

## Planning for parents/carers' meetings in a Church of England School prior to teaching about Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

### Prior thinking for the school team

It might be helpful to look at the PSHE Association's 'Roadmap to statutory RSE':

[www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/roadmap-statutory-rse](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/roadmap-statutory-rse)

You might find it helpful to discuss as a school team:

- What is your community like? What is the religious/ethnic makeup? Are you aware of the diversity of views within those communities?
- Have you had any prior indications of concerns or strongly held views?
- Do you have any predictions of issues you might need to deal with? – what is the evidence base?
- We would suggest that having identified what might be the contentious issues the school develops a 'staff script' that all can stick to so that you can be consistent and honest with parents and carers.

### Different types of knowledge

The principles in the Charter explain that there is a difference between factual teaching (biology, medicine, the law, marriage, different types of families and the composition of society) and moral teaching about relationships and values. However, that distinction can be easily blurred by selecting and presenting factual information with a moral framing. How will we be conscious of those differences and seek to avoid blurring the boundaries between them?



### Have we examined our own assumptions?

*We all bring to our teaching of RSHE our worldviews about relationships and sex. For some this worldview might be rooted in a religious narrative (either conservative or liberal), for others this will be based in a more secular or perhaps romantic narrative. We are all influenced in our judgement of what is a healthy sexual relationship by our personal experiences and the experiences of our family and friends. As we plan and deliver RSHE we need to be aware of the filters through which we all approach this subject.*

## **A shared responsibility between schools and parents/carers**

It should be recognised that parents/carers are the first educators of children. They should also be expected to support the work of the school. It is, therefore, important that parents and carers have the opportunity to contribute to a meaningful dialogue and discussion process as the school develops its policy on RSHE.

The Church of England Education Office suggests that a school hold two meetings. The first as the policy is being developed with a focus on vision, values, principles, and legal requirements. It should be an opportunity to hear parental concerns and to deal with misconceptions. The second should come at the other at the end of the process which will focus on the resources to be used and how parents can support the schools teaching. If are using the PHSE Association road map the first meeting should come after 'Understand pupil needs' the second one, as suggested, at the final 'communicate' stage.

	<p><b>Suggested first meeting format</b></p>
	<p>Start with a welcome and introductions and if you feel it is appropriate an optional prayer (resource A).</p> <p>Explain we will be working hard in this meeting – ‘we need your views’.</p>
	<p><b>Introductory Activity</b></p> <p>Place ‘stations’ around the room with a staff member or governor at each station to facilitate conversations and to scribe if necessary.</p> <p>The stations should address concerns you have identified from the school community. This will give everyone an opportunity to make sure their views are part of the discussion. Here are some suggested titles that might get conversation started.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your fears about the teaching of RSHE in our school?</li> <li>• What do you really want your child to know about – Health, Relationships (and Sex where appropriate)? And when should this be introduced?</li> <li>• Is there anything you would not want missed out or not want included?</li> </ul> <p>Parents should be given some post it notes and be encouraged to circulate around the stations adding their thoughts.</p> <p>Begin to explore these concerns ensuring everyone present has a chance to hear these reflected back – highlighting where they differ and maybe contradict each other. Make sure these comments are collected to inform policy development.</p>
	<p><b>The legal context</b></p> <p>Explain the legal context and the DFE requirements RSHE – what parents can now withdraw from and what they can’t – and an outline of the content. See if you can address some of the issues raised in the introductory activity.</p>
	<p><b>What difference does it make that we are a Church of England School?</b></p> <p><b>Diamond nine card sort activity</b></p> <p>Explain the distinctive context for your school as a Church of England School and what difference that will make. You should refer to your school’s vision and associated values. Using resource B - in groups discuss the quotes from Church of England publications on this theme. Sort them into a diamond 9, discuss what statements are at the top of the diamond which at the bottom etc. What principles must be included, which are less important?</p> <p>Introduce the Church of England Charter for RSHE. Consider if this is an approach they feel is appropriate in this school.</p>
	<p>That will probably be enough for a first meeting. Thank everyone for their contributions and assure them that their comments will form an important part of the development the school’s policy. Ask them to fill in the evaluation form that will capture parents/carers’ main concerns.</p>

*Between meetings a draft policy will have been drawn up that should have been circulated to those attending the meeting asking for comments. Any revisions can be made and hopefully the governing body will have approved the policy.*

*A common complaint from parents is that they are not given the space and opportunity to look at and ask questions about resources before resources were purchased. As school budgets are tight it is often not possible to replace resources that may be causing concern. If possible, especially if the school has opted to buy in an expensive scheme, this meeting should be held before resources are ordered. The PSHE Association has a quality mark process to help assure that resources have reached a good standard [www.pshe-association.org.uk/quality-mark-for-resources](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/quality-mark-for-resources)*

	<b>Suggested second meeting format</b>
	Welcome and thank everyone for their help in developing the schools RSHE policy. Explain that this meeting will focus on issues of resourcing.
	<b>A coherent and well-resourced curriculum</b> Explain how the school intends to teach RSHE/PSHE throughout the school. Chose a suitable activity from your intended relationships programme that all can join in with. This should be fun but will also reassure.
	<b>Looking at you year group key stage</b> If the school is large enough, use break out rooms so that different classes can share the resources and the type of activities they might be using with their class. Have the materials you will use on display and, if there is time, demonstrate one activity from one lesson. This should cover all the resources used in PSHE and not just those related to sex education.
	<b>Working in partnership: we need you help</b> Give parents the opportunity to ask questions and express their views on the resources. Share with parents any recommended websites, books and resources that parents can use in having discussions at home with their child. Allow time for any further questions and concerns.
	<b>And finally</b> Have a take-away sheet for those who have attended that will outline the curriculum for RSHE as you have explained during the meeting, places that they can go to for further information, and appropriate ways in which they can raise further concerns with the school. Again, make use of an evaluation form so that parents/carers can ask or say anything they feel they didn't get a chance to raise during the meeting, or perhaps didn't want to in front of others.