Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance
An Update for Post-Primary Schools
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In 2001, CCEA gave post-primary schools specific guidance on the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education. This material was accompanied by the Department of Education Circular 2001/15. At this time, Relationships and Sexuality Education was a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum through the Key Stage 3 Science programme of study and the Cross-Curricular theme of Health Education. Then, the introduction of the (revised) Northern Ireland Curriculum in all grant-aided schools as required under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 www.deni.gov.uk/circular-2007-06-commencement-order.pdf meant that from September 2007, Relationships and Sexuality Education became a statutory component of both the Personal Development and Home Economics statements of requirement for Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory component of the Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work. At this time, CCEA provided non-statutory guidance for schools on delivering Personal Development at Key Stages 3 and 4, which included information on Relationships and Sexuality Education. This material is available at www.ccea.org.uk. The flexibility which the Northern Ireland Curriculum offers also allows schools to teach Relationships and Sexuality Education through other areas of learning.
Rationale for Issuing Additional Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance

CCEA has issued this guidance for a number of reasons:

• All young people have the right to high quality Relationships and Sexuality Education that is relevant to their lives today. The aim of this guidance is to prompt schools to:
  − reflect on their existing Relationships and Sexuality provision; and
  − update their provision, if and where appropriate, to ensure that it is relevant to their pupils’ lives today.

• Schools should take care to ensure that their provision addresses the pressures and dangers to which young people may be exposed: in particular technology, the integral role it plays, and how it impacts on their lives.

• The Department of Education Circular 2013/16 requires every school to have an up-to-date written policy on how it will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education. This guidance offers advice for schools on how to develop and review their policy.

• The Department of Education Circular 2010/01 advises schools to take account of guidance issued by the Equality Commission in March 2009 on eliminating sexual orientation discrimination in schools in Northern Ireland. This guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. It is available at www.equalityni.org. It offers advice for schools on providing inclusive Relationships and Sexuality Education.

• In January 2011, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) published their Report of an Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Post-Primary Schools. This is available at www.etini.gov.uk. This guidance will help all schools to address the areas for improvement identified in this report.

• Child sexual exploitation has been prioritised within the three year strategic plan of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI, 2013). The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997–2013 highlighted the value of teaching pupils how to stay safe within the context of the Personal Development curriculum and the effective teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (Jay, 2014). Locally, the inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland highlighted the ‘particular role of schools in raising awareness and identifying concerns about child sexual exploitation’ as part of a ‘regional strategy to prevent, identify, disrupt and tackle child sexual exploitation’ (Marshall, 2014, pages 18 and 19). Relationships and Sexuality Education gives schools the opportunity to play a preventative role in child sexual exploitation by raising staff awareness of vulnerability factors and current indicators. This guidance also identifies how effective Relationships and Sexuality Education provision can help pupils to recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations, and teach them how to take preventative action.

• The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety’s Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland (2013–2020) public consultation document recognises that ‘schools are in a unique position to promote and safeguard the welfare of all children’ (DHSSPS, 2013, page 43). Through the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education, young people can explore sensitive issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse in an age-appropriate way, and develop appropriate behaviour to protect themselves (DHSSPS, 2013).
The DHSSPS Sexual Health Strategy identified Relationships and Sexuality Education as a priority in improving the sexual health and well-being of young people (DHSSPS, 2014). This guidance highlights the significant role that schools can play in helping and encouraging young people to make informed, responsible decisions about their relationships and sexual health.

What follows is supplementary guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education which builds on and complements existing guidance and advice. We hope that this latest guidance will help Boards of Governors, principals, senior leaders and teachers to ensure that their school provides broad, balanced, coherent and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education.
Relationships and Sexuality Education in the Northern Ireland Curriculum

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Personal Development, within which Relationships and Sexuality Education is firmly grounded, is at the core of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The centrality of Personal Development reflects the importance which CCEA places on delivering appropriate age-related Relationships and Sexuality Education within a clear values framework. The delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education contributes to ‘promoting pupils’ personal growth and development and in supporting their academic achievement’ (ETI, 2011, page 22) – that is, developing each child as a whole.
Defining Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education is about more than simply educating young people about biological sexual reproduction. Although it is often referred to as ‘sex education’, this terminology is misleading. Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process encompassing:

- the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy.

For pupils, the learning process has begun informally, with their parents or carers, long before any formal education takes place at school. Sexuality includes all aspects of the human person that relate to being male or female: it changes and develops throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions.

Effective Relationships and Sexuality Education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. Relationships and Sexuality Education in post-primary schools should build on the learning experiences from the primary curriculum, and provide young people with:

- the opportunity to develop the skills to build healthy and respectful relationships, stay safe, and develop their own moral thinking and value system; and
- up-to-date, accurate and accessible information about reproduction, sex and sexual health matters.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is effective when it is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, and in a way that is appropriate to the pupil’s emotional and physical age and stage of development. All young people have the right to quality teaching and learning across the curriculum; Relationships and Sexuality Education is no exception. An absence of such provision may leave pupils with a learning and skills deficit, making them more susceptible to inappropriate behaviours, sexual abuse and exploitation.

Why Relationships and Sexuality Education is important:

- **Respects the rights of children and young people**

  The United Kingdom Government, including Northern Ireland, is a signatory to the 1989 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) and has agreed to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the Convention. This means that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have a right to a good quality education in accordance with the Convention.

- **Promotes a better understanding of diversity and inclusion**

  Schools are increasingly diverse spaces reflecting wider societal change. This is acknowledged in the Department of Education’s *Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy* (2011). A school should provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment: it should foster respect for difference, challenge prejudicial attitudes, and promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. If schools are to encourage young people to be confident and
responsible of themselves and others, and prepare them for life after school, the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education should be inclusive of all differences regardless of race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender and sexual orientation. Schools should also recognise the diversity of family life in today’s society, particularly the fact that some children may have gay, lesbian or bisexual parents or carers, some of whom may be in a civil partnership. All staff must be sensitive and respectful of difference, ensuring that no pupil ever feels or is excluded, or experiences bullying due to their family or home circumstances.

**• Helps young people keep themselves safer in the digital world**

Technology plays an integral role in the lives of many young people in Northern Ireland today: they use the internet to watch programmes, play games, listen and download music, carry out research for school, chat with their friends, and make new friends. In fact, many young people choose to document their entire lives on social media. However, schools need to recognise the fact that, while technological advancements provide many opportunities, risk can accompany opportunity (Devine and Lloyd, 2014).

Cyber bullying, the use of chat rooms, online grooming, access to inappropriate images, and ‘sexting’ are just some of the ways in which online and digital technology can affect the lives of young people. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (Wanless, 2013) reports that over a third of young people would prefer to explore issues around sex and sexual identity online rather than ask a teacher or a parent or carer. Searching for information of a sexual nature on the net is making young people highly vulnerable and could expose them to risks including pornography, abuse and exploitation.

Between 15 to 40 per cent of young people are involved in ‘sexting’ (Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone and Harvey, 2012). ‘Sexting’ is ‘creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive, nude or nearly nude images’ through mobile phones and the internet (Lenhart, 2009, page 3). An NSPCC ChildLine Survey (2013) reports that six out of ten 13–18 year olds have been asked to send sexual images or videos of themselves, and that four out of ten have done so. In Relationships and Sexuality Education young people should have the opportunity to explore the issue of ‘sexting’, in particular, what constitutes an inappropriate image, and why young people send sexually explicit images. Sending sexually explicit messages, images or videos online or on mobile phones can have devastating consequences for a young person, so teachers need to make time to explore the outcomes of this behaviour. For example, the pupils could consider:

- the emotional effects, such as feelings of embarrassment and regret;
- the loss of control over where the messages, images or videos may end up in the virtual world; and
- how the sending of materials could lead to cyber bullying.

Pupils should also be aware that under The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 it is a crime to take, make, permit to take, distribute, show, possess, possess with intent to distribute, or to advertise indecent photographs of any person, including themselves, below the age of 18. The issue of ‘sexting’ also provides pupils with the opportunity to further explore and discuss related issues such as peer pressure, pornography, negative body image, and low self-esteem.
Through Relationships and Sexuality Education, young people should be taught how to safely navigate the digital landscape which plays such an integral role in their lives. They should be able to:

- identify potential threats or dangers, including all forms of emotional, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation;
- make informed choices and decisions;
- build their resilience; and
- be aware of strategies which they can use to protect themselves.

It is important that pupils affected by such issues know where to find appropriate sources of help.

• Helps young people to recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour and touch

Article 34 of the UNCRC enshrines all children’s rights to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation. According to recent reports, child sexual exploitation is increasingly evident and is an issue of serious concern in Northern Ireland (Beckett, 2011; Webb and Montgomery-Devlin, 2013). The SBNI has published a leaflet, issued to all schools in Northern Ireland on 5 November 2014 (see Department of Education letter at www.deni.gov.uk/circular_letter_to_schools_-_child_sexual_exploitation.pdf) which defines child sexual exploitation as ‘a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse’ (SBNI, 2014, page 7). Whilst any child under the age of 18 can be a victim of child sexual exploitation, it is young people of post-primary school age, particularly between 12–15 years old, who are primarily affected and most at risk (Beckett, 2011). Young people of 16 and 17 years old can also be victims of child sexual exploitation, even though they are legally eligible to consent to sexual activity. As with all forms of sexual abuse, people tend to hold stereotypical views of the type of young people who are at risk. Whilst there are circumstances and factors which can increase the vulnerability of a young person to this form of abuse – for example, female gender, low self-esteem, looked-after children, young people living in difficult home circumstances, substance misuse, being bullied at school, and disengagement with school – the majority of child sexual exploitation victims live at home (SBNI, 2014 page 4). All children and young people, both male and female, are at risk.

Furthermore, over half of victims of sexual violence in Northern Ireland are under 18 years of age (Bunting, 2011), with one in three teenage girls and 16 per cent of teenage boys having experienced sexual violence in intimate partner relationships (Barter, McCarr, Berridge and Evans, 2009). Some pupils will come from homes where there is domestic violence, and therefore may view this behaviour as acceptable and normal within a relationship. The Relationships and Sexuality classroom provides an ideal safe place for pupils to explore sexual and relationship violence. Although some pupils may have had personal experience of sexual violence or an exploitative relationship, the teacher should not avoid these issues in the classroom. Indeed, it makes it more essential, as the effective teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education can enhance pupils’ awareness of these issues and help them to recognise and challenge inappropriate and unwanted attention from others. It is also important that the pupils are encouraged to challenge the ‘blame’ that can be attached to victims of sexual abuse and domestic and/or sexual violence in a relationship, particularly female victims because of factors such as how they choose to dress, or their alcohol intake. Through Relationships and
Sexuality Education, pupils will develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of personal safety, and the importance of having equal, mutually respectful, consensual, non-exploitative and non-violent relationships. Pupils will also develop the resilience to work their way through difficult situations, and find out where to access help and support.

- **Provides reliable, accurate and age-appropriate information**

  Young people regularly contact organisations such as ChildLine as they lack basic knowledge on issues such as sexual health, puberty, pregnancy and relationships. NSPCC evidence suggests that young people feel that they are not obtaining such information in school (Wanless, 2013). Young people should have access to reliable, accurate and relevant information which reflects their age and maturity. All young people, including those with minority needs, must also know where to access a range of services if they need help or support.

  Relationships and Sexuality Education provides opportunities for young people to critically evaluate the information they are bombarded with today, particularly the often distorted and inaccurate information about sex and relationships they are exposed to from their peers and social media. Relationships and Sexuality Education can lead to young people making informed choices and decisions by providing opportunities for them to examine their own values and attitudes in the light of those held by others. A deeper understanding of their own personal values and beliefs can help young people to clarify why they think and behave as they do, separate fact from fiction, recognise prejudice, and respect the views, emotions and feelings of others.

- **Increases young people’s awareness of sexual health**

  Relationships and Sexuality Education is an important vehicle for:
  - increasing awareness of issues such as contraception and fertility;
  - improving the sexual health and wellbeing of young people; and
  - reducing unplanned teenage pregnancy and rates of sexually transmitted infections.

  However, despite the fact that research repeatedly shows that quality Relationships and Sexuality Education can delay sexual activity amongst young people, the reality is that many young people are engaging in sexual activity.

  In 2013, a Northern Ireland survey of Year 11 and 12 pupils found that one in 10 reported having experienced sexual intercourse, with a further 16.5 per cent reporting some sexual experiences but no sexual intercourse Young Persons’ Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (NISRA, 2013). Of those who had experienced sexual intercourse, 45.6 per cent were 14 years old or under when they first had sexual intercourse. In addition, a quarter of young people surveyed said that they had not used any contraception to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. These stark figures indicate the need to ensure that, through Relationships and Sexuality Education and taking account of the agreed morals and values framework, every school should ensure that they provide young people with timely and accurate teaching about safer sex. Furthermore, teaching about safer sex remains one of the key strategies of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS, 2014) in combating teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
Sexually transmitted infections are an important public health issue in Northern Ireland. Recent data shows an increasing trend in the numbers of new diagnoses, highlighting the fact that young people are at particular risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (Public Health Agency, 2013). As the incidences of sexually transmitted infections continues to rise here, pupils should be provided with accurate, factual information about the following:

- the most common sexually transmitted infections;
- the prevention of HIV/AIDS;
- the ways in which these infections can be transmitted;
- what constitutes risk-taking behaviour; and
- how to obtain appropriate advice if they are concerned about their sexual health.

Young people must also understand that sexually transmitted infections are major causes of ill health and that anyone involved in intimate contact, irrespective of their sexual orientation, is at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection.

Birth rates for teenage mothers in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom are among the highest in Europe, although in recent years there has been an overall decreasing trend in the numbers of births to teenage mothers in Northern Ireland. Between 2000 and 2012 the number of births to mothers under 17 years old was reduced by 50 per cent. However, despite the overall decrease in teenage birth rates in Northern Ireland, there is still an unacceptably high rate of teenage pregnancy, particularly in deprived areas where teenage birth rates are almost double that of Northern Ireland as a whole (DHSSPS, 2012). Moreover, the targeting of boys and young men is an important, yet neglected, part of addressing unplanned teenage pregnancy (Shaw and Mohan, 2012). Relationships and Sexuality Education in schools should address the boy’s role in preventing unintended pregnancy, and on the impact teenage pregnancy has on the lives of teenage boys as well as girls.
Building Partnerships Between Home, School and the Wider Community

Strengthening the partnership between school and home

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a lifelong process which begins in the home. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a young person’s life, particularly in the sphere of Relationships and Sexuality Education. However, in view of the significant amount of time young people spend in school, parents or carers entrust teachers to help educate their children in this sensitive and important area of their lives. In a recent survey, when asked where they learnt about sexual matters and relationships, almost three quarters of young people selected ‘lessons at school’ Young Persons’ Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (NISRA, 2013). This finding is important for two reasons. Firstly, it shows how important Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes in schools are, and the important role a teacher of Relationships and Sexuality Education can play in a young person’s life.
If a teacher and pupil build a strong, secure relationship it may help to nurture the values, beliefs and attitudes that young people need to have healthy relationships and to develop informed decision-making skills (Gregg and Johnston, 2014). Secondly, the finding shows how important quality school-based Relationships and Sexuality Education is to young people, as both parents or carers and their children often report that they are too embarrassed to talk to each other about sex and relationship issues. However, schools must be mindful of the fact that their role must be considered to be complementary to that of parents or carers.

**Engaging with parents or carers**

It is understandable that many parents or carers are anxious about when, what and how their children will be taught in Relationships and Sexuality Education. Concerns range from parents or carers thinking that their child is too young to participate in these classes, to worrying that exposure to sex-related issues will lead to their child becoming more sexualised.

As parents or carers play a crucial role in supporting their child’s education (DENI, 2009; Harris and Goodall, 2007), schools should consult closely with parents or carers to allay these fears. A recent survey conducted by ETI has concluded that schools need to do more to engage parents and carers in this aspect of their child’s education. ETI states that ‘there is a need for parents to be involved more in developing the Personal Development curriculum in school and for them to be supported so that they can help keep their children safe outside of school hours’ (ETI, cited in Marshall, R, 2014, page 105). Schools could employ strategies such as:

- providing up-to-date parent or carer friendly information leaflets, which would encourage parents or carers to discuss any issues which may arise in the classroom with their children;
- holding awareness-raising workshops; and
- sharing resources to educate parents or carers on, for example, how to ensure that their children are using social media safely and responsibly.

Engagement with parents or carers also gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of sex education, and to consider issues such as the readiness of their child for aspects of the programme, the appropriateness of resources to be used, the content and methodologies proposed, and how sensitive issues will be addressed. Parents or carers must know that a school’s teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education will be complementary and supportive of their role as lead educators in this sensitive area, and will be delivered in the context of the school’s distinctive ethos.

**Withdrawal from Relationships and Sexuality Education**

Whilst Relationships and Sexuality Education is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland curriculum, parents or carers have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, whilst ‘there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education’, schools can grant these requests on an individual basis (Lundy, Emerson, Lloyd, Byrne and Yohanis, 2013, page 25). Schools should consider how they can support parents or carers who choose to withdraw their child from all or part of Relationships and Sexuality Education.
If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw a child from all or part of Relationships and Sexuality Education, they must discuss the potentially detrimental effect that this can have with the school (Lundy et al, 2013, page 25). They should consider the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the pupil will hear their peers’ version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teacher’s. Ultimately, however, the school must respect the wishes of the parent or carer.

Engaging with pupils

Article 12 of the UNCRC ‘provides all children with the right to express their views in matters affecting them and for those views to be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’ (Lundy et al, 2013, page 43). The UNCRC has also identified Article 13, on the right to freedom of expression, and Article 17, on access to information, as prerequisites if a child’s right to be heard is to be effective (Lundy et al, 2013, page 43).

Pupils should become involved in the development and review of a school’s Relationships and Sexuality Education policy. They should be involved in the school’s ongoing evaluation and review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education provision to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. A programme which goes unaltered year on year is unlikely to reflect the changing needs of pupils. Moreover, as is the case with all learning, young people are more likely to engage with, enjoy and value a programme which has been tailored to meet their needs and one which they feel a sense of ownership of.

Strengthening the partnership between school and the wider community

Schools may wish to use the expertise and skills of education and health professionals from outside agencies or from individuals in the wider community. There are many benefits of this, including the following:

• Outside agencies/individuals in the wider community can bring specialist knowledge, expertise and experience into the classroom;
• The novelty of a new visitor coming in to the classroom/school is often very welcomed by pupils;
• It can increase the pupils’ knowledge of services which can be accessed in the local community, and teach them how to go about accessing these services if and when they need them; and
• It can enhance teachers’ capacity by updating their knowledge and/or showing new pedagogy/teaching practices used by the outside agency/individual.

It is vital that any outside agency/individual delivering a support session in a school:
• receives a copy of the school’s Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;
• is made aware of and adheres to the school’s Child Protection Policy;
• receives a copy of the school’s policy on the use of outside agencies/visitors (if they have one);
• agrees to respect the ethos of the school;
• is made aware of the issues around confidentiality; and
• is vetted as appropriate.
A school may also wish to draw up a brief written agreement/contract between themselves and the external service provider which outlines details of proposed session(s), aims, learning intentions, methodology and evaluation. This will help to clarify the expectations and requirements of both the school and the outside agency.

To maximise learning from the session, schools should thoroughly prepare pupils for the visit. The class teacher should also check that pupils are not uncomfortable or unhappy with either the topics that they are addressing or the teaching methodologies that will be used. During the session, the teacher should be present at all times. Afterwards the teacher should provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss their experience(s) and honestly evaluate the session(s). Schools can use their pupils’ feedback to inform their future planning and provision along with any evaluation carried out by the outside agency/individual.

Whilst there are benefits associated with using outside agencies/individuals, schools should not come to over-rely on their use. Teachers should not use outside agencies/individuals as substitutes for aspects of Relationships and Sexuality Education which they do not want to address. Teachers must also ensure that any resources or activities the outside agencies/individuals undertake are complementary to and support the ongoing provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education, and are respectful of the school ethos.

If an outside agency/individual is coming into the school to support the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme, parents or carers should be made aware in advance. Schools should explain the type of activities which will take place to parents or carers to ensure that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns they might have before the visit. Doing this will also have the added benefit of letting parents or carers know what is going on, and strengthen ties between home and school.
Sexual orientation and gender identity

A young person’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a central and significant part of who they are and how they see themselves in relation to others. The results of a study carried out in Northern Ireland in 2013 reveal that, across lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) groups, the average age at which young LGB people became aware of their minority sexual orientation is 14.1 years; for males the average age is 13.8 years, and 15.5 years for females (O’Hara, 2013, page 18). Recent research reveals that transgender young people become self-aware that their assigned birth sex is different from their gender identity between the ages of 3–5 years old (McBride, 2013). However, it is between the ages of 6–16 years old that transgender young people began to understand their feelings and could begin to talk about them (McBride, 2013).
Uncertainty or discomfort about their sexual orientation and gender identity can also have a negative effect on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of a young person. Research shows that ‘young people can experience disadvantage due to their sexual orientation, such as homophobic bullying, mental health issues, rejection from family and friends and increased risk of homelessness’ (McDermott, 2010, page 5). Relationships and Sexuality Education can help to promote a positive view of sexual orientation and gender identity, which in turn can help raise the self-esteem of young people who may feel different.

Schools should handle the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity in a sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way. However, many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils feel excluded in Relationships and Sexuality Education classes, claiming that negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes often go unchallenged. All pupils, regardless of their sexual orientation, have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. It is of paramount importance that teachers do not view teenage LGB attraction and gender identity as a passing phase, as this would in effect trivialise an important part in the development of these young people’s lives, and potentially have an ongoing negative impact on them (Appleby and Anastas, 1998).

Dealing with homophobic language and bullying

A school should be a happy environment where young people feel safe and secure: a place where difference is celebrated and where all young people can focus on their learning. Unfortunately, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that homophobic bullying and the use of homophobic language is not being acknowledged or adequately and openly addressed as a problem in some schools across Northern Ireland. Homophobic bullying is ‘any language, conduct, or behaviour used to exclude, demean or threaten a person based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation’ (The Rainbow Project, 2010). The word ‘gay’ is often used in a negative and belittling way by many young people. This abusive language is often tolerated; however, not only is this wrong, but it can have a devastating impact on young people who may be questioning their sexual orientation or who may have lesbian, gay or bisexual parents or carers/relatives. Schools should ensure that young people are aware that using this kind of language is not acceptable. In providing advice to the government on proposals to outlaw sexual discrimination, the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People (NICCY) reported that young people with actual or perceived sexual orientations often experience homophobic bullying in schools. The advice stated that ‘homophobic attitudes about sexuality thrive with ignorance and suspicion’ (NICCY, 2006, page 6).

Homophobic bullying, as with other forms of bullying, must be addressed at whole-school level. The effects of homophobic bullying can have a detrimental impact on young people, resulting in poor health outcomes including low self-esteem, substance abuse, self-harm and suicidal behaviour, as well as poor educational experience such as low attendance, high absenteeism and low academic attainment (McDermott, 2010, page 6). Schools must deal with homophobic bullying as robustly as they would with any other form of bullying. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has issued ‘good practice’ measures to help schools to address homophobic bullying. These include:

- updating anti-bullying policies to cover all equality issues including sexual orientation, transgender bullying, sexual harassment and bullying for other reasons relating to sex, gender or relationships;
• ensuring that policies stipulate what behaviour is and is not acceptable, particularly the use of homophobic language by pupils;
• updating anti-bullying policies to include cyber bullying;
• communicating their anti-bullying policy to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers;
• raising awareness of what homophobic bullying is and how the school proposes to deal with any reported incidents;
• ensuring that effective reporting systems are in place to enable pupils to report incidents; and
• dealing with all complaints promptly, seriously, sympathetically, confidentially and effectively (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2009, pages 11–12).

Young people with special educational needs (SEN)

Schools must ensure that young people with SEN in mainstream schools have appropriate, accessible and relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education. Schools may need to engage in the careful planning and adapting of resources and teaching activities to ensure that there are no barriers to participation or learning for pupils with SEN compared to their peers. It is particularly important that schools communicate with parents or carers of young people with SEN about the content of the programme and the date when classes will cover certain teaching activities/Themes. This communication will allow for parents or carers to reinforce learning at home.

It is widely recognised that pupils with SEN are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse and exploitation. Teachers must try to ensure that they develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of pupils to enable them to:
• identify inappropriate and exploitative behaviour;
• help develop their own prevention strategies to stay safe;
• recognise and build healthy relationships; and
• know who they can talk to.

Meeting the needs of boys and young men

A recent survey of male adolescent school-life experiences in Northern Ireland reported that boys perceived their experiences of school to be disconnected from the social contexts and reality of their everyday lives (Harland and McCready, 2012). These findings support the views of health, education and social services professionals who also maintain that the needs and concerns of boys and young men, particularly in relation to issues around relationships, sexual identity and sexual health are not being adequately addressed.

Relationships and Sexuality Education has tended to focus primarily on girls; boys are often excluded as they feel that the content is not relevant to them, and they are either unable or too embarrassed to ask questions about relationships and sex. Boys are currently much less likely to receive education on pregnancy prevention in schools, and parents or carers are much more likely to have discussed sex and pregnancy with their daughters than with their sons (Hyde et al, 2010). Because of this void of information, boys and young men often turn to their peers, or to television, films, magazines and pornography to search for answers. This material can distort
and negatively influence boys’ attitudes of what it means to be a man, and their views towards the opposite sex. It can also increase risk-taking behaviour, such as having sex at a young age. Furthermore, these sources of information often fail to address the emotional aspects of relationships, leaving boys and young men with an unbalanced knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a healthy sexual relationship and sex-related issues.

It is for reasons such as these that teachers should consult with boys when planning Relationships and Sexuality Education content, to ensure that it is relevant for boys as well as girls, and include activities which encourage them to ask questions and talk about their concerns and feelings. Not only will engaging with boys ensure a more relevant Relationships and Sexuality Education programme but it will also show boys that their views and opinions matter. It will also boost their self-esteem, make them feel valued, and ultimately lead to their greater engagement and participation in Relationships and Sexuality Education classes. Schools may also wish to explore ways in which they can help parents or carers, particularly fathers, discuss Relationships and Sexuality Education issues with their sons.

**Personal backgrounds and cultural practices**

Teachers of Relationships and Sexuality Education must be particularly sensitive to the personal circumstances and cultural background of their pupils. They must recognise how pupils’ views and values are influenced by their informal learning experiences and by the views of family, peers, community and the media (DE, 2011). For example, for some pupils it would be inappropriate to address some Relationships and Sexuality Education issues in a mixed gender setting because of cultural or religious beliefs. Other pupils may come from a background of same-sex parents or carers, so teachers need to be mindful of this. Relationships and Sexuality Education also provides a forum in which to explore issues such as how young girls may be victims of cultural practices, including child/forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Schools should, however, handle such issues very sensitively to ensure that some cultures are not viewed negatively due to their practices.
The importance of establishing good relationships in the classroom environment

Good relationships are important in any classroom; however, they are particularly important when teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education. In Relationships and Sexuality Education, learning is most effective when it takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive space, where pupils can express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment, judgement or ridicule from their peers. Agreeing ground rules or creating a classroom charter can help both teachers and pupils to feel more at ease in Relationships and Sexuality Education class.
Approaches to teaching and learning

Teachers need to adopt a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning about Relationships and Sexuality Education if they wish it to be meaningful and engaging for pupils. The teacher’s role is to facilitate and support pupils’ learning. They should employ an enquiry-based approach when exploring sensitive issues. Using methodologies in which pupils actively participate, such as scenarios, role plays and debates will ensure that they gain deeper knowledge, understanding, thinking skills and personal capabilities, attitudes and dispositions, and that they really engage in the learning process.

Connected learning opportunities

There are many opportunities within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for subjects such as Science, Home Economics, Citizenship, Religious Studies, and the use of ICT to contribute to and deepen the learning experiences of pupils outside the Relationships and Sexuality Education classroom. Schools can do this by arranging for subject leads to work together to identify and plan learning opportunities and create a thematic approach. This is a particularly effective way for teachers to enable pupils to explore sensitive issues as it allows them to do so through a variety of different lenses. It also helps pupils to deepen their knowledge of different viewpoints and perspectives and to understand why people have them. For teachers, a connected learning approach helps to create a strong supportive climate within a school, allowing them to share good practice in dealing with sensitive issues. This approach also helps teachers to build their confidence and skills to teach these issues.

Teaching resources

Teachers must be cautious about the resources they use to deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education, especially if they are planning to use resources which are freely available on the internet. Teachers must satisfy themselves that the resources they plan to use:

• reflect the ethos of the school;
• are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to the pupils’ needs and experiences; and
• are factually accurate, up-to-date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion.

Please note that inappropriate/explicit images should not be used under any circumstances. Schools must also ensure that they protect pupils from accessing unsuitable material on the internet. CCEA advises that schools inform parents or carers about any materials that pupils will be exposed to, particularly if these are of a sensitive nature.

Relationships and Sexuality Education and sensitive issues

Sensitive issues can include those about which different individuals/groups disagree, and hold strong opinions on. Such issues can often divide society and arouse strong feelings as they tend to deal with fundamental questions of values and beliefs. Issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual abuse and family lifestyle all have the potential to be sensitive, depending on the personal experiences, opinions and values of each individual within the classroom and on the distinctive ethos of the school. Schools may wish to deal with such issues differently, depending on their distinctive ethos. When each individual school is developing their Relationships and Sexuality Education policy they should discuss and agree on their approach, and give teachers clear guidance in their policy.
Sensitive issues are part and parcel of life. Young people are aware of them, and want to talk about and understand them, particularly those sensitive issues which are also topical. Pupils should not be denied the opportunity to explore such issues simply because a teacher feels uncomfortable discussing them, and they should not be sheltered from discussing sensitive issues in an age-appropriate way. To do either is to leave young people ignorant and unprepared to engage and deal with the diverse and complex range of issues facing them in society today. When teaching sensitive issues, teachers must plan for and be prepared to deal with the strong emotional responses which pupils often have. This is where the teacher can draw on the Personal Development curriculum framework within which Relationships and Sexuality Education sits to help pupils develop an understanding of their feelings, thinking and behaviour, and to develop strategies to manage and cope with these feelings.

**Responding to questions in Relationships and Sexuality Education**

In the past many young people have reported that the information they were given during Relationships and Sexuality Education classes did not help them make informed choices and that classes were delivered by ‘scared and embarrassed teachers’ (Children and Young People’s Unit, OFMDFM, 2003, cited in NICCY, 2004, page 31). Teachers have also reported that they do not feel that they have the skills to deal effectively with teaching sensitive issues. When teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education, the natural inquisitiveness of young people often results in the teachers being asked many questions which they had not planned for and which may challenge their own values system. It is this fear of the unknown which often makes teachers apprehensive about delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education.

There will be occasions when teachers will have to use their own discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular questions raised by a pupil or a group of pupils. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement as to whether it is appropriate to deal with the question in a whole-class forum. It may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. The teacher may also wish to discuss the questions posed with the parents or carers and/or a senior member of staff to ascertain how they would like the matter to be handled. It is essential that the school leadership team, including the Board of Governors, ensures that any teacher responsible for teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education is supported and feels equipped to deal with the unexpected. A school’s Relationships and Sexuality Education policy should include guidance as to how teachers respond in these circumstances.

**Providing advice to pupils**

As part of the curriculum teachers can provide pupils with general information on a range of Relationships and Sexuality Education issues, as well as information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice, treatment and support should they need it. Teachers can give this general advice to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which teachers give it supports the role of the pupils’ parents or carers, and reflects the ethos of the school.

Teachers should remember that, as they are not medical professionals, they cannot give personal medical advice to any pupil. Teachers must advise pupils to seek advice from parents or carers and health professionals.
Confidentiality and dealing with disclosures

The provision of effective Relationships and Sexuality Education can play a key role in meeting schools’ child protection/safeguarding obligations. Schools have the responsibility to develop appropriate policies and practices which safeguard and keep young people from harm. They must ensure that they can identify pupils who are ‘at risk’ so that they can provide the appropriate support. A study revealed that 62 per cent of young people who were groomed for child sexual exploitation never told their parents or an adult in a position of authority (Beckett, 2011). This finding is a stark reminder of the significant role teachers play in the early detecting of ‘at risk’ pupils and why they must always be alert to pupils experiencing distress and/or changes in their behaviour, as the majority of young people do not tell when they are being abused or exploited.

The foundation for the effective delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education is the building of secure, trusting, respectful relationships between the teacher and their pupils. Pupils should feel reassured that their teacher cares about their wellbeing and be aware that there are adults whom they can talk to and confide in. Pupils must also know and understand that the promise of confidentiality is never an option in the classroom or school setting. They must know where the sources of confidential help are and how they can access them. It must also be clear to pupils that, whilst teachers will offer support, they are obligated to notify the child protection/safeguarding teacher/team if they are concerned that the pupil may be ‘at risk’. Teachers must take decisions relating to personal disclosures in accordance with the procedures set out in DE’s booklet Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (Circular 1999/10).

The following is a summary of these procedures:

• The staff member should immediately inform the designated child protection teacher/member of the safeguarding team.

• The designated child protection teacher/member of the safeguarding team must inform/consult with Social Services and/or the PSNI.

• No staff member should take on the role of investigator – this is the responsibility of Social Services and the PSNI.

• Staff members should explain their responsibilities to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate authorities, but they also must ensure that the matter will only be disclosed to the people who need to know about it.

• Staff members should give the pupil time to talk without interrupting or probing, recording exactly what the pupil says, whilst not promising confidentiality.

It is very important that any pupil who feels that they cannot talk to or does not wish to talk to their parents or carers has access to other sources of support. The school should also make parents or carers aware of how they address pupil disclosures.
The DE Circular 2013/16 states:

‘The Department requires each school to have in place its own written policy on how it will address the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education.’

The circular also states that:

Relationships and Sexuality Education ‘should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities’.
Having a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy will help schools to:

- promote a shared vision of Relationships and Sexuality Education across the school;
- show how Relationships and Sexuality Education complements and supports other aspects of school life;
- establish consistent standards and practices in the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- create a framework for wider curriculum development and review;
- provide a foundation for the monitoring and evaluating of Relationships and Sexuality Education provision; and
- prepare for inspection and help to promote school self-evaluation and improvement.

Developing a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy should be a collaborative process involving teachers, parents or carers, pupils, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of these stakeholders has a valuable contribution to make, so schools must develop a structure which provides genuine opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to the policy. It is hoped that each school can create a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy which is unique to them through a consultative process. The policy should:

- cater for and meet the needs of all pupils; and
- ensure clarity and consensus on how Relationships and Sexuality Education will be taught.

These two elements should be the driving forces behind the policy.

It is the responsibility of the school’s governing body to ratify the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy. Whilst it is appreciated that every school’s Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy will be different, there are some key areas which should appear in all policies, regardless of school type.

The following framework is a starting point to help schools to develop a Relationship and Sexuality Education policy or review their existing policy.
Relationships and Sexuality Education Exemplar Policy Framework

Contextual information

• School details
• Date of policy
• The overall school aims and objectives of the policy
• How the aims of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy support the values, ethos, and moral and ethical framework of the school, and how this will inform the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education
• How the policy takes account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. This is available at www.legislation.gov.uk
• Reference to the relevant sections of UNCRC, available at www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf
• How the policy contributes to Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy. These documents are available at www.deni.gov.uk
• How the policy links to the School Development Plan

Description of policy formation and consultation process

• How the policy was drawn up – who was consulted and how
• How the policy will be disseminated – who will receive it, where it can be accessed
• How and when it will be reviewed
• Contact person for comments/feedback on policy

Aims and objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

• The aims of Relationships and Sexuality Education and why it is important in the school
• How the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education supports the school’s ethos and reflects the moral and religious principles held by parents or carers and school management authorities
• The objectives of Relationships and Sexuality Education within the school – what the school is setting out to achieve through Relationships and Sexuality Education
• How the school will ensure inclusive learning for all pupils through Relationships and Sexuality Education

The management and co-ordination of Relationships and Sexuality Education in the school

• Name of co-ordinator responsible for planning and delivery
• Who will teach Relationships and Sexuality Education – for example, self-nominating teachers, and ensuring a gender balance of staff teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education
• Timetable allocation of Relationships and Sexuality Education
• Classroom arrangements – single-gender classes, mixed-gender classes
• Approaches to learning and teaching – teaching methodologies that will be used
• Provision for pupils with SEN
• Relationships and Sexuality Education resources used and criteria for selection (to ensure that they are inclusive and consistent with the school’s moral and values framework)
• Strategies for gathering and disseminating the most current and relevant information and research on Relationships and Sexuality Education issues to inform planning and ensure relevance
• How to deal with sensitive issues and respond to pupils’ questions
• Monitoring and evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education provision, for example tools for gathering data, who will be involved
• Staff development and training

Specific issues statements
• Confidentiality and disclosures (individually and in the classroom setting)
• Procedures for the involvement of outside agencies/individuals in supporting the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Procedures for involving and consulting with parents or carers
• Parents or carers with learning difficulties
• Parents’ or carers’ rights and responsibilities
• Engagement with parents or carers – curriculum input, policy development, information, support sessions, providing materials/reading for home use
• Withdrawal from Relationships and Sexuality Education – how the school will provide support for pupils who are removed from part or all of the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme

Links across the curriculum and to the wider life of the school
• How learning and teaching in other subjects complements Relationships and Sexuality Education across the key stages, for example in Local and Global Citizenship, Religious Studies and Science
• How elements of the wider pastoral programme support and complement Relationships and Sexuality Education, for example assemblies, form class provision

Links to other school policies
• Anti-bullying Policy – specific reference should be made to homophobic bullying, transgender bullying, cyber bullying, sexual harassment and bullying for other reasons relating to sex, gender, or relationships
• Policy on using outside agencies and vetting arrangements
• Pastoral Care Programme
• Confidentiality Policy
• Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy – how the school will support pupils who are thought to be ‘at risk’, and how the school will assess the ‘at risk’ pupils
• Behaviour Policy
• Internet Safety/E-Safety Policy
• Drugs Education Policy

Possible appendices

• Relevant documentation could be signposted, for example:
  - Parent or carer-friendly summary of Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
  - Pupil-friendly summary of Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
  - Pupil-friendly list of contacts, websites and organisations related to Relationships and Sexuality Education
  - Relevant DE Circulars
  - Schemes of work/outline programme across the key stages
  - Independent counselling service/support services
  - Brief details of outside agencies/individuals the school uses to support the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education and an outline of the session(s)
  - Northern Ireland Curriculum link
  - Link to the ‘iMatter’ programme and ‘message of the month’
Selecting appropriate resources

This guidance document has identified some of the Relationships and Sexuality Education related issues which are particularly relevant to young people today. Below is a list of resources which teachers may wish to consult when planning or refreshing their existing provision to ensure that it remains meaningful and relevant to pupils’ lives and experiences.

As pointed out earlier in this guidance, it is a matter for individual schools to decide on the teaching and learning resources they wish to use. CCEA strongly recommends that schools review and quality-assure all the resources chosen before the pupils use them. The resources below give a flavour of the materials and support that is readily available to help teachers; however, CCEA does not endorse any of the websites listed. Resources have been grouped under key themes for ease of reference.
Keeping young people safer in the digital world

www.saferinternet.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a range of resources to help schools teach pupils about staying safe online. These include resources on teaching about the consequences of ‘sexting’ and how to prevent the sharing of images. There are also links to other valuable websites which offer similar resources.

www.childline.org.uk

The NSPCC has produced resources to make it easier for children and young people to get help about ‘sexting’.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) ‘thinkuknow’ website contains advice and resources for teachers exploring the risks which children and young people are exposed to when online. CEOP have produced targeted advice and guidance for 11–13 year olds, 14+ years, parents or carers, and teachers.

www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Childnet International provides in-depth advice for teachers in their ‘hot topics’ section, covering issues such as ‘sexting’, online grooming, cyber bullying and online gaming safety. There is also an online resource bank which contains lesson plans and activity ideas suitable for young people up to nineteen years old – this is available at www.childnet.com/resources.

www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/externaldocs/ACPO_Lead_position_on_Self_Taken_Images.pdf

Information on policy and procedures relating to sexting in Northern Ireland is available from the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

CEOP have created a short film entitled Exploited to help young people stay safe from sexual exploitation by being able to recognise the signs. It compares an exploitative friendship or relationship with a healthy relationship, and gives young people clear information about reporting abuse and accessing support.

www.safetoknow.info

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland’s (SBNI) website contains useful information and resources to raise awareness on child sexual exploitation.


Expect Respect: A Toolkit for addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse is a teaching resource that challenges the attitudes of teenagers to violence and abuse in relationships.
The NSPCC have produced a number of resources to support teachers in responding to relationship abuse.

**Sexual health issues**

www.thinkitthrough.org.uk
This website provides advice for young people about healthy relationships and also has links to other organisations in Northern Ireland.

www.nidirect.gov.uk
This provides useful advice for young people about sexual health and pregnancy.

www.fpa.org.uk
This factsheet summarises some of the key points of UK law relating to sexual behaviour.

www.qub.ac.uk
Queen’s University Belfast have produced a resource entitled *If I were Jack* about teenage men and unintended pregnancy. It encourages pupils to consider and reflect on all of the options and consequences associated with unintended pregnancy.

www.crisispregnancy.ie
As part of their Crisis Pregnancy Programme the Health Service Executive in Dublin have produced *B4UDecide*, a free, downloadable teaching resource for Relationships and Sexuality Education.

www.brook.org.uk
As well as classroom activities and lessons, posters and leaflets, Brook also offers training for teachers to develop their knowledge and confidence of teaching issues such as safeguarding, contraception choices, relationships and sex advice, sexuality, sexual health and pregnancy advice.

**Sexual orientation, gender identity and homophobic bullying**

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.schools-out.org.uk
*Schools Out* is a UK charity committed to helping make schools safe and inclusive for everyone.

www.the-classroom.org.uk
This website provides detailed advice on many aspects of teaching and learning to make LGBT people visible in education. It includes presentations, detailed lesson plans and a range of inclusive teaching resources celebrating diversity.
The ‘exceeding expectation initiative’ is designed to tackle homophobia and address sexuality with young people. This website is divided into three main sections and provides useful background information on what homophobia is, responding to homophobic bullying and the homophobic bullying experiences of young people.

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum includes resources on cyber bullying and homophobic bullying.

The Rainbow Project in partnership with Cara-Friend offers free training to schools on homophobic bullying. They also develop educational resources and offer awareness-raising workshops for pupils.

This website provides information for young people on sexual identity.

This website provides advice for schools who want to explore issues around gender and identity, and advises on dealing with transgender issues for children at school.

**Guidance documents**

The following guidance documents produced by CCEA may be of use to teachers in planning their Relationships and Sexuality Education provision:

- Insync – Key Stage 3 Personal Development
- Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4
- Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 3
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Key Stage 4
- Guidance on Teaching Controversial Issues at Key Stage 3

All documents are available at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)
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Appendices

Appendix 1
Statement of Minimum Requirement at Key Stage 3: Learning for Life and Work - Personal Development strand

Appendix 2
Statement of Minimum Requirement at Key Stage 3: Learning for Life and Work - Home Economics strand

Appendix 3
Statutory Statements of Requirement for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4 - Personal Development strand
Appendix 1

Statement of Minimum Requirement at Key Stage 3: Learning for Life and Work - Personal Development strand

The minimum content is set out below. The statutory requirements are set out in **bold** under the **Key Concepts** and **Learning Outcomes**. The Relationships and Sexuality Education strands are highlighted in **yellow**. Additional non-statutory guidance and suggestions are set out in plain text with all examples in **italics**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept - Self Awareness</th>
<th>Key Concept - Personal Health</th>
<th>Key Concept - Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Self Awareness provides opportunities to consider the importance of self-confidence and self-esteem to physical and emotional/mental health throughout life.</td>
<td>Exploring Personal Health provides opportunities to understand the importance of recognising and managing factors that may influence physical and emotional/mental health throughout life.</td>
<td>Exploring Relationships provides opportunities to understand the importance of forming and maintaining relationships to physical and emotional/mental health throughout life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupils should have opportunities to:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupils should have opportunities to:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupils should have opportunities to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and express a sense of self, for example, temperament, feelings and emotions, personal responsibility, personal needs, aspirations, etc.</td>
<td>Explore the concept of Health as the development of a whole person, for example, defining what makes up a whole person, the need to develop his/her physical, mental, social, moral, cognitive self, etc.</td>
<td>Explore the qualities of relationships including friendship, for example, conditions for healthy relationships, types of relationships, healthy boundaries, gender issues in relationships, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate the influences on physical and emotional/mental personal health, for example, immunisation, regular physical activity, personal hygiene, diet, stress, addiction, life/work balance, etc.</td>
<td>Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios, for example, sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, domestic violence, teenage rebellion, child abuse, sexism, change in family circumstances, coping with rejection, loneliness, loss, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the influences on a young person, for example, peer pressure, media, social and cultural trends, fears, anxieties, motivations, etc.</td>
<td>Develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour, for example, puberty, body image, mood swings, etc.</td>
<td>Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict, for example, active listening, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore the different ways to develop self-esteem, for example, enhanced self-awareness, sense of security and self worth, setting achievable targets, developing resilience, new interests and skills, learning to recognise achievement, etc.</td>
<td>Investigate the effects on the body of legal and illegal substances and the risks and consequences of their misuse, for example, effects on behaviour, physical and mental health, life and work changes, etc.</td>
<td>Explore the implications of sexual maturation, for example, sexual health, fertility, contraception, conception, teenage pregnancy, childbirth, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop skills and strategies to improve own learning, for example, self management, time management, attitudes and motivation towards learning, organisation and recognition of own learning preferences, developing ambitions for life and work, etc.</td>
<td>Develop preventative strategies in relation to accidents in the home, school and on the road, for example, safe practices in relation to appliances and equipment, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, road safety, knowing what to do in the event of cuts, burns and fire, knowing emergency first aid, etc.</td>
<td>Explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity, for example, personal values, attitudes and perceptions, the Law, STIs, the impact of underage parenting, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learning outcomes require the demonstration of skills and application of knowledge and understanding of Personal Development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupils should be able to:</strong></td>
<td>• develop an awareness of emergency first aid procedures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research and manage information effectively to investigate Personal Development issues, including Using Mathematics and Using ICT where appropriate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• show deeper understanding by thinking critically and flexibly, solving problems and making informed decisions, demonstrating Using Mathematics and Using ICT where appropriate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate creativity and initiative when developing ideas and following them through;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• work effectively with others;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate self management by working systematically, persisting with tasks, evaluating and improving own performance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• communicate effectively in oral, visual, written and ICT formats, showing clear awareness of audience and purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** Teachers may develop activities that combine many of the statutory requirements, provided that, **across the Key Stage**, all of the statutory aspects highlighted in **BOLD** (including each of the **Key Elements**), are met.
Appendix 2

Statement of Minimum Requirement at Key Stage 3:
Learning for Life and Work – Home Economics strand

The minimum content is set out below. The statutory requirements are set out in **bold** under the **Key Concepts** and **Learning Outcomes**. The Relationships and Sexuality Education strands are highlighted in **yellow**. Additional non-statutory guidance and suggestions are set out in plain text with all examples in *italics*.

### Key Concept - Healthy Eating
Exploring Healthy Eating provides opportunities to develop understanding required in the choice, planning, storage, preparation, cooking and serving of food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils should have opportunities to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrate skills in the safe, hygienic, healthy and creative use of food;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• research and manage information effectively to investigate Home Economics issues,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including Using Mathematics and Using ICT where appropriate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• show deeper understanding by thinking critically and flexibly, solving problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and making informed decisions, demonstrating Using Mathematics and Using ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where appropriate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrate creativity and initiative when developing ideas and following them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• work effectively with others;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrate self management by working systematically, persisting with tasks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluating and improving own performance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• communicate effectively in oral, visual, written, mathematical and ICT formats,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>showing clear awareness of audience and purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Concept - Home and Family Life
Exploring Home and Family Life provides opportunities to understand the importance of the family as a caring unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils should have opportunities to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals within a variety of home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and family structures, for example, sharing roles within the family, role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reversal, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop awareness of parenting skills, for example, how parents or carers can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurture physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• investigate some of the changing needs of family members at different stages of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the life cycle, for example, physical (including nutritional), intellectual,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional, social needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explore strategies to manage family scenarios, for example, managing changes in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family circumstances such as sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Concept – Independent Living
Exploring Independent Living provides opportunities to understand the importance of becoming discerning consumers and effective managers of resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils should have opportunities to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop a range of skills to promote independence through planning, managing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and using resources, for example, task and time management, cooking for and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing self, managing money, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• investigate a range of factors that influence consumer choices and decisions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for example, media and advertising, peer pressure, ethical issues, value for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money, methods of payment, impulse and planned purchases, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• investigate consumer rights, responsibilities and support available in a range of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scenarios, for example, making use of relevant legislation and consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations, complaining effectively, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Concepts and Learning Outcomes

- **Key Concepts** are highlighted in **yellow**.
- **Learning Outcomes** require the demonstration of skills and application of knowledge and understanding of **Home Economics**.
- **Pupils should be able to:**
  - develop practical skills in the safe, hygienic, healthy and creative use of foods to plan, prepare, cook and serve a range of meals, for example, creative use of ingredients, cooking for different cultures and occasions, etc.
  - develop the practical skills in the safe use of a range of utensils and appliances in the preparation, cooking and serving of a variety of dishes, for example, selecting the equipment appropriate to the task, making use of labour saving appliances and new technology in the kitchen, etc.
  - investigate the impact of storage, preparation and cooking on food, for example, nutritional value, prevention of food poisoning, spoilage, etc.
  - explore ways to achieve a healthy diet, for example, an understanding of the current dietary recommendations and how they can be applied to food choice and preparation, understanding diet related disorders as a consequence of poor food choice.
  - develop awareness of parenting skills, for example, how parents or carers can nurture physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral development.
  - investigate some of the changing needs of family members at different stages of the life cycle, for example, physical (including nutritional), intellectual, emotional, social needs.
  - explore strategies to manage family scenarios, for example, managing changes in family circumstances such as sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, etc.

NB: Teachers may develop activities that combine many of the statutory requirements, provided that, **across the Key Stage**, all of the statutory aspects highlighted in **BOLD** (including each of the **Key Elements**) are met.
Appendix 3

Statutory Statements of Requirement for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4 - Personal Development strand

Personal Development
Pupils should be enabled to:
• develop an understanding of how to maximise and sustain their own health and well-being;
• reflect on, and respond to, their developing concept of self, including managing emotions and reactions to on-going life experiences;
• recognise, assess and manage risk in a range of real-life contexts;
• develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships;
• develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting; and
• develop further their competence as discerning consumers in preparation for independent living.

Elaboration of the statements at KS4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop an understanding of how to maximise and sustain their own health and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of personal health and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement emphasises the responsibility of the individual for their health and well-being and explores ways to maximise it. The level of depth and breadth should accommodate prior study and avoid unnecessary repetition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first part of this statement would require pupils to identify, explore and evaluate their personal status of health and well-being in terms of how they have progressed and developed in the five areas of health (social, physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual). Pupils could also investigate the determinants of health, particularly economic and social status with the strong link between poverty and poor health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In developing the statement, pupils would be required to identify, explore and respond to opportunities and challenges that impact on the promotion of personal health and wellbeing. In doing this pupils have an opportunity to explore the concept of emotional intelligence and its strong links with maximising potential in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of this statement will also require pupils to explore the consequences to the individual, community and economy if potential health issues are not addressed. This may include consideration of for example; mental health including stress and depression, obesity, smoking, alcohol abuse, addictions including drugs and sexually transmitted infections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on, and respond to, their developing concept of self, including managing emotions and reactions to on-going life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of self-awareness and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement emphasises the continual need to analyse ones self and how this links with understanding and managing emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first part of this statement would require pupils to identify and explore ways in which their sense of self is evolving in relation to internal and external factors. In doing so pupils will need to explore internal influences such as; the role of values, attitudes, conscience, resilience and esteem on their development of self. Along with external factors such as opportunities and experiences, parents, school and friends which all impact on the development of self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In developing the statement, pupils have an opportunity to explore the concept of emotional intelligence and its strong links with maximising potential in life. Pupils also have an opportunity to investigate the link between emotional intelligence and positive self-management, considering the emotional intelligence framework and the four competencies of emotional intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last part of this statement will require pupils to identify, explore and respond to a range of appropriate life changing circumstances such as relationship break-up, death of a relative/friend, leaving home etc. Pupils should make the link between, thinking, feeling and their behaviour in their selected circumstances and understand how the three are inextricably linked. They should explore possible strategies that would help them respond effectively to changes in their life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STATEMENT

**Recognise, assess and manage risk in a range of real life contexts.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of personal health and relationships and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement encourages pupils to develop their skills of risk assessment and identify when risks are necessary in order to learn and personally develop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first part of this statement requires pupils to identify and review different types of risk and examines how a change in context can alter the exposure to risk. Pupils should have the opportunity to identify different kinds of risk, considering the context in which the risk is occurring and whether it is a necessary or unnecessary risk. The level of depth and breadth should accommodate prior study and avoid unnecessary repetition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In developing the statement, pupils would be required to assess the level of risk in a range of situations and examine the potential positive and negative consequences. This will necessitate deeper discussion around risk and how it is assessed, as well as their view on what constitutes positive and negative consequences. Pupils should also be encouraged to consider longer term consequences and how these can differ from the short term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last part of this statement will require pupils to identify ways to manage risk leading to positive outcomes. This will require pupils to demonstrate skills in forward planning, managing emotional responses and thinking through all of the issues. Pupils will be encouraged to make informed choices regarding risk which help facilitate a positive outcome. They should use real life contexts for these activities, some of which may be reflective on past events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STATEMENT

**Develop an understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of relationships and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement will necessitate deeper investigation and understanding of many issues already addressed in Key Stage 3 as pupils’ emotional and physical development progresses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first part of this statement requires pupils to identify and explore the meaning of ‘sexuality’ and how it influences all relationships. Pupils should understand that from birth humans are all sexual beings and that sexuality affects many aspects of life including, behaviour, communication (verbal and non-verbal), clothing, personal preferences and emotional responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The statement requires pupils to identify, explore and respond to the role of values and attitudes in the development and maintenance of healthy and appropriate relationships. Pupils should have a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship. They should consider how they think and feel about a variety of relationship scenarios and the impact of personal values and attitudes on their decisions. In particular, pupils should explore the need to respect themselves and others while in a relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further development of the statement will require pupils to recognise, explore and assess the impact of various forms of abuse on a young person. This will require sensitive handling by the teacher, taking into consideration the needs and maturity of the pupils. Such areas as sexual, emotional, physical and psychological abuse can be considered along with abuse of power and position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From this, pupils move on to identify and explore options which promote healthy sexual relationships. Key to this is the promotion of respect, both for themselves and the other person in the relationship. They should consider the role of marriage in a relationship. Pupils should have a sound understanding of the range of contraceptives available and the advantages and disadvantages of each. They should discuss abstinence as a viable option in a relationship. Pupils should consider the consequences of unhealthy sexual relationships, for example STIs, unplanned pregnancy and emotional stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, the statement will require pupils to identify a range of strategies to resolve challenging relationship scenarios. This may range from falling out with a close friend, breaking up with girl/boyfriend, family rows, disagreements with a teacher, to unwanted attention from another person. Pupils research support services available to young people. This may include, school support structures, family members, friends, counselling services, GPs, and NGO’s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STATEMENT

**Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of home and family life from the Home Economics (HE) strand and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement encourages pupils to explore the range of family structures that exist today and examine the many challenges placed on families and parents in today’s society, and particularly if the child has a disability or the parents are teenagers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The early part of this statement would require pupils to investigate the roles played by parents, the impact of parenting on child development and the challenges that parents may face. Pupils have the opportunity to explore how child development is significantly influenced by the quality of parenting, particularly in the early years of development. This can be linked to other work on emotional intelligence and how the behaviour of significant adults impacts on the emotional development of children. They should consider the potential challenges and opportunities created for different types of parents, for example single, teenage and older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last part of this statement will require pupils to explore the issues surrounding teenage pregnancy and parenthood with reference to the individual, family, community and society. Pupils should consider the emotional, physical, social, academic and financial implications of teenage pregnancy and parenthood in all these areas for both boys and girls. Pupils should review the range of options available to teenagers who discover they are pregnant and the impact these options may have on the individuals involved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATEMENT

Develop further their competence as discerning consumers in preparation for independent living.

This statement follows on from the Key Stage 3 study of self-awareness and Independent Living from the HE strand and the statements that are contained there. In particular, this statement encourages pupils to consider the influences on the consumer in today’s society and how best they can prepare themselves to cope as an independent adult.

The first part of this statement requires pupils to identify and explore how to manage finances effectively. Pupils should be made aware of the implications of getting into debt and the emotional and psychological impact it can have on the individual. Pupils should also evaluate the ‘buy now pay later’ schemes that are widely available.

Another aspect of this statement will require pupils to investigate how to draw up a budget for themselves or for a family given a specific income. This exercise should develop an appreciation of the cost of living and the need for sound financial planning now and in the future. In developing the statement, pupils would be required to examine the government and non-governmental agencies that young people can go to for help and advice. For example; General Consumer Council, Citizens Advice Bureau, and Trading Standards (Consumer line).

The last part of this statement will require pupils to develop an appreciation of savings plans and investments. Pupils should investigate the need to save for the future and for old age.