relationships education and health education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. All schools have to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we expect no new discriminatory impact (a) or removal of discrimination in terms of access to the subjects.

The new subjects and the new accompanying guidance will increase the availability of relationships, sex and health education and seek to increase its relevance to young people of all sexual orientations, thus increasing equality of opportunity for young people with different sexual orientations, or who are in different family models (b).

One of the purposes of the new subjects is to ensure that all young people learn about different types of relationships. We believe this will build greater understanding and better relationships (c) between young people of different sexual orientations and may help reduce homophobia and bi-phobia. The new subjects should also address the finding in Ofsted's 2013 review that:

“Pupils’ understanding of diversity, prejudice and discrimination was not developed well enough in one in four primary schools and one in eight secondary schools. Pupils had learnt about racism and sexism but not about other forms of discrimination, resulting in their failure to appreciate the impact on others of derogatory language, particularly homophobic and disablist comments.”

The consultation showed that the guidance is a step change from the 2000 sex education guidance in its coverage of sexual orientation and in setting out that sexuality should be integrated throughout the programme of teaching.

The new subjects may also reduce instances of homophobic and bi-phobic bullying by building tolerance and respect. The fourth wave of the Pupils and their Parents/ Carers omnibus survey¹⁴, published in September 2018, showed that amongst pupils who said they had been a victim of bullying at least once a month in the last year, they were more likely to say they had been a victim of bullying because “they are, or someone says they are gay, lesbian or bisexual (6%)”.

This is compared to those who said they had been a victim of bullying at least once a month in the last year because of their ‘special educational need or disability’ (6%), ‘gender’ (4%) ‘race, nationality or ethnicity’ (3%) or ‘religion’ (2%).

The guidance states that schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Although the guidance does not state the age at which children should be taught about

¹⁴ [Omnibus survey](#)

lesbian, gay, and bisexuality (LGB), we expect that most primary schools will include at least some coverage. The guidance is also clear that content on sexuality should be fully integrated into the programme of study rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. This should ensure that pupils' own life experience is reflected in the teaching they receive.

The inclusion of these details in the guidance should mean that pupils should feel supported and included regardless of their emerging sexuality or family circumstances. As the guidance is not explicit about the age at which children should start to receive this teaching, there is a risk that primary age pupils with LGB parents (or other close friends or family) or those who are already beginning to understand their own sexuality may feel that relationships education does not address their needs. They may also feel that the teaching is indirectly discriminatory if they attend a primary school that chooses not to include LGB content. However, across their time at school, the content included in the guidance should mean that children with LGB family and friends or who may be LGB themselves have access to teaching that reflects their life and personal development.

Gender reassignment

Young people with this protected characteristic, or in a family model which includes members with this characteristic, will have equal access to RSE, Relationships education and health education; therefore, there is no discriminatory impact or removal of discrimination in terms of access to the subjects (a).

As with sexual orientation, there is a potential risk that some young people with this protected characteristic or in a family model that includes members with the characteristic might feel that the new subjects are not fully applicable to them if they do not see themselves reflected in the teaching. However, we expect that the teaching of the new subjects will be tailored to the needs of the school population. The guidance also says that schools should ensure that 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. Therefore, the new subject has the potential to improve the access of such young people to relevant teaching, thereby improving their equality of opportunity (b).

One of the purposes of the new subjects is to build respect and understanding. We believe this will build greater understanding and better relationships (c) between young people who share this protected characteristic or are in a family model that includes members with the characteristic and those who do or are not.

Age

All schools have to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we expect no new discriminatory impact (a) or removal of discrimination in terms of access to the subjects.

The new subjects should encourage respect between people in different age groups. Through inclusion of content on the conventions of courtesy and manners, bullying, permission-seeking and giving and through content on how in school and in wider society pupils can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, we expect there to be a positive impact (b and c).

Marriage and civil partnership

As part of the new subjects, pupils will learn about marriage and civil partnership. This should inform their own understanding, encourage respect of the different choices couples in committed relationships make and help them to consider their own future options.

Following the consultation feedback, we have amended the draft regulations. The current draft regulations create a requirement that guidance must be given with a view to ensuring that ‘...pupils learn about...the nature of marriage and civil partnerships and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children’. This is a direct replica of the wording in the Education Act 1996 provisions on sex education to which we have added ‘civil partnerships’. By making this addition, we are ensuring teaching that marriage and civil partnerships have equal parity in law and both represent legal, binding forms of long-term commitment.

The guidance also refers to civil partnership as well as marriage. This will mean that schools will be required to talk about the status and importance of both institutions.

Race

We do not expect there to be a differential impact (a, b or c) on young people from different races or ethnicities beyond the impact discussed under the protected characteristic of religion and beliefs.

Pregnancy and maternity

All schools have to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we expect no new discriminatory impact (a) or removal of discrimination in terms of access to the subjects.

The policy should have a positive impact on pupils who are pregnant or have children. The new subjects will ensure more consistent teaching about sexual health and pregnancy including choices in relation to pregnancy. Teaching will also cover the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children and therefore increase tolerance towards girls who become pregnant.

As a result, the policy is likely to have a positive impact (b and c) on those with this protected characteristic.

Conclusion

This assessment has analysed the impact of the introduction of compulsory RSE, Relationships education and health education¹⁵ in schools, in line with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED.

Following this analysis, we believe the implementation of the regulations and associated statutory guidance in schools has the potential to have a more positive than negative impact on pupils with certain protected characteristics.

A major tool of mitigating any potentially negative impacts and increasing positive impacts will be the continued engagement process, the school support offer to implement the new subjects and the new statutory guidance to be published by the Department.

The table below lists the protected characteristics and sets out where we anticipate positive and negative impacts:

Protected characteristics	Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality of opportunity	Foster good relationships
Sex	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact
Disability	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact
Religion / belief	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact
Sexual orientation	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact
Gender reassignment	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact
Race	No impact	No impact	No impact
Pregnancy and maternity	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact

¹⁵ Health education is already compulsory in independent schools as part of PSHE.

Protected characteristics	Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality of opportunity	Foster good relationships
Age	No impact	Potential positive impact	Potential positive impact.
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact	N/A – not a relevant protected characteristic	N/A – not a relevant protected characteristic.

We believe that even where there is a potential negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics the anticipated positive impacts will outweigh the negative. We believe that the overall positive impact of the policy on groups protected by the Equality Act 2010 justifies the potential negative impacts.

In keeping with the Government’s commitment to system-led educational reform, we expect schools to work in partnership, locally and nationally, to provide high quality Relationships education, RSE and health education and develop effective ways of meeting the particular needs of all of their pupils. We also anticipate, and will work to encourage, those organisations that represent those with relevant protected characteristics to help schools fulfil their equalities duties in delivering the provision and ensure that all pupils are able to achieve.

We have decided to proceed as planned with the proposals. Schools must have regard to the guidance when they start teaching the new subjects from September 2020, in line with the start of the new school year.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will continue to review the effectiveness of the subjects and have already committed to reviewing the guidance three years after it takes effect and then regularly after that.



Department
for Education

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