

Guidance for a governors' meeting

For any governing body of a Church of England school, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is likely to be a subject that provokes discussion. Educators and Policy makers are concerned that children and young people receive the most helpful education and guidance possible in areas that can really impact on wellbeing and life happiness. In many governing bodies there is likely to be a span of beliefs and opinions about the teaching of these subjects, and a governing body meeting to discuss RSHE can be one that might be regarded as needing thought-out planning.

It may be felt that an **RSHE sub-committee** could be temporarily established to discuss these issues and bring them back to the full governing body meeting.

This is a suggested agenda.

The aim of the meeting:

1. To discuss and agree the place of [RSHE within the context of Church school life](#).
2. To decide whether this school (if a Primary School) wishes to include the teaching of sex education at KS2. (see [Should we teach Sex Education in our Church of England/Methodist primary school?](#))
3. To agree the first draft of the RSHE policy (which can become part of the parent's consultation meetings/process).

[Suggested process: produce first draft of the RSHE policy, consult parents/guardians, use this consultation to support the production of a second draft of the RSHE policy, present the policy to the full governing body, make any necessary changes/amendments, ratify the policy at a meeting of the full governing body, then publish the policy on the school/academy website.]

4. To review materials to be used in teaching.

A. Defining the world we live in and the world our children are being educated to inhabit.

Ask governors to read this extract from *God, Gender, Sex and Marriage* by Mandy Ford (who is now Dean of Bristol Cathedral).

If you talk to someone from a different generation to you, or someone who comes from a different religious faith, or a different culture, you may well find that you have a very different view or expectation of gender roles, sexuality and marriage.

My mother, who grew up in the 1950s, expected to give up work as soon as she married, at the age of 21, and to live a life with very different priorities to my father, who was the breadwinner and very definitely head of the family. She always found it amazing that my brothers, who grew up in the 1970s and married in their thirties, were willing to change nappies and were better cooks than their spouses. A generation further on, my nephews and nieces will not only expect to work on an equal basis with their partners or spouses, but will negotiate household roles and be able to marry a partner of the same sex should they wish.

You may recognise this picture, or your family situation may be very different, but you will certainly notice that there has been a change in the wider culture.¹

Questions

1. Does this accurately describe the changes that have taken place in the wider culture? What have been your own experiences of cultural change?
2. In the light of these changes and the need to equip pupils to live in modern Britain, what does that mean for RSHE in our Church of England school/academy?

B. Considering the context of our school and curriculum

Evaluate how RSHE will sit within the life of the school, and consider the connections that will need to be made with other curriculum areas and the life of the school. (See [RSHE within the context of Church school life](#))

C. Sex education and our wider school community

[primary schools and academies only]

Use the decision-making grid to help you make a conscious decision for your school community as to whether you will or will not include Sex Education in your curriculum for KS2 pupils. (See [Should we teach Sex Education in our Church of England/Methodist primary school?](#))

¹ Mandy Ford, *God, Gender, Sex and Marriage* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2019), 18

D. Formulating a policy for RSHE

Read [RSHE policy exemplar for Church schools](#), which meets the requirements the Church of England Education Office and the Department for Education. You can adapt this exemplar policy or use it as the basis of a similar document in order that your RSHE policy appropriately reflects your school/academy's vision, values and context.

E. Ensuring Christian distinctiveness in RSHE

Ask governors to review the materials used in the school to deliver the RSHE curriculum. Using the support materials available at www.goodnessandmercy.co.uk, ask governors to evaluate how the school/academy can ensure that RSHE will be taught in a way that is underpinned by its Christian foundation and vision.