

Government response: Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs

The Department for Education is introducing compulsory [Relationships Education for primary pupils](#) and [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#) for secondary pupils from September 2020. Also, from September 2020 it will be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education.

Through these subjects, we want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe – we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. Throughout our engagement process as we developed this curriculum, we have heard a number of wide ranging concerns.

Below, we have explained some of the common misconceptions around the subjects.

Q: Will my child's school have to consult with me before teaching these subjects?

A: Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. Effective consultation gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parent's views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. What is taught, and how, is ultimately a decision for the school and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

A school's policies for these subjects must be published online, and must be available to any individual free of charge. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use, for example the books they will use in lessons.

Q: Will my child be taught sex education at primary? This is too young.

A: We are not introducing compulsory sex education at primary school.

We are introducing Relationships Education at primary, to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

Some primary schools choose to teach sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), and in those instances we recommend you discuss this with the school to understand what they propose to

teach and how. If you continue to have concerns, you have an automatic right to withdraw your child from these lessons.

Q: Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take account of my faith?

A: The subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain.

In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled. Schools with a religious character can build on the core content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching.

In developing these subjects, we have worked with a number of representative bodies and faith organisations, representing all the major faith groups in England. Several faith organisations produce teaching materials that schools can choose to use.

Q: Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

A: Parents will have a right 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.

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.

Q: Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?

A: A thorough engagement process, involving a public call for evidence and discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance, has informed the key decisions on these subjects. The consultation received over 11,000 responses from teachers, schools, expert organisations, young people and parents – these responses have helped finalise the statutory guidance as well as the regulations that have been laid in Parliament.

Q: Will these subjects promote LGBT relationships?

A: No, these subjects don't 'promote' anything, they educate.

Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all

pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years – we expect secondary schools to include LGBT content. Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so, but there is no specific requirement for this. This would be delivered, for example, through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents.

Q: Will teachers receive training before delivering these subjects?

A: The department is committed to supporting schools to deliver these subjects to a high standard. We know that training is a priority for teachers and we will be consulting with teachers, trade unions and other key stakeholders over the coming months on how we structure the training.

In addition, we are encouraging schools to act as early adopters for this curriculum and to start teaching the subjects from September 2019. To help early adopter schools, we will provide further advice on how they can improve their practice. Lessons learned from the early adopters and best practice from schools will be shared with all schools from September 2020.

We also have translation in:

[News story: British equine exports race ahead as Grand National looks to draw record overseas viewers](#)

- Exports of UK made equine equipment grow to reach a record value of £38.8 million in 2018
- North Yorkshire company Neue Schule's tech is being used to train horses for competition at the highest level
- The Grand National's organisers expect to attract over 600 million global viewers for this year's event

Overseas sales of British made saddlery and harness equipment grew to a value of £38.8 million in 2018, up 11.7% on the year before. The United States remains the biggest market for these products, however some of the fastest growing demand now comes from Asia.

Exports to Japan rose by 28% from 2017/18 to reach a value of £2.14 million, while during the same period, exports to Singapore grew by a whopping 214% to reach a value of £546,000.

One company leading the pack is Stokesley-based Neue Schule, an industry pioneer in equestrian hardware, which is riding the wave of global demand for British goods with a client list that includes the Team GB and USA Olympic equestrian teams.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) Export Champion manufactures a range of high-quality horse bits made from a soft metal alloy, specifically developed to avoid damaging the enamel of a horse's teeth. The product range was born out of a desire to improve horse welfare.

Neue Schule's products are now sold in 31 countries and, with support from the Department for International Trade, exports account for around 65% of the company's total business.

The business progressed through two DIT export development programmes and thanks to a DIT trade mission to Eastern Europe, discovered new distributors and made valuable contacts in-market.

Speaking about her company's exporting success, Neue Schule's chief executive Sarfraz Mian, said:

At Neue Schule we are passionate about horses – seeking to bring the best possible products to market for both animal and rider in the UK and overseas. When we were beginning our export journey in 2010, we did not know the level of success we would achieve.

Exports are now a fundamental part of our business and I'd recommend any company with international ambitions to just go for it!

The Northern Powerhouse is a vital exporting region for the United Kingdom, and it is companies such as Neue Schule that are really putting it on the map. It's brilliant to see their equine expertise being projected on the world stage.

In 2018 the region exported over £59 billion worth of goods alone, with over £18 billion of this coming from Yorkshire and the Humber.

There is substantial demand for UK products and expertise around the world, so I'd urge companies both small and large to get in touch with the Department for International Trade to learn more about how we can help them reach their exporting potential.

Thanks to advice and support from the Department for International Trade, the company now has a global network, selling thousands of products around the world including Africa, Canada, USA and New Zealand.

[Press release: Education Secretary thanks school leaders for academy success](#)

The success of the school academies programme and the impact it has had in raising school standards across the country was honoured by the Education Secretary yesterday (4 April).

Seventy-six school and sector leaders joined Damian Hinds at Lancaster House to mark the milestone that 50% of pupils in England are now studying in academies and free schools.

To celebrate the successes of the academies programme – which placed freedom into the hands of school leaders in thousands of schools across England since 2010 – Mr Hinds hosted leaders from top academies and free schools, including the Harris Federation, Co-op Academies Trust and STAR Academies, to thank them for their hard work.

The reception, which was co-hosted with Academies Minister Lord Agnew, also marked the fact that more than 50% of children in state-funded schools in England are now taught in an academy or free school, with standards typically rising faster in many sponsored academies than in similar council-run schools.

Mr Hinds also thanked attendees for their dedication to improving education for children and driving up school standards in some of most disadvantaged areas of the country.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The overwhelming majority of academies – that's more than 8,000 schools – tell a positive story. I see and hear about this every day in my job, and we've come a long way in the past eight years thanks to the hard work and dedication of teachers and school leaders across the country – including all of you.

Many of you run schools in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country that were previously underperforming – that is no longer the case and parents now have the choice of a good school.

The fact that more than half a million children are now in Good or Outstanding sponsored academies that were previously underperforming demonstrates that when schools come together, as part of a multi academy trust, they can achieve far more than they can on their own.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for helping to drive up standards for the next generation – the challenge now is to continue to transform education and encourage other school leaders to do the same.

More than 8,300 schools in the country have become an academy or opened as a free school and hundreds of schools each year continue to make the positive choice to become an academy.

The academies programme was introduced by the Blair Government in 2000 with the aim “to improve pupil performance and break the cycle of low expectation”. By 2010, there were 203 academies – mostly in inner cities.

The 2010 Academies Act gave all schools in England the freedom to choose to become an academy and now over 50% of pupils in the state funded education system are taught in an academy or free school.

The reception follows the publication of a research report on the benefits of academies earlier this year that showed that thousands of pupils are benefiting from higher standards in their schools after converting to become academies, and the Education Secretary urging more schools to consider the freedom and opportunities offered by becoming an academy.

Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of Confederation of School Trusts, said:

We want trust leaders to have the confidence to say that their trust is a group of schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards to help local communities thrive by giving children the best opportunities to learn.

We have therefore published guidance for trust leaders to help them proudly say that academy trusts are education charities that run schools to give children a better future and advance education for the public benefit.

Press release: Private sector employers report second year of gender pay gap data

Introduced in 2017, gender pay gap legislation means that every employer with 250 or more employees has to publish the differences between what they pay their male and female staff in average salaries and bonuses. This is the

second year that employers have been required to report their data.

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) estimates that around 50% of relevant employers have put in place an action plan to tackle their pay gap. Ministers want to see that number increase and the GEO have published guidance to encourage employers to identify why they have a gender pay gap and how they can work to resolve it.

The data from this year's public sector reporting shows:

- 8,424 private sector employers reported their data
- 3,736 employers saw their pay gap improve
- 3,387 employers saw their pay gap worsen
- 645 employers reported no change in their pay gap

Latest statistics from the ONS show that, across all employers, the median gender pay gap is at a record low of 17.9%, down from 18.4% the previous year.

Minister for Women and Equalities, Penny Mordaunt, said:

"Actions to tackle the gender pay gap are good for business. That's why we have produced support to help employers close their gaps.

"We recognise that in order to close the gap entirely we still need a much wider cultural change, that is why we have introduced a range of initiatives to tackle the drivers of the gap, including shared parental leave and spending around £6billion on childcare support."

Over the past year, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) has been working with employers in a number of sectors to encourage them to put in place detailed and effective action plans to reduce their pay gap.

One of these is the retail sector which has a large number of female employees working in customer facing roles. The British Retail Council are working with their members, supported by GEO, to increase the opportunities for women to progress to more senior roles while retaining the flexibility that attracted them to the sector in the first place.

Helen Dickinson OBE, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium, said:

"We know that many people choose to work in retail because of the flexibility it offers. With more than half of jobs in the industry offered on a part-time basis, retail supports women and other individuals who cannot, or choose not to, work full-time.

"Retailers have been focused on diversity and inclusion for a long time and the gender pay gap figures are just one aspect of a much broader agenda. Working with the Government Equalities Office we hope to support those who can to take steps to reduce their pay gap over time and, more importantly, build on the strong foundations we have as a leading employer of women and create equal opportunity for all within the retail industry."

Notes to editors:

Companies that are taking positive action against their pay gaps, may still see their gap widen this year. This is because companies that are taking effective action to close their gender pay gap may be taking steps to hire more women, if these are in junior positions then it could see the average wage for women drop within that organisation. Likewise, a senior female leader could move on to another opportunity and that may cause a short term widening of the gap within that organisation. The data from this year's public sector (deadline March 30th) reporting showed:

- 1,536 public sector employers reported their data
- 703 employers saw their pay gap improve
- 658 employers saw their pay gap worsen
- 90 employers reported no change in their pay gap

All Gender Pay Gap data can be found at:
<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>

Speech: The effects of human rights violations on the population and the political future of Haiti

Thank you, Mr President. This has been an especially rich and informative session on Haiti, thanks largely to our briefers this morning. I think the presence of the High Commissioner in the chamber today reminds us all that human rights are of vital importance both in their own right and across the other two pillars of the UN. We know that states that violate human rights are less prosperous, less stable, less able to meet the demands of their people and more likely to pose a threat to international peace and security.

Mr President, I want to focus on three issues today. First, on Women, Peace and Security. Ms Viaud drew our attention to the many barriers faced by women in Haiti, including a lack of access to healthcare, gender-based violence and a lack of access to justice. We strongly agree with the calls you made this morning, in particular for improved services to survivors of gender-based violence – especially for fair and safe access to justice – and for ensuring that whatever UN entity succeeds MINUJUSTH must ensure that any gains made on gender equality are preserved and should also support women's protection and empowerment.

And I would also echo the call that you made for the improved participation of women in political life – a point made by my Belgian and Dominican colleagues. Surely this will help accelerate progress to securing improved rights, justice and access to services for women.

And I also agree that it's very important that the UN in their reports to this Council should focus on this issue and update us on progress.

Second, turning to the human rights situation in Haiti, we very much agree with other speakers that whilst there has been progress in the human rights situation, that progress has been uneven and serious concerns remain. We welcome the work that has been done on the development of a National Action Plan on Human Rights and the appointment of a ministerial level human rights focal point. And we welcome the other improvements mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. However, at the same time, we remain concerned about the human rights abuses allegedly committed by the Haitian National Police during the demonstrations of October and November 2018, including allegations of summary executions. And it's also a concern that according to the Secretary-General's report, 74 percent of the prison population are still on pre-trial detention and a death rate of those in prison, according to this helpful handout from the UN, has actually increased from 11% to 14%. Those concerns remain.

I want to emphasize that if Haiti is to accelerate on its path to stability and prosperity based on a reinforced social contract between the state and its citizens, then human rights need to come front and centre. And this is a particularly important elements of the shift away from peacekeeping to peace building that we really hope can be prioritised.

And in the spirit of interactivity, Mr President – you encourage us to ask questions – it would be useful to know from the UN when the results of the MINUJUSTH investigation of events at La Saline will be completed and hopefully made available to this Council.

Third and finally, on the question of the reconfiguration of the UN presence that many speakers have touched on, the UK broadly supports the Secretary-General's proposal for MINUJUSTH to be succeeded by a special political mission. We especially welcome the fact that human rights and women's protection and empowerment will be at the centre of this mandate. I hear very much the concerns of the Dominican Republic; It is important that this transition happens in a responsible and smooth way, taking account of the situation on the ground as we move from a peacekeeping presence to a special political mission.

And we'd like to reiterate our appreciation for the work of OHCHR, encourage all states to cooperate with them and offer them their full support. The UN has a clear role to play to ensure an integrated and sustainable transition, but it will ultimately be the government of Haiti's leadership that will make this a success.

Thank you.