

RSHE parental engagement during the time of Covid-19

“All schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and RSE. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy. Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community they serve.”¹

“The broad process for engagement should involve the school providing clear information to all parents, in an accessible way, on their proposed programme and policy; parents being given reasonable time to consider this information; the school providing reasonable opportunities for parents to feed in their views; and the school giving consideration to those views from parents. Schools ultimately make the final decisions and engagement does not amount to a parental veto.”²



Department for Education

In summary, from 1 September 2020, Relationships Education, Health Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will still be compulsory. However:

From 1 September 2020 to the end of the spring term 2021	Following an assessment of preparedness, schools should commence teaching as soon as practically possible or use the time to prepare to deliver the new curriculum. This includes engaging parents on their policy as well as planning their curriculum provision.
By the start of the summer term 2021	All schools should have begun teaching the subjects.

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¹ https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/A4-Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education-16496.pdf

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884450/Parental_engagement_on_relationships_education.pdf

³ <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Communication-to-schools-on-the-implementation-of-Relationships-Education-Relationships-and-Sex-Education-and-Health-Education-June-2020-1.pdf>

During a 'normal' school year parental engagement or consultation meetings about R(S)HE would happen face-to-face and would be part of the fabric of ongoing relationships with parents and carers.

For future years, the Subject Leader tab of the [Goodness and Mercy website](#) has supporting materials for parents' meetings and engagement.

Before any engagement process can start, the governing body⁴ needs to have met, discussed and agreed a draft policy⁵ and reviewed the programme of study recommended by the responsible members of staff.

This year's consultation and engagement will probably, most wisely, be held through electronic means (for example, using the school newsletter, an RSHE-specific letter, an electronic poll, an agreed email for feedback, even perhaps a virtual consultation meeting might be held where appropriate). Then follows a meeting for ratification and a final communication of the decisions made to the parental body.

Summary of suggested process for parental and community engagement

1. Governing body meets to agree draft policy and review programme of study.
2. Through appropriate vehicles of communication:
 - The statutory expectations from the Department for Education are communicated.
 - The draft policy is shared along with an outline of the proposed curriculum.
3. The deadline for responses and comments is clearly communicated and the accepted method of responding is explained.
4. Senior staff and governors review the responses, consider the feasibility of any possible changes with regard to this feedback and decide on the final policy, programme of study and form of communication of the same to the parent body.
5. A communication is sent to parents which briefly summarises the responses received and explains that these were considered and that the final policy and overview of the programmes of study can now be found on the school website.
6. A review of the impact of the curriculum offer is carried out and an ongoing rhythm of engagement with parents is agreed (annually / bi-annually) and built into the school's cycle of improvement.

⁴ <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/B5-Guidance-for-a-governors-meeting.pdf>

⁵ <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/subject-leaders/> A sample policy for RSHE can be found here for adaptation.