

## Relationships and Sexuality Education - engaging with parents and carers

Under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a mandatory element for all learners aged 3 – 16. Schools need to plan their RSE curriculum using the [RSE Code](#) to ensure developmentally appropriate learning within the three RSE strands of relationships and identity, sexual health and well-being and, empowerment, safety and respect. The Code aims to ensure that every learner has access to RSE and it aims to improve the consistency, quality of learning and teaching, and curriculum time given to RSE.



Teaching RSE is not new for schools, much of the learning within the three strands of the [RSE Code](#) already exists within the Foundation Phase Framework and the PSE Framework for 7–19-year-olds in Wales; however, the move to the mandatory status of the Code (which includes the removal of the right for parents and carers to withdraw their children from RSE lessons) has caused anxiety for some. For this reason, it is more important than ever for schools to engage with parents and carers about RSE, clarifying what it is, and how it will be delivered in their setting.

The CfW statutory guidance for RSE states that:

‘Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should [engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community](#), offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE.’

[https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-\(rse\):-statutory-guidance](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-(rse):-statutory-guidance)

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Many schools will already have existing processes in place for engaging with parents and carers regarding their curriculum and PSE offer and should continue to utilise these to support parents and carers in their understanding of what RSE is going to look like for their child in that school.

For those schools in the early stages of engaging parents and carers, or for those looking to further develop their processes, see the suggestions below:



**Establish communication with parents and carers from an early and ongoing basis** about RSE in your school. This helps foster positive relationships with parents and carers and helps them to understand that RSE is part of your curriculum and helps to develop their understanding of the positive nature of RSE in your curriculum.



**Include parents and carers in developing RSE in your school** by inviting them to be part of an RSE focus group. The group could support you in creating your vision and policy for RSE.



**Conduct parent and carer surveys** to help you establish their understanding of RSE and any questions or concerns they may have. This can then help you to plan engagement events and can also support you in developing your own set of **RSE Frequently Asked Questions**, specific to your own setting.



**Publish your RSE Curriculum** for your parents and carers to see what you plan to teach and when. The RSE Provision Map Tool could help you draw all of this information together into different phases or even year groups for sharing.



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**Hold parent and carer engagement events** where you share what will be taught, when, and some of the resources you plan to use. These events could also cover some of the concerns raised in the parent and carer surveys. Set an agenda for the event and establish ground rules at the beginning to ensure that everyone is clear of what and how things will be discussed. Think about the best time of day to hold these meetings to ensure maximum engagement.



**Support parents and carers** to be able to support RSE learning at home by providing advice and strategies they can use to talk to their children. Publishing your RSE curriculum overview and the resources you plan to use can be useful for parents and carers to see the sorts of things learners will have been covering in school.



Engaging with your wider community (faith leaders, organisations that can support RSE in your schools, Healthy School co-ordinators, School Nurses etc.) is also an important part of your whole-school approach to RSE. There have been some excellent examples from across the region of schools and clusters doing this - the key message from their work is that making time to engage with and involve parents, carers and the wider community has been a crucial factor in easing many concerns and tensions and has created an open and honest dialogue for those needing reassurance.

CSC has produced a number of resources and tools to support schools in developing their RSE curriculum which can be found on the [CSC website](#) and in the [RSE File in our CfW Community](#).

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