

# Relationships and Sexuality Education in schools

## Guidance

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# Relationships and Sexuality Education in schools

**Audience** Head teachers, governing bodies, personal and social education coordinators and teachers of relationships and sexuality education in all maintained schools. Health boards, school nurses, looked after children (LAC) nurses, sexual health nurses and other health professionals working in schools. LAC education coordinators responsible for the health and education of looked after children. Welsh Network of Healthy School Scheme Coordinators, Children and Young People's Partnerships, local authorities and coordinators/providers of sex and relationships education training programmes.

**Overview** Guidance on how schools should develop their sex education policy, plan and deliver their relationships and sexuality education provision and work in partnership with others.

**Action required** Schools must have regard to this guidance when implementing their sex education policy and relationships and sexuality education provision.

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**Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <https://beta.gov.wales/draft-guidance-relationships-and-sexuality-education>

**Related documents** Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in documents Wales; Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales; Keeping Learners Safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002; Working Together to Safeguard People: Volumes 1-7 issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ; School-based Counselling Services in Wales – a National Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
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# Contents page

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
What is the purpose of this guidance?	1
What is Relationships and Sexuality Education?	1
<b>Whole School Approach</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Curriculum Design</b>	<b>4</b>
Working with specialist providers	10
<b>Links to policies</b>	<b>12</b>
Safeguarding	12
Bullying	13
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	13
Uniform Policies	14
<b>External Support</b>	<b>14</b>
Signposting	14
Wales Network of Healthy Schools	14
All Wales School Liaison Core Programme (AWSLCP)	15
School Counselling and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS)	15
<b>Annex A: The legal framework for Sex Education</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Annex B – Legal information regarding the Age of Sexual Consent</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Annex C – Signposting – Links to external support organisations</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Annex D – Case Studies</b>	<b>22</b>

# Introduction

## What is the purpose of this guidance?

The aim of this guidance is to provide teachers and school staff with practical support to build high quality provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education as part of a “whole school approach”. The advice in this document is informed by the evidence gathered by the [Sex and Relationships Expert Panel](#) and Estyn in their [thematic review of healthy relationships education](#).

## What is Relationships and Sexuality Education?

Humans are social beings and healthy relationships are a vital component of establishing and maintaining good physical, mental and emotional health. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) explores the interconnected ways in which a wide and diverse range of social, cultural, technological and biological influences affect the ability to form and maintain positive relationships. Understanding how relationships are formed, developed and maintained enables us to develop the skills and attitudes that allow us to create healthy relationships of our own. It supports young people to develop the knowledge and skills needed to effectively navigate these rapidly changing influences and establish respectful, fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. These may include family relationships, friendships, professional relationships and sexual relationships. RSE is an important element in creating a whole school approach to supporting overall physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

The change in name to Relationships and Sexuality Education reflects the internationally recognised World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for sexuality education. This definition seeks to encourage schools to take a joined up approach to education around relationships and the broader range of topics included under sexuality.

## The legal obligations surrounding sex education (referred to as RSE in this guidance)

While this guidance encourages schools to think more broadly about the way they integrate this area of study into the curriculum, it does not change its statutory underpinnings. In legislation, the reference is to the inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum.

For primary schools sex education is not compulsory as part of the basic curriculum but schools may choose to provide developmentally appropriate RSE if they wish to do so. **Primary schools** must still teach the national curriculum in Wales and in subjects such as science there may be matters covered in that which could potentially form part of RSE. Where that is the case primary schools must continue to teach those aspects of RSE.

**Secondary schools**, and pupil referral units (PRUs), must include provision for sex education for all registered learners.

**Special schools** must also include provision for sex education for all registered learners who are provided with secondary education at the school.

Schools will continue to decide on time given and the strategies for learning they provide. Nevertheless, RSE should not be delivered in isolation. It should be a planned and integrated part of the whole curriculum, with effective coordination to ensure continuity and progression in learning across key stages.

School governing bodies and PRU management committees must make and keep an up-to-date written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sex education, which ideally should be reviewed every two years. The policy must also include a statement about parents' and carers' rights to withdraw their child from sex education.

A full summary of the legislation regarding sex education in the curriculum is included in Annex A.

As part of sex and relationship education, pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. But we recognise that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

Sex and relationship education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

## **RSE at Post 16**

The advice in this guidance is intended to support education settings to integrate RSE into a whole school approach to building and maintaining good physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. Sixth forms and colleges should consider this guidance as they shape provision that effectively supports their young people.

## **Age of consent to sexual activity**

While we encourage schools to deal with issues around sex and sexual health in a developmentally appropriate (see p9 for a definition of developmentally appropriate), factual and non-judgemental manner, it must be remembered that the age of consent for sexual activity in the UK is 16. The age of consent is the same regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of a person and whether the sexual activity is between people of the same or different gender identities.

A full summary of the law on the age of consent to sexual activity is included in **Annex B**.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement for local authority maintained schools (including PRUs) in Wales and makes good educational sense to comply with it. The Public Sector Equality Duty helps schools to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve outcomes for all learners. The duty includes identifying where we can take action to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster

good relations, and where possible, mitigate negative impacts which may result from decisions.

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The Welsh Government is fully committed to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). [Children and Young People: Rights to Action](#) (2004) sets out the Welsh Government's seven core aims for children and young people. The core aims describe the entitlement of children and young people to access educational and health services and address their right to participate in the decisions that affect them. This includes being given the necessary information to make choices. This guidance is designed to support schools to achieve those core aims.

## **Whole School Approach**

Evidence gathered by the Sex and Relationships Expert Panel identified a “whole school approach” as the single most important element for ensuring high quality and effective RSE. The panel's research demonstrated that a well planned whole school approach to RSE supported positive changes to attitudes and behaviour.

A “whole school approach” is the effective linking of all elements of an education setting's curriculum, policy, staff and community. It encourages the communication and reinforcement of a consistent positive ethos and provides holistic high quality support for learners. This should also include how RSE makes up a part of a whole school approach to physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. For example, a school may want to consider how a supportive school environment can give opportunities to reinforce messages around inclusive relationships or encourage learners to seek help and support. Professional learning is a key element in embedding comprehensive RSE through a whole school approach. Schools should enable their teachers to access learning that can support them to develop confidence and knowledge regarding RSE topics.

## **RSE for learners with special educational needs or additional learning needs.**

Schools providing education for learners with moderate and severe, profound and multiple learning needs should consider how best to meet the needs of all learners whose understanding of sexual health and well-being issues may not match their development.

All staff, including ancillary staff, physiotherapists, nurses and carers should be aware of the school's sex education policy when working with learners with additional learning needs.

RSE provision should be a planned and integrated part of the curriculum, coordinated effectively to ensure continuity and progression in learning across key stages. Special schools should decide the precise content of the RSE programme and the strategies for learning adopted to meet the differing needs of learners. For example, for learners who use alternative methods of communication, such as signing, symbols and/or communication switches and aids, schools will need to ensure that all staff are familiar with key RSE terms in Makaton, Braille and British Sign Language, or whatever alternative methods of communication are being used.

## Curriculum Design

The school curriculum is just one of the tools that schools can use to develop a whole school approach to RSE.

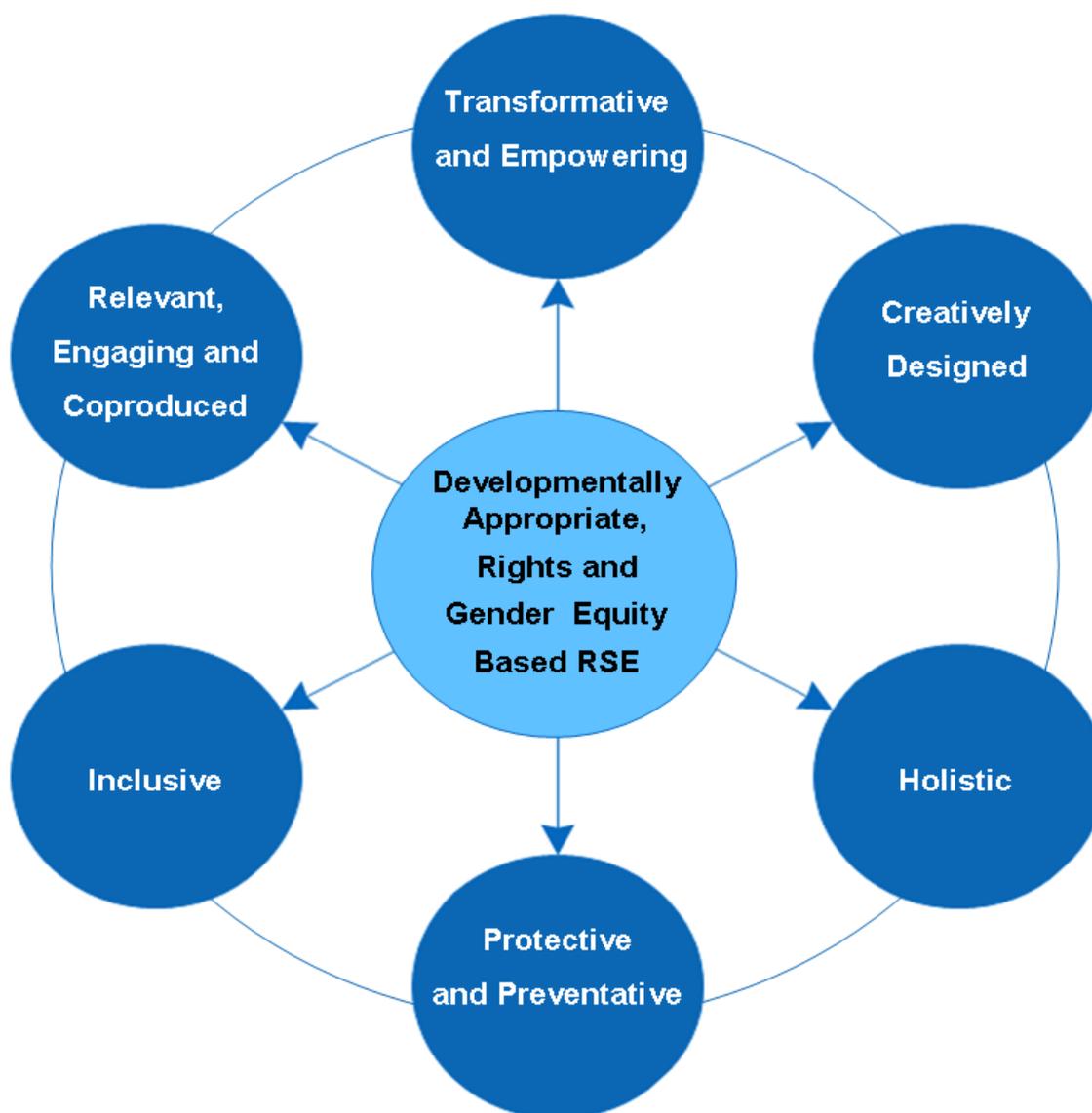
RSE in the curriculum should give learners the opportunity to explore a wide range of social, cultural, technological and biological influences that can affect their lives and their ability to form and maintain positive relationships.

Schools may wish to draw upon the UNESCO technical guidance for sexuality education to support them in the planning of their RSE curriculum. The technical guidance maps out progression for 5-18 year olds across eight thematic areas:

- Relationships;
- Values, rights, culture and sexuality;
- Understanding gender;
- Violence and staying safe;
- Skills for health and well-being;
- Human body and development;
- Sexuality and sexual behaviour; and
- Sexual and reproductive health.

A case study demonstrating how the UNESCO technical can support curriculum planning and assist schools to co-produce their curriculum with learners can be found in Annex D.

When designing a curriculum for RSE, schools are encouraged to consider using a developmentally appropriate, rights and gender equity based approach to develop effective provision:



## **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE, RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY BASED RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

### **Developmentally Appropriate**

Developmentally appropriate, rights and gender equity based RSE encourages learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of human rights related to gender, relationships and sexuality and how they contribute to the health, well-being and safety of themselves and others. International research compiled by the expert panel shows that the most effective programmes are those that have a rights and gender equity based approach at their core.

RSE lessons should always be appropriate to the developmental stage of the learner. The age of learners should be one of the criteria by which practitioners decide upon the appropriateness of content; however, there will be other factors they will need to consider when planning provision. Factors such as the physical and mental and emotional development of learners should also be taken into account. This is essential to ensuring learners are kept safe from information for which they are not sufficiently mature to process. This, however, should not be a reason for not providing children and young people with the essential information they need as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally; developmentally appropriate RSE requires the coverage of subjects that are integral to learner's development. For example, issues which may affect younger learners, such as puberty and menstruation, should be engaged with sensitively and before the onset of physiological changes. Schools should also consider how appropriate support is provided through a whole school approach such as, in the case of puberty, ensuring that learners have access to sanitary products.

A case study detailing how Brackla Primary in Bridgend has worked with parents to establish a whole school approach to RSE for younger learners is included in **Annex D**.

## **Rights**

Schools are encouraged to effectively link learning regarding RSE to the UNCRC where appropriate, the Equality Duty (2010) the Violence against Girls and Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (2015) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).

A case study on UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools programme is included in Annex D.

## **Gender Equity**

The World Health Organisation defines gender equity as "being more than formal equality of opportunity, it refers to the different needs, preferences and interests of women and men. This may mean that different treatment is needed to ensure equality of opportunity". Schools should consider how they can secure equal access for learners to participate in educational experiences and activities, both within the school day and as part of an after school offer. For example, schools should give male and female learners equal opportunity to participate in sports and physical activities, rather than making certain choices only available to one group (e.g. if football is offered to boys as an activity, it should also be offered to girls).

Developmentally appropriate, rights and gender equity based RSE provision is underpinned by the following six principles:

## **INCLUSIVE**

Inclusive RSE recognises the importance of diversity and difference across a range of identities related to relationships, sex, gender, sexuality and that this diversity is a source of strength and is foundational to a cohesive, fair and equitable society.

High quality RSE should strive to meet the needs of all learners, ensuring that through an effective whole school approach, they can access appropriate assistance both from the school or external services.

Wherever possible, education practitioners should be aware of, and sensitive to the personal circumstances of individual learners. This should enable them to deliver suitable tailored content to the religious and cultural background of learners as well as those from at risk or disadvantaged groups such as those who may be living in poverty, looked after children, young carers, or part of the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community.

It is important that practitioners and learners recognise relationship and sexual diversity and show respect for others regardless of their gender identity and expression or sexual orientation. It is also important that, in addition to fostering a positive and respectful attitude to diversity, schools should also ensure that learners who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ+) have access to RSE provision that is relevant, factual and supportive.

Schools should also ensure that learning is relevant for those children or young people with a disability or additional learning need. All learners should be given opportunities to access appropriate information and develop knowledge around when and how to seek advice and support.

A case study detailing how Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr has used a range of approaches to enhance learning around gender equity and LGBTQ+ issues can be found in **annex D**

## **HOLISTIC**

Holistic RSE explores the interconnected ways in which sex, gender, sexuality and relationships shape people's lives across the world. The curriculum provides a range of rich contexts for learning that schools should consider using to engage with RSE topics. While issues around sex education have traditionally focused on biological topics such as reproduction, schools are encouraged to design provision that draws upon other areas of the curriculum to provide opportunities to enrich and broaden learning. Schools should also give learners the opportunity to revisit key concepts throughout their education and build upon them as they grow in age and understanding.

Schools are able to draw upon the non statutory framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE), which can provide a basis for planning RSE provision. The PSE framework has five themes and for each theme details the attitudes and values, and knowledge and understanding that should be used as learning contexts to develop PSE and RSE related skills. While the theme "Health and Emotional Well-being" has the most immediate relevance to RSE, schools should consider how the other aspects of PSE, such as respect for others within the "Active Citizenship" theme, can support learners to develop a more holistic understanding of positive relationships. Schools should also explore opportunities to link RSE and other curriculum subjects; for example:

- The role of social media use in supporting respectful relationships;
- Gender equity and the changing landscape of rights and advocacy in History;
- Features of healthy and unhealthy relationships in Literature and the Arts; and.
- Attitudes to menstruation around the world in Geography.

## **RELEVANT, ENGAGING AND COPRODUCED**

An approach that effectively engages learners recognises and responds to children and young people's own knowledge and experiences. A relevant and effective curriculum can mean drawing upon contemporary issues and media, such as popular culture.

The curriculum should be flexible and responsive to the issues and questions that may arise from RSE provision. These techniques help learners discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment – for example:

- role play or use of drama activities, which can help learners explore issues (e.g. consent);
- use of prompt materials such as photographs, digital media, advertisements; newspaper articles, objects of interest (e.g. historical artefacts);
- case studies with fictitious characters that learners can relate to;
- appropriate online materials; and
- learner-led, teacher supervised research on key topics (e.g. gender stereotypes in retail and advertising).

To ensure that a whole school approach to RSE is responsive to the needs of learners, schools should consider consulting with learners, parents and carers when designing their RSE curriculum.

Schools are encouraged to engage with their learners and seek their views to better understand their experiences and inform the design of their RSE provision.

Secondary schools in Wales are able to join the School Health Research Network (SHRN) which uses an electronic student survey to produce an individualised Student Health and Well-being Report every two years. These reports provide schools with data on key emotional and physical health topics with national data for comparison, including on RSE. More information can be found on the [SHRN website](#)

Similarly, engaging with parents and carers can assist schools in shaping provision which takes account of their wishes and concerns and is appropriate to the age and circumstances of learners. This collaborative approach can enhance the delivery of positive messages around RSE, with parents and carers having a central role to play in terms of reiterating and reinforcing these messages with their children. Parents and carers need to know that they can become actively involved in the determination of the school's statutory sex education policy and that the school's RSE programme will complement and support their role. Schools should also seek the views of parents and carers, and children and young people when developing their sex education policies.

## **CREATIVELY DESIGNED**

Creative approaches develop learners' ability to engage with a range of viewpoints and actively consider different perspectives and the experiences of others. Pedagogies that focus on creativity give learners the opportunity, often through practical or artistic activities, to challenge, debate, reflect and problem solve without personalising the issues being discussed.

Research regarding best practice in RSE shows the benefits of drawing on creative pedagogy for developing safe, engaging and interactive learning environments. For

example, creative approaches can help learners safely express how they feel about difficult or sensitive issues such as what is harmful, what is fair or what is consensual without having to disclose personal information or experience. Working creatively can also enable learners to imagine other lives, identities, families, experiences and ways of being in the world. Creative approaches to RSE more widely also support the expression of new, strong or ambivalent feelings and response to familiar or unfamiliar ideas or situations.

Peer education can provide a creative way to engage with RSE and is recognised as having a positive effect on the attitudes and behaviours of learners. Secondary schools should consider training learners as peer educators in the provision of their RSE programme. This may be achieved as part of a school's Welsh Baccalaureate. The WJEC website has a range of Community Challenges for the Welsh Baccalaureate at key stage 4 that focus on health and well-being and developing peer mentoring and coaching skills (e.g. from healthy relationships to LGBTQ+ rights). Peer educators should complement, not replace the role of trained teachers, and all peer-led sessions should always be facilitated and supervised by a teacher.

Equally, such young people may be particularly at risk. Any approach to them to become peer educators should ensure that it does not lead to inappropriate disclosures of confidential information or to them becoming stigmatised by their peers. Schools are encouraged to work with the parents or carers of potential peer mentors to ensure it is appropriate that they participate in such a programme and that they are sufficiently supported in terms of their own physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

Any input by a peer educator should be in keeping with the school's sex education policy which they should be made aware of and abide by during the lesson delivery.

Peer educators require high quality professional learning and support. It is also important to ensure that peer education programmes are included as part of a whole school approach to RSE and not used in isolation. This is to ensure that learning from peer led programmes reinforce and complement the school curriculum, policy structure and pastoral support programmes.

A case study showing how Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn has effectively used peer mentoring to provide high quality RSE is included at **Annex D**.

## **EMPOWERING AND TRANSFORMATIVE**

An empowering and transformative approach to RSE emphasises a positive approach to learning regarding relationships, sexuality and sex. Research analysed by the expert panel showed that blame and shame based approaches to this area of study, which focus exclusively on risk and negative consequences, do not give learners sufficient knowledge to form an effective understanding regarding issues that are provided for under RSE. Positive approaches to RSE should enable children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to make informed choices that support affirmative life experiences, including sexual well-being and healthy relationships.

A key element of whole school approaches to RSE includes involving children and young people in student-led learning. An empowering and transformative RSE will support children and young people as active citizens, challenge the impact of harmful social attitudes and expectations in relation to sex, gender, sexualities and relationships; such as sexism or

gender based discrimination. Activities such as well-planned class discussions allow learners to explore personal opinions, clarify values and express feelings. Field trips and focused whole school assemblies can also be used to spark discussion and reflection, supporting learners to articulate and share their views with others. Open-ended questioning and assessment for learning techniques encourage reflection, helping learners to think about what they have learned and the skills they have developed.

## **PROTECTIVE & PREVENTATIVE**

Protective and preventative RSE is informed by many of the protective articles embedded in the UNCRC. Article 19, 32, 35 and 37 state that governments should protect children under 18 from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, and sexual abuse. Article 2 covers freedom from discrimination (e.g. sexism, racism, sectarianism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination against the disabled or ableism); Article 8, the right to an identity (including gender and sexual identity) and article 24 and 31 state children's rights to health, well-being and play. Integrating these articles with the VAWDASV (2015), the Equality Act (2010) and the Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), a protective and preventative RSE curriculum will enable children and young people to build their knowledge and understanding of how to recognise discrimination, abusive relationships and violence and develop an understanding of issues regarding consent.

Preventative and protective RSE avoids focusing only on strategies which minimise personal risk, but instead utilises interactive pedagogies that encourage collaboration within the school and with parents and the wider community. It should support children and young people to gain the resilience, compassion and social and emotional literacy needed to engage positively with change e.g. in relation to identity, their body, in relationships, in families and in society.

They will also support building children and young people's confidence to communicate effectively and know where and how to seek advice, support, protection and factual information (e.g. on sex and gender equality/equity, sexual health, LGBTQ+ issues and VAWDASV).

## **Working with external providers**

Collaboration with external providers can support schools to provide high quality RSE within the curriculum and assist with learning regarding sensitive issues.

Elements of RSE may be provided by a wide range of people including health professionals, social workers, youth workers, peer educators, and school-based counsellors. Community partners bring a new perspective and offer specialised knowledge, experience and resources. For example, school nurses are a valuable source of professional advice and support for learners and can arrange for access to sexual health services.

This is particularly effective when delivered as part of a whole school approach, where professionals can use their expertise, skills and effective educational approaches to enhance the positive attitudes and behaviours being fostered across the school curriculum and environment.

The Terrence Higgins Trust has provided a case study which you will find in Annex D regarding a community project it runs called "Positive Voices" which is about people living

with HIV who share their personal stories to raise awareness of HIV and promote good sexual health for everyone. UNICEF has also provided a case study with information about their 'Rights Respecting Schools' award. UNICEF works with schools in the UK to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School in Bridgend have achieved 'Gold: Rights respecting' status. You can read more about their experiences in Annex D.

## **Sex Education Policy**

All PRUs and maintained schools, primary, secondary and special, must have an up-to-date written sex education policy that is available for inspection by parents or carers. Governing bodies have a key role, along with head teachers and relevant staff, in determining and monitoring the effectiveness of the school's RSE programme. It is recommended that governing bodies ensure that the written sex education policy is reviewed annually.

The policy should:

- outline the school's vision of RSE within a clear values and rights framework;
- state the aims and expected outcomes of the school's RSE programme clearly;
- describe how the programme is managed and organised, and how it forms/links with other areas of the school's curriculum;
- outline how the programme is delivered, the teaching approaches and resources used and who is responsible for providing them and evaluating their effectiveness;
- set out the content of the RSE programme for each year group, summarising when key themes should be introduced and how potentially sensitive issues should be dealt with;
- describe how school policies on confidentiality, safeguarding and child protection relate to RSE;
- explain how learners will be given guidance about where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and where necessary, treatment;
- specify how the views of learners will be sought;
- summarise how health professionals and specialist external agencies are involved and will enhance the RSE programme;
- explain how RSE is monitored and evaluated, specifying the means and timescale for regular review to ensure it is relevant and up to date; and
- include a statement about the parents' or carers' right to withdraw their child from RSE

## **Right to Withdraw**

Through effective collaboration with parents and carers, schools should ensure that their provision of RSE addresses the needs of the pupils at the school and the pupils at the school and the community the school serves. It will not always be possible to take into account the wishes of all parents/carers and at this point, parents/carers may ask for their child to be withdrawn from RSE lessons.

Parents and carers wishing to withdraw their children from all or part of sex education provided in a maintained school should make a request, which must be honoured by the school. Schools should keep a record of such requests. This right remains until the learner attains the age of 19. It would be good practice to make the request in writing so there is a written record of that request should it need to be referred to in the future.

Schools should make alternative arrangements for learners whose parents/carers have chosen to withdraw them from RSE.

## Links to policies

An effective whole school approach to RSE ensures that wider school policies reinforce and reiterate positive messages around healthy relationships and sexuality.

While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, schools should ensure that these policies are reviewed to ensure consistency of approach:

## Safeguarding

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Where RSE is taught, there is the potential risk for the topics being discussed, such as consent, respect and domestic violence, to trigger a learner to make a disclosure of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. Each school should identify a designated senior person (DSP) with lead responsibility for managing such disclosures. The DSP must know how to recognise and identify the signs of abuse and neglect, and know when it is appropriate to make a referral to the relevant investigating agencies. The DSP's role is not to investigate allegations, but to keep the head teacher informed of all child protection disclosures and cases in the school and work in partnership with other agencies in the referral processes and to ensure children and young people are protected and supported.

There is a statutory duty to report children at risk under Section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This duty means that partners including education, health, police, probation and youth offending teams are required to inform the local authority where they have reasonable cause to believe a child to be at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. The Welsh Government has issued a compendium of statutory guidance under the common heading of '**Working Together to Safeguard People**' which sets out the role of the local authority and relevant partners in ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements in every local authority.

Please see following links:

<https://gov.wales/topics/health/socialcare/act/code-of-practice/?lang=en>

The Welsh Government statutory guidance, [Keeping learners safe](#) sets out the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools to ensure they have effective systems in place to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Schools also have a central role in helping children to build resilience, by promoting positive mental health and well-being and providing evidence-based prevention and early intervention. School-based services can improve accessibility, better address school

related stress and ease pressure on other specialist services like the Counselling for children and young people and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

## **Bullying**

RSE encourages schools to foster an environment where learners are taught about building and maintaining respectful relationships. Schools should address bullying and harassment in all its forms, including any related to sexual orientation and sexual relations. All schools must, by law, have a school behaviour policy. Effective anti-bullying strategies should be central to that behaviour policy and be developed and put into effect by everyone in the school, including staff and learners. Schools and education services should make it clear that all forms of bullying are entirely unacceptable and deal with any suspicion of bullying in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. The Welsh Government's [anti-bullying guidance](#) offers practical solutions both for the prevention of and dealing with incidents of bullying in schools.

## **Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence**

RSE, while fostering positive attitudes and behaviours, may also give learners space to explore the features of unhealthy relationships.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence touches many lives. An estimated one in four women in the UK have been victims of domestic abuse and one in five have been victims of sexual violence. This has particularly serious implications for children and young people, whether as victims themselves, or as witnesses in households where domestic abuse plays a part. It can impact on their safety, mental and physical health and general well-being. It affects family and peer relationships, and potential to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future; and it can impact on current and future educational attainment.

There will be children, young people and staff within your school who are currently experiencing or perpetrating violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence, or have done so in the past. Every school and Further Education Institution (FEI) should be responsible for making sure its learners and staff are safe and healthy.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 presents an opportunity to lead the way on prevention work here in Wales.

Educational settings provide an environment where positive attitudes towards gender equality and healthy, respectful relationships can be fostered through a rights-based approach.

Adopting a whole education approach that includes preventative education within, and through, all parts of school and college life, and which also involves the wider community is vital.

The [Welsh Government's Whole Education Approach to Violence against Woman, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales: Good Practice Guide](#) was developed in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid. It is intended to be a practical and useful toolkit for embedding principles of a whole education approach to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It recognises the importance of education settings

being environments where positive attitudes towards gender equality and healthy, respectful relationships can be fostered.

The Welsh Government has also published [practical guidance for school governors](#) on the need to develop a policy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; how to recognise indicators of abuse and where to get support for themselves, their colleagues or their learners.

## Uniform Policies

The Welsh Government has published guidance for governing bodies on school uniform and appearance.

<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-for-governing-bodies-on-school-uniform-and-appearance-policies-revised-july-2011.pdf>

## External Support

### Signposting

An effective, whole school approach to RSE should ensure that learners are able to know where to go for relevant and accessible information about services that meet their needs, including helplines, websites and local advice and sexual health services. Schools should ensure that learners know to talk to a trusted adult about any feelings that trouble them and have access to relevant helpline numbers, websites and organisations.

**Annex C** of this document provides contact information for organisations that can support learners across a range of issues; such as, LGBTQ+, sexual health and domestic violence.

## Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes

The Welsh Government's Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) supports schools to develop a whole school approach to a range of health topics including RSE; with the potential to work towards the National Quality Award (NQA).

A healthy school is one which takes responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health of all who 'learn, work, play and live' within it not only by formally teaching learners about how to lead healthy lives but by enabling learners and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health.

The Indicators for the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes detail the performance criteria for schools being assessed for the NQA.

It recognises a range of health topics, including Personal Development and Relationships, which aligns with RSE, which should be covered throughout a school's involvement in the scheme; and for each of these, identifies important aspects of a whole school approach, including Leadership and Communication, Curriculum, Ethos and Environment, and Family and Community Involvement. Similar support for FE colleges is available via the Healthy and Sustainable Higher Education/Further Education Framework

More information on the programmes can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/topics/health/improvement/schools/?lang=en>

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/82249#introduction>

## **All Wales School Liaison Core Programme (AWSLCP)**

The AWSLCP is partnership between schools and the police which aims to provide pupils with opportunities to enhance their knowledge, understanding, behaviour, attitudes, values and skills regarding areas such as Substance Misuse, Social behaviour and Personal safety. The programme is jointly funded by Welsh Government and the Police. Further information on the programme can be found at:

<https://www.schoolbeat.org/>

## **Counselling for children and young people and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

RSE has the potential to support young people's overall physical, mental and emotional health. There may be circumstances however, where learners may need further specialist help beyond what is provided within the curriculum.

Local authorities in Wales are required to provide independent counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 and learners in Year 6 of primary school. Children and young people should be able to access this service through their school or through the local authority, by checking their local authority website.

CAMHS are the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. GPs, teachers and other professionals are able to refer young people to CAMHS for assessment and support.

Further information on counselling services and CAMHS, including signposting to third sector organisations that can provide information regarding mental health services for young people, can be found in the Welsh Government's guidance: *Collaborative working between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the counselling service*.

<https://beta.gov.wales/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs-and-counselling-service>

## **Annex A: The legal framework for Sex Education**

### **Definition of sex education**

**A.1** Section 579(1) of the Education Act 1996 gives a definition of 'sex education' as including education about:

- (a) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Human Immuno-deficiency Virus; and
- (b) any other sexually transmitted disease.

### **Sex education policy**

**A.2** Governing bodies of **all** maintained schools are required by section 404 of the Education Act 1996 to:

- (a) make, and keep up to date, a separate written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sex education, and
- (b) make copies of the statement available for inspection (at all reasonable times) by parents of registered pupils at the school and provide a copy of the statement free of charge to any parent who asks for one.

**A.3** The policy statement must also include a statement about parents' rights under section 405 of the Education Act 1996 to exempt/withdraw their child from sex education.

### **Secondary schools**

**A.4** All maintained secondary schools are required under section 101(1)(c) of the Education Act 2002 to include, as part of the 'basic curriculum' of the school, sex education for all registered pupils.

### **Primary schools**

**A.5** Section 101(1) of the Education Act 2002 does not require primary schools to provide sex education as part of the 'basic curriculum'. Primary schools can provide sex education but whether they do so is at the discretion of the school.

### **Special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)**

**A.6** Under section 101(1) of the Education Act 2002, maintained special schools and PRUs must provide it for secondary-age pupils. They can provide sex education for primary-age pupils and must provide it for secondary-age pupils if they wish to. There is no requirement for special schools in hospitals to provide sex education, but if they provide secondary education, they must have a policy on sex education, and if they do provide sex education they must have regard to this guidance.

### **Guidance**

**A.7** Where sex education is given, section 403(1B) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) requires head teachers and governing bodies to have regard to the National Assembly for Wales' guidance.

**A.8** Section 403(1C) requires the Assembly's guidance to 'include guidance about any material which may be produced by NHS bodies for use for the purposes of sex education in schools.'

### **Marriage, family life and inappropriate materials**

**A.9** Section 403 of the Education Act 1996 requires that the governing body and the head teacher shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered pupils at a maintained school, it is given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.

**A.10** In addition, section (1A) of section 403 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance designed to secure that when sex education is given to registered pupils at maintained schools:

(a) they learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and

(b) they are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

### **Parent/parental responsibility**

**A.11** Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as follows:

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person –

(a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or

(b) who has care of the child. Section 3 (1) of the Children Act 1989 defines 'parental responsibility' as follows: (1) In this Act 'parental responsibility' means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property. References to parents/carers in this guidance should therefore be taken to include those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

### **Exemption/withdrawal from sex education**

**A.12** Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 enables parents to prevent their children, either wholly or partly, from receiving sex education in school other than sex education contained within the national curriculum.

If the parent of any pupil in attendance at a maintained school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at the school, the pupil shall, except so far as such education is comprised in the National Curriculum, be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

## **Annex B – Legal Information regarding the Age of Sexual Consent**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 sets the legal age for sexual activity at 16. It further provides specific legal protection for children aged 12 and under who cannot legally give their consent to any form of sexual activity. In law, sexual activity with a child under the age of 13 years is a serious offence and reflects society's view that children of less than 13 years of age should not be sexually active and that their level of vulnerability to exploitation and sexual grooming is potentially significant.

The All-Wales-Child-Protection-Procedures-includes a protocol on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of sexually active young people, and is designed to identify where these relationships may be abusive and where children and young people may need to be safeguarded. This protocol endorses both of the following;

- Sexual activity between consenting young people should not be criminalised;
- The legal position that sexual activity under the age of 16 is an offence.

In practice this protocol will apply for under 16 year olds. However practitioners must always be aware of the possibility of abuse and / or exploitation in the 16-18 age groups.

Any child under the age of 16 regardless of gender, or sexual orientation who are believed to be engaged in, or planning to be engaged in, sexual activity must have their needs in respect of their health, education, support and/or protection assessed by the agency involved. This assessment must be carried out in accordance with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures Professionals working with young people.

When a girl under the age of 13 is found to be pregnant, a referral must be made to social services where an initial assessment will be completed and a strategy meeting or /discussion will take place, which will include representatives from health and education.

Additionally, Sexual Offences Act 2003 also sets out that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18 if the older person holds a position of trust (for example a teacher or social worker) as such sexual activity is an abuse of the position of trust. In Wales, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out that a child is anyone under the age of 18.

## Annex C – Signposting – Links to external support organisations

### **Bullying**

**MEIC**, is a free 24-hour helpline for children and young people. MEIC provides advice and support for a range of issues, including bullying:

[www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)

**The Welsh Government** provides leaflets with advice regarding bullying for children, young people and parents of those being bullied:

<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/leaflet-are-you-being-bullied.pdf>

<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/is-your-child-being-bullied.pdf>

<https://beta.gov.wales/bullying-posters-children-and-young-people>

### **Children's Rights**

The **Children's Commissioner for Wales** supports children and young people to learn more about their rights and supports them when they have been treated unfairly:

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/>

### **Equalities**

**Stonewall Cymru** is a source of advice and information regarding LGBTQ+ issues:

<https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/help-and-advice>

**Umbrella** is a gender and diversity advice organisation:

<https://www.umbrellacymru.co.uk/>

**Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays** is a UK wide organisation that offers support to parents and their LGBTQ+ identifying sons and daughters:

<https://www.fflag.org.uk/>

**Mermaids** is a UK based charity that works with gender questioning young people and their families:

<https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

## **Online Safety**

The Welsh Government's Hwb digital learning platform, supports learners, parents and carers, schools and colleges with a range of resources and guidance regarding keeping safe online:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/onlinesafety>

## **Relationships and sex**

**Childline** provides information for young people regarding sex, relationships, online safety and consent:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/friends-relationships-sex/sex-relationships/sex/>

## **Sexual Health**

**NHS Wales** provides information regarding sexual health and accessing advice and support services:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/healthtopics/lifestyles/sexualhealth>

The **Terrance Higgins Trust** provides advice and support regarding HIV and sexual Health:

<https://www.tht.org.uk/>

**Friskywales** provides a wealth of information useful to young people regarding sex and sexual health:

[www.friskywales.org](http://www.friskywales.org)

## **NHS**

<http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/LocalServices/default.aspx?s=SexualHealth&locale=en>

## **Sexual Abuse**

**NSPCC** provides advice and support regarding identifying children and young people who may be experiencing abuse:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/>

Telephone: [08088005000](tel:08088005000)

E-mail [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **VAWDASV**

### **Live Fear Free**

The 'Live Fear Free' website contains details on services that can be accessed which includes; FGM, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages and Slavery – each has signposting information to specific helplines and websites.

<https://livefearfree.gov.wales/?lang=en>

Live Fear Free Helpline: 0808 8010 800

Text service: 078600 77333

Email: [info@livefearfreehelpline.wales](mailto:info@livefearfreehelpline.wales)

### **VAWDASV Spectrum Project**

The **Spectrum Project** is an all Wales programme funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by experienced teachers in primary and secondary schools. The free, bilingual, workshops are closely linked to the curriculum and promote the importance of healthy relationships whilst raising the awareness of children, young people and adults about the issues of domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women. The activities are designed to be thought provoking and promote peer discussion but are not intended to be so emotive as to cause distress.

The conclusion of every session provides information for young people on where they can access help and support both inside and outside of school. Spectrum also delivers training for school staff and governors about understanding the impact of domestic abuse on a child and raises awareness by looking at a whole school approach to tackling domestic abuse.

**Website:** <http://spectrumproject.co.uk/about/>

**Telephone Number:** 01267 266924

**Email Address:** [spectrum@hafancymru.co.uk](mailto:spectrum@hafancymru.co.uk)

### **Adult Perpetrators**

The Welsh Government is developing 'Good practice guidance for the Welsh Public Service on working with adult perpetrators of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence'.

The draft guidance is currently available for feedback via a survey. Once published, the guidance will highlight the importance of identifying VAWDASV for staff experiencing it (including those in schools) and provide advice on signposting to specialist services.

## **Annex D – Case Studies**

Case studies 1-4 are drawn from Estyn's thematic review of Healthy Relationships Education (2017).

### **Case Study 1: Ysgol Pen Coch – Special School**

#### Information about the school

Ysgol Pen Coch is in Flint, North Wales. The school is a maintained special school in the county of Flintshire. Currently there are 104 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. The school's provision meets the needs of learners with complex layered needs. This includes learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, communication needs, sensory needs, physical needs and/or social, emotional mental health needs.

#### Context and background to the practice

Personalised learning is at the core of Ysgol Pen Coch's approach as well as the school specialising in Therapeutic Intervention. Ysgol Pen Coch's success lies in the schools understanding of how a diagnosis of Autism, Complex Needs or Social and Emotional plus Health Needs requires a cross the spectrum of learning disabilities affects a child in all aspects of their learning. The school recognises pupils for their strengths, and work with them to grow their ambitions, to achieve their aspirations, and to develop positive attributes towards others. This includes developing the awareness of pupils knowledge and understanding of safe relationships, including online safety.

#### Description of activity/strategy

The school has implemented a number of different activities and strategies in order to promote safe relationships in school and within the schools community. Safe and healthy relationships are promoted by all staff in the form of 'show me 5' rules, a strategy developed through the use of the Incredible Years Programme. Class management programmes run across the whole school, including the coverage of safe relationships, such as understanding our feelings and the feelings of others, as well as small group therapy sessions for pupils needing further intervention on issues, such as listening skills and a whole school celebration assembly, highlighting those pupils who have displayed safe and healthy relationships in the form of receiving certificates. The 'show me 5' rules are displayed in every class and staff wear visual fobs to further promote these rules around school.

The school uses the resources of the Community Liaison Officer, who visits throughout the year to promote online safety and stranger danger topics to groups of pupils in foundation and key stage 2. Sessions are visual, practical and sensory approaches are every pupil to access these areas of discussion. The school have developed a "digi club" sessions which focus on personalised coding and computing skills, and this includes online safety. The sessions are designed to follow pupil's interests, promote thinking and problem solving.

## Impact on provision and standards

The school developed skills ladders, based on the 'p scales' to measure the impact on the provision and standards. Teachers use the relationships and sexuality in education skills ladder to guide them in the coverage of individual pupil targets. Teachers track these skills ladders to make sure the provision is raising the standards of its pupils. The school is further developing its provision for parents in online safety and is holding more sessions in the future.

## **Case Study 2: St Woolos Primary School, Newport**

### Information about the school

St Woolos Primary School is in Newport. Currently there are 337 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. The school has a diverse population made up of pupils from many countries. Across the school population, there are 43 different languages spoken. Forty-nine per cent (49%) of pupils speak English as an additional language. Around 38% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified that 38% of pupils have additional learning needs. These figures are well above national averages.

### Context and background to the practice

St Woolos Primary School is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel valued, safe and secure. The school promotes an understanding of diversity and respect for all and ensures that pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and empathy for one another.

### Description of activity/strategy

The school provides a comprehensive package of training for staff that equips them with the awareness and skills necessary to understand the cultural heritage of pupils and support their diverse needs. For example, staff receive regular training from specialist agencies including child and adolescent psychotherapists and Bawso. In addition, staff have gained qualifications to enable them to run innovative intervention programmes supporting pupils' social and emotional development. These include 'restorative justice' sessions, which enable pupils to understand how their behaviours affect others and how they can resolve disagreements successfully. The school also runs projects to develop parents' communication and language skills alongside their children.

Teachers plan many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy relationships within topics across the school. For example, the school uses positive role models from the local community to raise the aspirations of pupils from the black and ethnic minority community. Welsh Women's Aid run workshops with pupils at key stage 2 to learn about gender equality and the importance of healthy respectful relationships.

Faith leaders from the local community come into school to increase children's understanding of the main faiths represented at the school. The school uses grant funding successfully to provide additional services to support pupils. These include counselling and play therapy.

## Impact on provision and standards

The curriculum promotes respect and understanding of the many faiths and cultural identities of the pupils. As a result, pupils with a wide range of languages and cultural backgrounds work together well. They show care and consideration for each other and value equality and diversity.

Staff build positive relationships with key stakeholders including parents and community leaders. As a result, parents have increased their engagement with the school.

## **Case Study 3: Brackla Primary School, Bridgend**

### Information about the school

Brackla Primary School is an English-medium school maintained by Bridgend local authority. There are currently 314 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. Around 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. According to Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2016, 35% of pupils have additional learning needs. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home. A very few pupils are learning English as an additional language.

### Context and background to the practice

The school has worked collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop a powerful ethos that supports pupils in developing healthy relationships. This ethos supports the school to develop strong core values and knowledge, skills and attitudes in pupils that enable them to become resilient and reflective learners.

### Description of activity/strategy

Since September 2015, the school has had a Family Engagement Officer to enhance and extend partnerships with parents. Part of the role is to support the development of healthy relationships both at home and school. This includes supporting individual and targeted groups of pupils through daily drop-in sessions, nurture groups, a family values scheme and regular internet safety workshops. The school encourages parents to attend nurture group sessions alongside their child to reinforce skills learnt at school in the family home. The school liaises effectively with an extensive range of external agencies to deliver healthy relationships education. These agencies provide training for staff, enhance the PSE curriculum through delivery of specific sessions on the importance of showing respect for others. The school works well with external agencies to provide them with information about pupils' specific needs identified through parental concerns or the school's well-being assessment tool. This tool provides valuable information about important aspects of well-being such as pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes towards themselves and others.

## Impact on provision and standards

The school's focus on promoting pupils' health and well-being has a strong impact on pupil outcomes and family engagement. For example, attendance has improved over the last four years and for 2015-2016 was 95.6%. In 2016, all Year 2 pupils achieved the expected outcome 5 and many achieved outcome 6 in the personal, social, well-being and cultural diversity (PSWCD) strand of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Partnerships with an extensive range of agencies make a strong contribution to widening the range of learning opportunities and support available for pupils. Relationships with targeted families have improved. There are increased attendance rates at parent events and consultation evening

#### **Case Study 4: Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff**

##### Information about the school

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr is a Welsh-medium school that is maintained by Cardiff local authority, for boys and girls aged between 11 and 19 years. The school is situated in Fairwater in Cardiff. The school serves the western side of the city and has a very wide catchment area. There are currently 1,002 pupils on roll.

##### Context and background to the practice

The school places a high priority on pupil participation and encourages pupils to develop their leadership skills through organising a wide range of conferences and assemblies that have a focus on healthy relationships and respect for others. The school also promotes effective peer to peer support through training pupils as mentors for the development of academic and social skills.

##### Description of activity/strategy

There are effective means for pupils from across the school to work with each other to develop positive relationships. For example, assemblies and all age conferences focus on important issues such as gender stereotyping in the mass media, sports, toy making and the world of work. Pupils benefit from being part of campaigning groups such as 'Merched Mentrus' (Enterprising Girls) to promote sexual equality and healthy relationships, 'Bechgyn Bonheddig' (Noble Boys) to develop social skills, 'Digon' (Enough) to tackle homophobic attitudes and 'Balch' (Proud) to celebrate the school's multicultural community. 'NewidFfem' is a pupil led initiative that promotes gender equality within the school community. It has succeeded in raising awareness of gender issues faced by pupils and in changing the attitudes of pupils and teachers towards feminism and gender equality. The group is responsible for organising monthly conferences where every pupil has the opportunity to discuss current affairs concerning gender equality. The group challenges traditional gender based attitudes towards careers. Members of the NewidFfem group have shared their work successfully with pupils from other schools through being part of the AGENDA project.

##### Impact on provision and standards

Pupils develop as active and informed citizens. They have the skills and confidence to challenge inequality and unhealthy disrespectful attitudes. They act as ambassadors of healthy relationships education through working with younger pupils in local primary schools to raise awareness of gender equality. Pupils' participation in the school community is comprehensive. The way in which pupils lead contemporary and innovative mentoring groups is a significant strength of the school.

## **Case Study 5: Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn, Gwynedd**

### **Information about the school**

Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn is a bilingual 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in rural west Wales, situated on the coastline between Barmouth and Aberystwyth. There are currently 270 pupils on roll and the proportion of pupils eligible free school meals stands at 11%. The school has identified 30% of pupils as having a range of additional learning needs. One point nine per cent (1.9%) of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. According to PLASC 2016, 7% of pupils are fluent in Welsh.

### **Context and background to the practice**

The school is committed to providing an inclusive, wide-ranging education to its pupils, and to encouraging and building a supportive environment where pupils and staff understand, appreciate and respect the views, rights and situations of others. Healthy relationships education plays a key role in raising the awareness of pupils about how to establish, maintain and recognise positive relationships and how to identify signs and symptoms of unhealthy relationships.

### **Description of activity/strategy**

The school delivers important information about healthy relationships through a wide range of activities. These include PSE lessons, subjects across the curriculum, suspended timetable days, drama productions, assemblies and outside speakers. The school holds information-sharing and training workshops for staff and parents, delivered by specialist agencies on issues such as e-safety, sexting and domestic abuse. These are popular and useful in helping adults to support young people.

The school provides a high level of support for vulnerable pupils in sessions that focus well on respecting self and others, improving self-image, and the need to respect the choices others make.

The school operates a buddy system. Prefects undergo peer-mentoring training and each prefect is matched with lower-school tutor groups and allocated a small group of pupils within those classes. The prefect meets every week with their mentees and checks their well-being. Younger pupils are often more comfortable to raise concerns with older pupils than with a member of staff. Any concern is then passed on to the inclusion officer or pupil progress co-ordinator or senior leadership team, depending upon its nature.

### **Impact on provision and standards**

This is an inclusive school, where the needs of groups of pupils are considered carefully. Pupils and staff understand the role they play in encouraging and developing healthy relationships and in helping young people to recognise and respond appropriately in situations where they may feel awkward, uncomfortable or threatened. There is a strong support network within the school, which is proactive in establishing and sustaining healthy relationships.

## **Case Study 6: St Teilos Church in Wales School, Cardiff**

St Teilo's Church in Wales High School is an 11-18 voluntary aided school in the east of Cardiff. There are 1,500 pupils on roll with a significant proportion of vulnerable young people. The school works closely with other statutory agencies and the third sector to promote positive and healthy relationships. A particular focus of the school's work has been to address issues of child sexual exploitation. The children call this work 'Think Safe'.

St Teilo's engages a number of organisations to deliver workshops and assemblies to pupils. However, there existed a lack of strategies for risk reduction and direct work with vulnerable children. To create the capacity to address this need, school staff were trained by the NSPCC as facilitators for the Protect and Respect programme, supporting children and young people aged 11 to 19 who have been, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited. This meant that a larger number of pupils could receive the education needed to keep safe and help them understand what child sexual exploitation and grooming are compared to a safe, loving relationship. The school also facilitates a multi-agency professional networking group designed to bring the work of safeguarding professionals together in a coherent and creative way.

Despite these efforts to respond to the complex issue of child sexual exploitation, the school recognised that too little was being done to address the needs of those who may, without appropriate intervention, grow up to become at risk of offending behaviour. School staff therefore worked alongside Social Workers to design and implement a new programme of study, 'SHIELD'. This eight week programme promotes:

- **Safety** - The quality of being protected and free from risk
- **Honesty** - The quality of being truthful and honourable
- **Integrity** - The quality of being trustworthy and fair
- **Empathy** - The quality of being understanding and sharing the feelings of others
- **Love** - The quality of being caring and affectionate
- **Dignity** - The quality of behaving with seriousness and self-control

Preserving a climate of open, candid and 'real world' discourse is key to the success of the sessions. Themes include power and control, consent, pornography, expectations and peer pressure, popular culture and damaging stereotypes. The use of case studies, scenarios, debate and discussion allows participants to wrestle with the more difficult aspects of sex and relationships within a safe space. In context, swearing and sexual language is permitted – this is the language young people use, after all.

Now in its third year, SHIELD has proved popular with pupils. Young people say that they have been able to ask questions that they would not normally be able to ask. They describe the programme as "real" and "the truth" unlike "PSE lessons that only tell you what the law says". Students state they feel more confident to handle "real situations" and that they can be themselves in relationships, not "who other people expect us to be".

## **Case Study 7 – UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Scheme**

### **Information about Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Award**

Unicef works with schools in the UK to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Our Rights

Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as our guide, we are working with more UK schools than almost any other organisation. 1.5 million children in the UK go to a Rights Respecting School and more than 4,000 schools up and down the country are working towards the award.

### Information about the school

Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School is in the village of Pen Y Fai on the outskirts of Bridgend and maintained by Bridgend LA. There are currently 230 pupils on roll including part time nursery children.

Approximately 3.8% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals which is significantly lower than the local and all-Wales averages. The school identifies around 4.8% of pupils as having additional learning needs at school action level with 7.2% of pupils at school action plus level. No pupils have a formal statement of special educational needs. Approximately 6% of pupils are from ethnic minority background with no pupils speaking Welsh as a first or second language at home.

### Context and background to the practice

The school engaged with Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) in September 2016 and made the commitment to fully embed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into the life of the school. The school achieved Silver: Rights Aware in July 2017 and Gold: Rights Respecting status in July 2018. RRSA works with school staff every step of the way on their journey to become Rights Respecting, providing training, lesson plans, guidance and, when a school is ready, an assessment by one of our child rights professionals. As part of the accreditation process the school completes a self-evaluation and impact form, and pupil and staff questionnaires before it hosts an accreditation visit. The school recognised that RRS has helped develop mutually respectful relationships by embedding a shared language across the school founded on children's rights.

### Description of activity/strategy and impact on provision

Classroom and school rules have been replaced with charters which are visible in every classroom. At the start of each school year, pupils work with their class teachers to collectively decide on the articles of the CRC they wish to include in their charters and the actions and behaviours that they are going to display to ensure everyone's rights are respected. Staff and pupils agree that charters have contributed positively to school life and are regularly referred to; "the old school rules were for teachers, they didn't give us a voice" and "charters are all our rights. We agree to respect the rights and decide on which to include". Creative interpretations of the charters have been made "so they just don't belong on the wall". Pupils have made 'chatterboxes' to encourage rights to be discussed with peers and include all the chosen rights on their charter along with additional rights that each pupil has chosen. Pupils show real understanding that rights are unconditional and can explain how their behaviour and actions affect the rights of others. This contributes significantly to a positive learning environment.

Respectful relationships are fostered and mutually respectful relationships exist between staff, pupils and staff and pupils with their peers. There is a calm and respectful environment at Pen Y Fai and children were noticeably kind and supportive of one another.

“We are a team and that is important. We have a shared vision which is based on the Convention and pupils and staff work together to share ideas, make learning fun” stated the Senior Leadership Team. There is a consistent and universally applied approach to modelling rights respecting actions and attitudes are modelled consistently by all staff. They described how “on board” all staff are and how “RRS has brought about consistency in the way we talk, act and engage with pupils”.

Several approaches are used to support pupils to resolve conflict in a rights respecting way. Pupils are encouraged to find solutions that promote fairness and democracy and children agreed that they are treated with dignity “children display more respect for each other because of RRS and we work with them to resolve problems and respect each other”. Articles are used by pupils to help them reflect upon a particular incident and the school has a designated ‘cwtch’ area which is used as a calming space when needed.

### **Case Study 8: Terrance Higgins Trust**

Positive Voices is a community project run by Terrence Higgins Trust where people living with HIV share their personal stories to raise awareness of HIV and promote good sexual health for everyone.

Our speakers are trained to deliver sexual health presentations to diverse audiences in a range of settings, including:

- schools and colleges
- youth clubs
- the NHS and other healthcare providers
- businesses
- faith-based groups
- charities and community organisations.

School-based sessions are designed to empower young people in making healthy choices about their own sexual health, covering HIV prevention and safer sex messages, along with sharing their own experiences living with HIV. We also provide free resources on request, such as condoms, leaflets, classroom activities and factsheets.

Sessions are tailored for audience and age and are discussed with schools in advance to ensure that the content is appropriate and engaging.

The project operates in London, Glasgow, and Brighton, where it has become an established part of the RSE provision in most schools, with sessions built into the calendar each year.

A volunteer and at least one member of Terrence Higgins Trust staff run the sessions, which usually last for an hour. They start with a Power Point, an introduction to the work of Terrence Higgins Trust and up to date stats and information on HIV. This is followed by personal stories of people living with HIV followed by question and answer sessions and an evaluation.

*‘You immediately see the reaction from young people in the room who may be LGBT+ themselves. When I’m asked questions like ‘can I get HIV from kissing?’ it reinforces the importance of what we’re doing. Students ask lots of searching questions regarding HIV transmission though oral sex and kissing – it’s great and really important to be able to clear*

*up some of the misinformation about HIV and how it's passed on.'* – John, Positive Voices volunteer speaker.

*'Positive Voices fitted wonderfully into our PSHE<sup>1</sup> programme. The speaker was so engaging and charismatic, and delivered such a powerful message to our pupils.'*  
Jake Jones, teacher, the Cumberland School.

*'The talk gave a face to the notion that anyone can become infected with HIV not just the traditional stereotype of gay men. Additionally being a female audience it was highly relevant to have two female speakers share their experiences so eloquently.'* – Teacher, La Sainte Union Catholic School, Highgate.

*'The best assembly we've ever had!'* - Sixth form students, Acland Burghley school, north London

### **Case Study 9 - from Professor Emma Renold - Co-producing the new Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum: a creative audit**

Following a 2 day workshop to learn and discuss the developments for the new Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Curriculum, the RSE lead in one primary school in the Rhondda Cynon Taf facilitated a series of creative activities to map current practice and begin to co-produce a more inclusive and holistic curriculum with staff and students.

#### **Creative audit with staff:**

An INSET session with all teaching and support staff explored the proposed core underpinning principles for new RSE in Wales; an overview of why change was needed, and how the eight themes from the 2018 UNESCO guidance can support developmentally appropriate learning aims and objectives. The RSE lead opened the session with a song and comedy clip, and invited staff to share their own experiences of sex education adapting the 'What Jars You?' task from the AGENDA resource. In small groups, they then mapped their current practice against the UNESCO themes. They finished by completing the stop/start task, writing on red plates what they wanted to stop doing in their school, and on green plates what they wanted to change or start doing in response to ensuring a rights-based, inclusive, holistic and empowering RSE for all.

Feedback from staff was very positive about the delivery and content of the creative audit. Many staff realised they needed to move forward and out of their comfort zones. Some concerns and questions were raised about the wider range of issues children already experience that are not addressed in school. There were some concerns about reaction from parents, and some concerns about 'age-appropriateness' of some issues. However, the UNESCO guidance and research evidence from the RSE report was vital in responding to and addressing these concerns. The mapping exercise was a useful task not only in highlighting gaps in practice and training on core issues, but recognising that we were already providing learning experiences on many of the themes.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal, Social, Economic and Health Education (PSHE) is a curriculum requirement in England only. It is not a curriculum requirement for schools in Wales.

### Creative audit with students:

Successful RSE involves listening to and involving children and young people in the design and evaluation of any comprehensive RSE programme.

Following some ice-breaker games, the RSE lead selected UNESCO's Key Concept 1 (Relationships). Using images, film-clips and TV adverts she invited Year 6 Students to participate in a similar creative audit to staff. They also created a 'diversity street' on a paper roll depicting possible family/relationship variations. Pupils were asked to define key topics in their own words, and generate a mind map of lessons/activities that covered the themes (e.g. family diversity, love, relationships, friendships, tolerance, inclusion, people I can trust and respect etc.). They then went on a 'learning-walk' around the school taking photos of displays/evidence of any of the topic themes. Next steps is to expand and share the creative audits from staff and students, share with parents and governors, and identify curriculum gaps and needs as we begin to co-produce an RSE programme that is relevant, engaging and meets the needs of all children in our school.

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