

Number: WG42816



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance and Code

Date of issue: 21 May 2021

Action required: Responses by 16 July 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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Overview

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance and Code

The Curriculum for Wales Framework was published on 28 January 2020. Before its publication, the Framework was subject to broad and extensive consultation. Feedback received signalled what specific, additional guidance schools and settings would require in order to successfully design and realise their own curriculum. Welsh Government committed to publishing:

- guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics
- guidance for relationships and sexuality education
- guidance on careers and work-related experiences
- guidance to support practitioners working with learners at the beginning of the learning continuum
- a curriculum and assessment framework for funded non-maintained nursery settings to adopt
- guidance on developing a curriculum for those responsible for education other than at school
- guidance on British Sign Language.

This feedback phase welcomes your views on this additional Curriculum for Wales guidance for relationships and sexuality education (RSE).

The draft guidance has been developed by practitioners through a process of co-construction that has been supported by other experts and stakeholders. This feedback phase forms part of the co-construction process. It provides an opportunity for all practitioners and other stakeholders to offer input that will support the further development of the guidance.

This feedback phase will end on 12 July 2021, after which all responses will be considered and analysed independently, as well as by practitioners and others in the working groups. The draft guidance will then be refined in response to the feedback and will form part of an update to the Curriculum for Wales Framework in autumn 2021, to be used by schools and settings as a tool for curriculum planning, design and implementation.

All your feedback will be gratefully received.

How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by **16 July 2021** at the latest.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

The published Curriculum for Wales guidance is available at <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

An easy read version is available at <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-easy-read/>

A children, young people and families guide is available at <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-a-guide-for-children-young-people-and-families/>

The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/consultations

Contact details

For further information:

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In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing. You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

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Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire

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SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance and Code

Section 1 of this document sets out the draft statutory guidance for RSE in the new curriculum.

Section 2 sets out the draft Code on RSE for the new curriculum.

Section 1: Statutory Guidance

The following is the draft guidance on which we are inviting feedback. The guidance is statutory and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act (“the Act”).

Audience

Those persons who must have regard to the guidance when designing or adopting¹ their RSE curriculum are set out below:

- (a) the head teacher of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school;
- (b) a provider of funded non-maintained nursery education²;
- (c) the teacher in charge of a pupil referral unit;
- (d) the management committee for a pupil referral unit;
- (e) a person who provides teaching and learning for a child, otherwise than at a maintained school, maintained nursery school or pupil referral unit, by virtue of arrangements made under section 19A of the Education Act 1996 (c. 56)³;
- (f) a local authority in Wales.

The persons/bodies responsible for designing a settings RSE curriculum and set out above must read and consider the guidance when designing the RSE element of a school’s curriculum pursuant to the Act.

¹ In respect of funded non-maintained nurseries the requirement is to adopt a curriculum that meets the requirements set out in the Act. That means the proprietor has a choice as to whether to design a bespoke curriculum or to adopt the curriculum published by the Welsh Ministers pursuant to section 13 of the Act. In all other settings such as maintained schools and maintained nursery schools the head teacher must design a curriculum that meets the requirements set out in the Act.

² A funded non-maintained nursery setting is defined in section 80(1)(a) of the Act as nursery education that is provided:

- (i) by a person other than the governing body of a maintained school or maintained nursery school,
- (ii) under arrangements made between that person and a local authority in Wales, in the exercise of its duty to secure nursery education under section 118 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and
- (iii) in consideration of financial assistance provided by the authority under the arrangements;

The term “nursery education” means full-time or part-time education suitable for children who have not attained compulsory school age.

³ This refers to those children who are not in a school or a PRU. This may be the case where illness prevents a pupil from attending such settings.

Introduction

What is RSE

RSE is a positive and protective part of the Curriculum for Wales. It plays a central role in supporting learners' rights to enjoy fulfilling, healthy and safe relationships throughout their lives.

Central to the Curriculum for Wales is an aspiration for every child and young person to achieve the four purposes of the curriculum. A [rights](#) and [equity](#) based RSE curriculum helps ensure that all learners can develop an understanding of how people's faith, beliefs, human rights and cultures are related to all aspects of RSE and how these rights can contribute to the freedom, dignity, well-being and safety of all people. Therefore, schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of the Rights protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴.

RSE should support learners to develop the knowledge, skills and values to understand how [relationships](#) and [sexuality](#) shape their own lives and the lives of others. Learners should be equipped and empowered to seek support on issues relating to RSE and to advocate for self and others.

RSE will be a mandatory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales for all learners from age 3 to 16 ("the Act"). This means that all learners must receive this education. There is no right to withdraw from RSE in the new curriculum. However, the new curriculum is being phased in, therefore, some pupils may still be withdrawn from RSE pending the new curriculum arrangements being rolled out to their school year.

Developmentally appropriate

The Act requires that the RSE provided must be developmentally appropriate for learners. Therefore, schools and settings must take account of a range of factors such as the learner's age, knowledge and maturity and any additional learning needs. The RSE needs to be developmentally appropriate for each learner.

The age of learners should be one of the criteria by which practitioners decide upon the appropriateness of content; however, there will be other factors they will need to consider when planning provision. Factors such as the physical and mental and emotional development of learners should also be taken into account. This is essential to ensuring learners are kept safe from information for which they are not sufficiently mature to process. This, however, should not be a reason for not providing children and young people with the essential information they need as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally; developmentally appropriate RSE requires the coverage of subjects that are integral to learners' development. For example, issues which may affect younger learners, such as puberty and menstruation, should be engaged with sensitively and before the onset of physiological changes. Schools should also consider how appropriate support is

⁴ See the glossary for more information.

provided through a whole school approach such as, in the case of puberty, ensuring that learners have access to sanitary products.

RSE for learners with special educational needs or additional learning needs

Schools providing education for learners with moderate and severe, profound and multiple learning needs should consider how best to meet the needs of all learners whose understanding of sexual health and well-being issues may not match their development.

All staff, including ancillary staff, physiotherapists, nurses and carers should be aware of the school's approach to RSE when working with learners with additional learning needs.

RSE provision should be a planned and integrated part of the curriculum, coordinated effectively to ensure continuity and progression in learning across the continuum. Special schools should decide the precise content of the RSE programme and the strategies for learning adopted to meet the differing needs of learners. For example, for learners who use alternative methods of communication, such as signing, symbols and/or communication switches and aids, schools will need to ensure that all staff are familiar with key RSE terms in Makaton, Braille and British Sign Language, or whatever alternative methods of communication are being used.

Legal status of this guidance

The RSE guidance is statutory and published under section 71 of the Act and is designed to assist those responsible under the Act for designing RSE as part of the school curriculum. They must consider the guidance when designing the curriculum.

Pluralistic requirement

The law already requires that RSE must be objective, critical, and pluralistic as to its content and manner of teaching⁵. The Act does not change that legal position. By pluralistic we mean that where questions of values are concerned, it must not seek to indoctrinate to a particular view but instead should provide a range of views on a given subject. This means that in practice, all schools and settings must teach RSE in a neutral, factual way. Where questions of values arise, they must present learners with different perspectives on a range of views on issues commonly held within society.

For example, schools may teach about different perspectives within faiths on matters of relationships and sexuality and this can help learners engage and navigate potential tensions. However, this must not be done in a way that seeks to indoctrinate learners in a particular view.

⁵ See the case of *Dojan and Others v. Germany* [2011] Application no. 319/08.

A good understanding of learners' views, emerging values and backgrounds and positive relationships with wider communities help to create a constructive context for exploring aspects and tensions.

Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character are currently required by Schedule 19 to the 1998 Act to teach religious education (RVE in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act) in accordance with their trust deed or the tenets of their religion. The same is not true in respect of 'sex education' in the 1998 Act – that position is not altered for what is now called RSE in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act. The requirement to teach pluralistically applies equally to the content and teaching of RSE for such schools.

It is important to note that a voluntary aided school with a religious character, whatever is taught in RSE, can still teach its own denominational syllabus as part of religious education i.e. that which accords with its trust or the tenets of its religion,⁶ but it should provide neutral, pluralistic information on other views⁷.

Equality Act 2010

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

In particular, schools and other settings should note that compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement for local authority maintained schools (including PRUs) in Wales and makes good educational sense to comply with it. The Public Sector Equality Duty helps schools to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve outcomes for all learners. The duty includes identifying where we can take action to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations, and where possible, mitigate negative impacts which may result from decisions.

In all schools and settings, teaching should reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

Provisions within the Equality Act 2010 allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic. This should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

⁶ In such schools the parents can always elect to for their child to receive the agreed syllabus and not the denominational syllabus.

⁷ This is also the case for those voluntary controlled schools with a religious character where parents have elected for their child to receive the denominational syllabus.

Schools should consider the makeup of their own student body, including the gender and age range of their pupils, and consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular **protected characteristics** (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk). Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.

RSE Policy

It is recommended that all PRUs and maintained schools, primary, secondary and special, have an up-to-date written RSE policy that is available for inspection by parents or carers. Governing bodies have a key role, along with head teachers and relevant staff, in determining and monitoring the effectiveness of the school's RSE programme. It is recommended that governing bodies ensure that the written RSE policy is reviewed annually and that engagement with parents / carers is undertaken at appropriate intervals.

As noted above the new curriculum is being phased in. Until the new RSE mandatory element is fully rolled out some school years will continue to be taught the 'sex education' pursuant to section 101 of the Education Act 2002. Similarly section 404 of the Education Act 1996 will continue to apply so that all PRUs and maintained schools, primary, secondary and special, must have an up-to-date written 'sex education policy' that is available for inspection by parents or carers.

The policy should:

- outline the school's vision of RSE within a clear values and rights framework;
- state the aims and expected outcomes of the school's RSE programme clearly;
- describe how the programme is managed and organised, and how it is embedded in the whole-school approach and forms/links with other areas of the school's curriculum;
- outline how the programme is delivered, the teaching approaches and resources used and who is responsible for providing them and evaluating their effectiveness;
- set out the content of the RSE programme for each year group, summarising when key themes should be introduced and how potentially sensitive issues should be dealt with;
- describe how school policies on confidentiality, safeguarding, child protection and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 relate to RSE;
- explain how learners will be given guidance about where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and where necessary, treatment;
- specify how the views of learners will be sought;

- summarise how health professionals and specialist external agencies are involved and will enhance the RSE programme;
- explain how RSE is monitored and evaluated, specifying the means and timescale for regular review to ensure it is relevant and up to date; and
- the new curriculum does not provide a right to withdraw for parents. However, the new curriculum is being phased in. Therefore, some pupils may still be withdrawn from RSE pending the new curriculum arrangements being rolled out to their school year. We would recommend the policy includes a statement about the parents' or carers' right to withdraw their child from RSE where still appropriate pending the full roll out of the new curriculum.

Principles of delivering effective RSE

Schools and settings' RSE curriculum should support and build on each learner's knowledge, skills and values in appropriate ways throughout their development and create safe and empowering environments which build on learners' experiences both within and beyond the educational setting providing positive alternatives to some learners' experiences. Set out below are the key principles to guide how RSE should be developed and delivered:

- RSE should be part of a **whole-school approach** and effectively integrated and coordinated across the curriculum.
- Effective RSE requires specialist expertise, time and resources. This will ensure a supportive environment is created to ensure learners and practitioners are safe to discuss and learn about issues which may be sensitive or challenging.
- RSE should be interdisciplinary in its approach to content, knowledge and understanding and in the way it is explored. RSE is a broad and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions that evolve over the lifespan.
- All practitioners should contribute to the school's RSE priorities and professional learning is a key requirement for delivery of high quality RSE. Schools and settings should enable all practitioners to access learning that can support them to develop confidence and knowledge regarding RSE.
- Building on the mandatory requirements of the code, RSE should be delivered in a way that is **inclusive**. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and **diversity** as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community offering them the opportunity to discuss and engage with decisions about learning and teaching in RSE.

- Provision should draw on specialist services and expertise, and engage with local communities. This should be mindful of the different perspectives and backgrounds within a local community.
- Building on the code, the approach to RSE should be protective and preventative, considering how learners might need to be supported to:
 - understand and cope with change, conflicts and pressure;
 - have the knowledge to recognise discrimination and violence, including Violence against Women and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
 - seek help and advice where appropriate.
- The teaching of RSE should respond to and be respectful of the lived experiences of learners.
- The approach to RSE should involve recurring themes and topics which reinforce and build on the learners' developing understanding and changing needs and should encourage learners to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- Building on the code, in developing their approach, practitioners should recognise, learners' social, physical, emotional and cognitive development and needs, as well as their evolving knowledge and experience.
- Progression in RSE should be a continuous process aiming to improve overall learner well-being and safety and to realise the four purposes. As learners progress, they should build on previous learning: consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions; knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts. The approach to RSE should therefore ensure that all learning and educational experiences will be sequenced and reinforced across the continuum.

Section 2: RSE Code

This mandatory code supports schools and settings to design their RSE curriculum setting out the content in three broad strands that can be inter-linked.

This Code is made under section 8 of the Act and contains mandatory requirements. A curriculum does not encompass RSE unless it accords with the provision in the RSE Code. Teaching and learning also does not encompass the mandatory element of RSE unless it accords with the provision in the RSE Code.

Themes and matters to be encompassed by mandatory element of RSE:

- Developing and expressing identity and forming relationships;
- Understanding sexual health and well-being;
- Fostering safety and respect, being valued and supported.

These strands allow practitioners to design and develop a curriculum tailored to their learners, making connections and developing authentic contexts for learning across the curriculum. The content of RSE, set out per strand in table form within this document, reflects a number of themes: relationships, rights and equity; sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; and violence, safety and support.

Across these themes, curriculum content in RSE is to be inclusive and reflect diversity. It must include learning to develop learners' awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and a diversity of relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives.

Designing your RSE curriculum

Strand 1 - Developing and expressing identity and forming relationships

This strand provides authentic contexts for learning that, and experiencing how, people of all ages are both unique individuals and members of families, various groups and communities. Learners should be given the opportunity to understand the different roles that they can play, both with their peers and with the adults in their lives, to develop their self-confidence, to have the confidence to speak up for themselves and to speak out in defence of others. At the appropriate period, their understanding of others and their ability to empathise should be supported to grow.

As learners develop, they can begin to explore how people's identity and individuality can be influenced and shaped by their personal experiences, interactions, and relationships with others. Gradually learners should be supported to understand how aspects of identity and individuality, including LGBTQ+ diversity, sex, gender and sexuality, develop and change over time. Being able to identify and value the things that connect individuals is as important as understanding the things that make us different and unique. Having an awareness of how opinions about others are formed can help to develop a considered view of oneself as well as a celebration of diversity among others.

Content appropriate to learner development

The content set out in the table below demonstrates the building blocks of [progression](#) in RSE which is a continuous process. As learners progress, they should build on previous learning - consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions, knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts. This is very different to simply acquiring learning about topics in isolation and then moving on to other content.

The educational provision for RSE refers to both what is taught explicitly and what is embedded throughout the curriculum and the school environment.

The statements set out in the table should be used in conjunction with the descriptions of learning in the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience, which provide more detail on the learning.

Early development (approximately age 3-7)	Developing years (approximately age 8-11)	Adolescence (approximately age 12-16)
The learning environment develops and the teaching focusses on:		
Developing empathy, kindness and compassion through positive, prosocial interactions.	How demonstrating empathy, kindness and compassion are key characteristics of a positive relationship.	Characteristics of equitable, consensual and loving relationships.
An awareness that there are different types of families and relationships.	An understanding of what characterises the nature of different families and range of relationships.	An understanding of the importance of connections with others and how these contribute to shaping our identity.
Everyone is unique.	An understanding of the characteristics and value/benefits/challenges of living in a diverse society.	Valuing safe, healthy and equitable relationships in a range of contexts (including marriage, and all types of civil partnership).
	An awareness of how social and cultural norms, roles and stereotypes shape perceptions around body-image, behaviour and health.	An understanding of how social and cultural norms shape feelings about body image, behaviour and health and strategies to counteract.
		How and why attitudes towards diversity are changing (including gender and sexual diversity).

Strand 2 - Understanding sexual health and well-being

This strand provides authentic contexts for learning about how living things grow, reproduce and have a life cycle. When learners understand this, they progress to looking at the changes that happen to the human body throughout the reproductive cycle and into adulthood. In early development, learners will experience contexts for understanding the importance of maintaining personal health and well-being, including personal hygiene, and how this impacts on self and others, progressing to applying broad principles of health and hygiene across sexual health.

As learners develop, teaching and learning should focus on exploring how physical changes have an impact on well-being and relationships. It should also focus on developing understanding of the possible outcomes of the decisions made relating to sexual health and relationships.

Content appropriate to learner development

The content set out in the table below demonstrates the building blocks of progression in RSE which is a continuous process. As learners progress, they should build on previous learning - consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions, knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts. This is very different to simply acquiring learning about topics in isolation and then moving on to other content.

The educational provision for RSE refers to both what is taught explicitly and what is embedded throughout the curriculum and the school environment.

The statements set out in the table should be used in conjunction with the descriptions of learning in the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience, which provide more detail on the learning.

Early development (approximately age 3-7)	Developing years (approximately age 8-11)	Adolescence (approximately age 12-16)
The learning environment develops and the teaching focusses on:		
<p>An awareness of life cycles and that living things change as they grow.</p> <p>The importance of self-care, personal hygiene and infection control.</p>	<p>The knowledge and understanding of how reproductive organs develop in a human body and the processes of reproduction, including what supports menstrual health and well-being.</p>	<p>How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy relationships which include mutual respect, consent; and shared outlook.</p>

	A gradual awareness in understanding that there can be both intended and unintended outcomes of developing relationships, including offline and online.	Knowledge and understanding that there can be both intended and unintended outcomes of having sexual experiences including offline and online.
The use of accurate terminology for all body parts.	The knowledge and understanding of how puberty triggers significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes for everyone.	The knowledge and understanding of how hormones continue to affect emotional and physical health throughout adulthood.
	The skills needed to manage self-care, personal hygiene and the importance of menstrual well-being and reproductive health for everyone.	The knowledge and understanding - of the causes, symptoms and impact of conditions and illnesses connected to sexual and reproductive health such as fertility, sexually transmitted infections and linked to menstrual health and well-being.
	The ability to understand that there are many reliable sources of information and support.	The ability to identify reliable sources of information and how to seek support and facilitate self-care.

Strand 3 - Fostering safety and respect, being valued and supported.

This strand provides authentic contexts for learning and experiencing that everyone needs to be cared for to grow and thrive. All learners have a right to be safe and respected within an environment, which provides for that. Learners develop understanding of the impact of different types of behaviour on others – both what you say and what you do - and the importance of self-regulation to ensure all learners' rights are respected. Learners should be taught that their right to be free from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect is enabled by trusted adults who support their safety, as well as through legal protections that exist for all including consideration of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Learners will increasingly understand the concept of consent, and

be confident to draw upon available support if they are concerned about their safety. Learners will also develop the ability to behave in a respectful and supportive way.

Content appropriate to learner development

The content set out in the table below demonstrates the building blocks of progression in RSE which is a continuous process. As learners progress, they should build on previous learning - consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions, knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts. This is very different to simply acquiring learning about topics in isolation and then moving on to other content.

The educational provision for RSE refers to both what is taught explicitly and what is embedded throughout the curriculum and the school environment.

The statements set out in the table should be used in conjunction with the descriptions of learning in the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience, which provide more detail on the learning.

Early development (approximately age 3-7)	Developing years (approximately age 8-11)	Adolescence (approximately age 12-16)
The learning environment develops and the teaching focusses on:		
An ability to interact with others in a way that is fair and respectful to all.	An understanding of the importance of equity and respect in all interpersonal behaviours including online and to recognise when to challenge and seek support.	A sense of responsibility to others including how we respond to behaviours which are discriminatory, disrespectful and harmful including online.
The benefits of asking for help and who to ask.	How to seek support for oneself and offer support to others.	The ability to identify reliable and evidence based sources of information, including online, and to learn about oneself, feelings, bodies and relationships with others.
An awareness of the right to privacy, bodily autonomy and an ability to recognise what is healthy/unhealthy, safe/unsafe and how to seek help.	An understanding of the right to privacy, bodily autonomy and the importance of consent and keeping safe, including online.	An understanding of the nature of consent in sexual relationships within different contexts, including online.

An awareness that there are laws in place to protect us from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect.	An understanding of laws that are in place to protect us from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect.
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Making connections within and across Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas)

Practitioners should ensure that they provide opportunities to develop learning in RSE across the curriculum, including all Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas).

The Health and Well-being Area statements of What Matters provide detail on knowledge, skills and understanding related to RSE and the descriptions of learning set out the progression within each statement. Practitioners should draw upon this when planning and developing RSE provision.

Statements of What Matters in the Health and Well-being area

- Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits
- How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being
- Our decision making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others
- How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being
- Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being

Practitioners should also look for opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in all the other Areas. For example, there is a clear inter-dependency with the biological and technological aspects of the Science and Technology Area and the complex nature of human societies within the Humanities Area.

Annex

Glossary

Awareness, knowledge and understanding	<p>(Ymwybyddiaeth, gwybodaeth a dealltwriaeth) In early development, learners experience holistic approaches to exploring relationships and are supported in shaping an understanding of themselves in the world. Learners have more awareness as they progress in their learning with concepts being introduced gradually according to learner development. As they move through the continuum, learners gain increased knowledge and understanding, and often experience of, the different themes that are part of RSE curriculum content.</p>
Consent	<p>(Cydsyniad) Consent is when one person agrees for another person to do something that affects them. It is important for people to ask for consent before they do something that affects another person. It is also important for a person's decision to be respected – if they say 'no' to something, then the other person should not go ahead with their action.</p> <p>In early development, learners start to understand consent by treating each other with kindness, consideration and respect. They learn about personal space and boundaries in negotiations about space, toys, books etc and showing respect for and understanding the difference between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. These are precursors of teaching about consent which takes place at secondary.</p> <p>In a healthy relationship, the person asking will usually respect the decision whether 'yes' or 'no' is the reply. They may question the decision but they should still respect the personal choice made. In an unhealthy relationship, the person asking may not respect the decision. They may try to persuade individuals to change their mind, using pressure to do what they want, or ignore the decision.</p> <p>Consent online means that someone has given permission for something to happen or has agreed others can do something with the data they have shared. For example, learners may be asked if a photo can be taken of them, this is asking for consent. Learners need to understand the implications of agreeing or not agreeing to such questions. Online, learners are not only navigating their relationships but also the different apps and services they use.</p>
Relationships	<p>(Cydbberthnasau) These can be interpersonal and intrapersonal. Interpersonal relationships refers to the</p>

	connections and interactions between two or more people. Intrapersonal relationships refers to the relationship that one has with oneself. Both types are inextricably linked, shifting and changing over time. They can be familial, spiritual, romantic, platonic and sexual.
Sexuality	(Rhywioldeb) A central aspect of being human and encompasses sexual orientation, gender identities and roles, sex, reproduction and intimacy. Sexuality is experienced and expressed through thoughts, beliefs, behaviours and relationships.
Whole School Approach	<p>(Dull Ysgol Gyfan) A “whole school approach” is the effective linking of all elements of an education setting’s curriculum, policy, staff and community. It encourages the communication and reinforcement of a consistent positive ethos and provides holistic high quality support for learners. This should also include how RSE makes up a part of a whole school approach to physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. For example, a school may want to consider how a supportive school environment can give opportunities to reinforce messages around inclusive relationships or encourage learners to seek help and support.</p> <p>The framework for embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being can be found here:</p> <p>https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/framework-on-embedding-a-whole-school-approach-to-emotional-and-mental-well-being.pdf</p>
Inclusive	<p>(Cynhwysol) Inclusive education is the process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.</p> <p>Inclusive RSE recognises the importance of diversity and difference across a range of identities related to relationships, sex, gender, sexuality and that this diversity is a source of strength and is foundational to a cohesive, fair and equitable society.</p>
LGBTQ+	(LHDTC+) LGBTQ+ Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual/bi, transgender/trans, queer or questioning. The + refers to other letters that can be added to include other groups and identities.
Equity	(Tegwch) Fair and impartial treatment, including equal treatment or differential treatment to redress imbalances in rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender	(Rhywedd) Often used to refer to whether someone identifies as female, male or non-binary. Gender often refers to the socially and culturally perceived norms and differences between men, women and non-binary people. People often find an important sense of identity in these but they can also perpetuate and enforce inequalities and harms through stereotypes.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	(Trais ar sail rhywedd) (a) violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation; (b) female genital mutilation; (c) forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding); 48458 Welsh Act Violence against Women.indd (legislation.gov.uk)
Diversity	(Amrywiaeth) An understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can relate to race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, or physical abilities.
Protected characteristics	(Nodeddion Gwarchoddedig) The Equality Act 2010 sets out the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
Sex	(Rhyw) Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Some people's gender identity does not match up with the sex they were assigned at birth. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used interchangeably to refer to whether someone is female, male or non-binary.
Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)	(Trais yn erbyn menywod, cam-drin domestig a thrais rhywiol) RSE, while fostering positive attitudes and behaviours, may also give learners space to explore the features of unhealthy relationships. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence touches many lives. This has particularly serious implications for children and young people, as victims themselves, in households where domestic abuse plays a part. It can impact on their safety, mental and physical health and general well-being. It affects family and peer relationships, and potential to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future; and it can impact on current and future educational attainment.

There will be children, young people and staff within your school who are currently experiencing, or at risk of using, abusive behaviour against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence, or have done so in the past. Schools and settings should be responsible for making sure their learners and staff are safe and healthy.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 presents an opportunity to lead the way on prevention work here in Wales. Educational settings provide an environment where positive attitudes towards gender equality and healthy, respectful relationships can be fostered through a rights-based approach.

Adopting a whole-school approach that includes preventative education within, and which also involves the wider community is vital.

The Welsh Government's Whole Education Approach to Violence against Woman, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales: Good Practice Guide was developed in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid. It is intended to be a practical and useful toolkit for embedding principles of a whole education approach to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It recognises the importance of education settings being environments where positive attitudes towards gender equality and healthy, respectful relationships can be fostered.

<https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-vawdasv-educational-toolkit>

The Welsh Government has also published practical guidance for school governors on the need to develop a policy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; how to recognise indicators of abuse and where to get support for themselves, their colleagues or their learners.

<https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-guidance-governors-0>