

Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education: Frequently Asked Questions for governors in schools and academies

March 2017 update

PSHE education is the school subject through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

In 2013, OFSTED found a strong correlation between outstanding PSHE education and outstanding schools. High quality PSHE education helps schools to fulfil their statutory duties and provides robust evidence for Ofsted judgements, especially in regard to safeguarding, personal development, behaviour and welfare but also in leadership and management and the requirement to provide a broad, balanced curriculum. In addition, a Department for Education (DfE) review of PSHE education provision in 2015 found a range of positive outcomes for schools including; improved attitudes to health, being able to deal with personal difficulties and improved behaviour.

On the 1st March 2017 the Government announced its intention to make relationships education (at primary) and relationships and sex education (RSE) (at secondary level), statutory in all schools, including academies and free schools, through the Children and Social Work Bill. RSE is an integral part of PSHE education and should always be taught as part of a broader PSHE education programme. The government also opened the door to making PSHE education statutory in its entirety following a period of consultation. The intention is for RSE and (depending on the consultation outcome) PSHE education in its entirety, compulsory from September 2019.

What does PSHE education include?

PSHE education provides opportunities for pupils to develop essential skills and attributes to keep themselves healthy and safe and to thrive in life and work. These include resilience, managing peer pressure; empathy, communication and negotiation, team-working, adaptability, risk management and personal, interpersonal and social effectiveness. Pupils develop these skills and attributes while learning about subjects such as:

- **Relationships:** developing and maintaining positive and healthy relationships of all kinds, including friendships; recognising and dealing with unhealthy relationships (including bullying); understanding how to communicate effectively and confidently within relationships. Relationships and Sex education will form a core aspect of a broader PSHE programme
- **Health:** healthy lifestyles; healthy eating and exercise; mental and emotional health and wellbeing; drug, alcohol and tobacco education
- **Risk:** assessing and managing risks and opportunities such as making independent choices and recognising and responding to peer pressure; personal safety on and offline, including on social media
- **Economic wellbeing:** budgeting, saving, pressures and influences on spending and risks associated with gambling and other financial choices
- **Career choices:** enterprise skills, different career pathways
- **Employability:** key skills needed to succeed in the workplace; preparation for the world of work

Why is PSHE education important for pupils in our school?

Effective PSHE education supports the development of physically, emotionally and socially healthy young people, equipped to live healthy, safe, productive and responsible lives and to keep themselves and others safe. It supports the development of essential employability skills for the 21st Century, encouraging positive career choices, and good behaviour. It reduces or removes barriers to learning, such as bullying, low self-esteem, unhealthy, or risky behaviours. There is also strong evidence to suggest that the focus of PSHE education on health, wellbeing and key life skills has the potential to significantly support and enhance pupils' academic [attainment](#).

Is PSHE education a national curriculum subject?

While PSHE education is currently a non-statutory subject (see introduction above), section 2.5 of the [National Curriculum framework](#) states that:

'All schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on good practice.'

Along with the National Curriculum framework, the DfE also published [guidance on PSHE education](#), which states that the subject is 'an important and necessary part of all pupils' education' and that:

'Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.'

How does PSHE education fit with other statutory duties required of our school?

[Section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework](#) states:

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'*

These duties are set out in the [2002 Education Act](#) (the [2010 Academies Act](#) also refers to the broad and balanced curriculum). Schools also have statutory responsibilities in relation to promoting pupil wellbeing and pupil safeguarding ([Children Act 2004](#)) and community cohesion ([Education Act 2006](#)). The [Equality Act 2010](#) places duties on schools to help to reduce prejudice-based bullying and in doing so to ensure all pupils regardless of their age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, are kept safe. PSHE education plays an important part in fulfilling these responsibilities.

How does the PSHE education curriculum support safeguarding duties?

All schools and academies have responsibilities relating to the safety of children in their care. Paragraph 68 of the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), clearly states that safeguarding extends to curriculum approaches such as PSHE education:

‘Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PSHE education....’

Do we have to publish our PSHE education curriculum on our school website?

As outlined in [Schedule 4 of the School Information \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), there is a requirement for schools to publish details of their curriculum online. In January 2014, the DfE updated its [timeline of mandatory information for schools](#), making it clear that a school’s PSHE curriculum should be published under this requirement.

How does sex and relationships education (SRE) fit into PSHE education provision?

See the introduction above for details of proposed changes to the status of SRE, including making it compulsory in all schools and academies and changing the name to relationships education in primary phase and relationships and sex education (RSE) at secondary level.

At the time of writing, primary and secondary state maintained schools should have an up-to-date SRE policy, available for inspection and to parents/carers on request. This is the responsibility of the governing board. Academies don’t have to have an SRE policy but it is advisable. Free schools must have an up-to-date SRE policy, drawn up by the governing board, available to parents and for inspection.

Currently, in state maintained primary schools, only those elements of SRE contained in the science national curriculum are statutory. The teaching of SRE is a requirement for state maintained secondary schools (including learning about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections).

SRE is not compulsory in academies and free schools but if it is taught, then the school must have ‘due regard’ to the Secretary of State’s Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DFEE, 2000) which strongly recommends a broader programme of SRE as part of PSHE education. The content of this broader programme is decided by each school or academy and constructed within the governing body’s SRE policy. The PSHE Association has developed guidance on drafting your sex and relationships education policy which is available [here](#).

At the time of writing, if a school decides not to teach SRE outside the science curriculum this must be documented in a statement by the governing board. In any school that provides SRE, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of SRE (excluding withdrawal from sex education within the science national curriculum).

The DfE has formally recognised [good practice guidance](#) from the PSHE Association, Brook and the Sex Education Forum, which sets out schools’ responsibilities on sex and relationships education which vary between primary and secondary schools and between maintained schools and academies/free schools.

How does PSHE education specifically contribute to Ofsted outcomes?

PSHE education has a key role in relation to Ofsted success. [Ofsted has identified that outstanding schools almost always have outstanding PSHE education](#), and that [PSHE education contributes to key judgements](#) in the Common Inspection Framework, particularly in relation to personal development, behaviour and

welfare; spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development; and safeguarding. Evidence gathered through assessment of learning in PSHE education plays a major part in demonstrating the impact of a PSHE curriculum that is matched to the needs of pupils.

How does PSHE education link to other policies which our school is obliged to hold?

A comprehensive programme of PSHE education contributes to schools' statutory policies for:

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Special Education Needs
- Sex education
- School behaviour
- Health and safety
- Equality
- Safeguarding/Child protection procedures

In addition, it is strongly recommended that schools have a policy for [drug education](#) and incident management which makes reference to PSHE education.

What can support your school's PSHE education provision?

Currently, as a non-statutory subject, PSHE education does not have a statutory programme of study. However, the PSHE Association provides [a Programme of Study for PSHE education](#) which is freely available to all schools and which is signposted by the government for schools to use. This covers Key Stages 1 – 5 and is based on three core themes:

- Health and wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the wider world

Guidance for schools on developing their PSHE education policy is available [here](#).

PSHE Association members can download free our scheme of work planning toolkits, which support PSHE Leads to design schemes of work tailored to the needs of their schools.

Key questions for governors to ask their school leaders, teachers and/or pupils

- How does our school ensure its PSHE education is relevant and is meeting the needs of our pupils?
- How is learning in PSHE education assessed?
- How could learning in PSHE education provide evidence to support our school in any future inspection – especially of safeguarding?
- Is PSHE education in our school taught by a teacher who is trained and comfortable in their role?
- Is it inclusive of difference, including other cultures, ethnicity, disability, faith, age, sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Does it take a developmental approach and is it relevant to pupils, depending on their age and maturity?
- Is the head teacher and senior leadership team supportive of PSHE education and the PSHE education Lead?
- Is PSHE education provision evaluated and monitored?

Conclusion

PSHE education helps schools to evidence how they are meeting statutory duties for safeguarding, , SMSC development, including British values, and all aspects of personal development and wellbeing. It links closely to many national curriculum subjects and is essential to success in Ofsted inspections, as well as being closely linked to [academic attainment and future employability](#). Longer term, PSHE education prepares pupils to manage the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities they will face both now and in their future lives.

Governor membership of the PSHE Association includes:

- access to member only resources
- regular email updates on best practice in PSHE
- governor support by email or phone
- full access to member only CPD & events.
- dedicated training for governors on PSHE education and how it supports statutory obligations.

The PSHE Association can help your governing board to recognise and ensure effective PSHE provision so that all pupils in your school community receive the best possible educational opportunities to achieve their potential. To discuss your requirements or request a quote, contact sue@pshe-association.org.uk or call us on 020 7922 7950.