

Minute Item 6.(iii)

From: ACCOUNT, Unmonitored [mailto:Unmonitored.ACCOUNT@education.gov.uk]
Sent: 14 November 2017 07:39
To: Damian Eaton <damian.eaton@stockport.gov.uk>
Subject: Department for Education: 2017-0052802 CRM:0707144

Dear Mr Eaton

I am writing on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education to thank you for your email of 6 November, enclosing your letter of 10 April. I am sorry your letter was not received in the department.

I appreciate you sharing Stockport council views on age appropriate education. We expect all schools to ensure that young people, whatever their developing sexuality or identity, feel that RSE meets their needs. The purpose of the new provisions are about ensuring that young people learn that there are different types of relationships. Schools should therefore ensure that RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all young people. Schools should also adhere to their duty under the Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Whilst we are clear that the most pressing safeguarding concerns relate to Relationships Education and RSE, it is evident that wider concerns about child safety and wellbeing relate to the types of issues PSHE can cover, such as drugs and alcohol, physical and mental health. We therefore think it is important that we are able to consider making PSHE statutory as well and have the time to consider carefully what the engagement on Relationships Education and RSE reveals about the content of those subjects and the remaining needs for the PSHE curriculum.

Statutory guidance will be developed following a thorough engagement process on the scope and content of ReEd and RSE, involving a wide range of stakeholders. The engagement process will seek evidence from schools and teachers, parents and pupils, experts in safeguarding and child wellbeing, subject experts, voluntary organisations and other interested parties and other government departments and public sector bodies. We will set out more details about the engagement process shortly.

The introduction of the new subject of ReEd in primary schools and renaming the current secondary school subject of sex education RSE, aims to emphasise the central importance of healthy relationships. The focus in primary school will be on building healthy relationships and staying safe. As children get older, it is important that they start to develop their understanding of healthy adult relationships in more depth, with sex education delivered in that context.

The regulations and statutory guidance will be subject to full public consultation. Our plan is for schools to teach statutory ReEd, RSE (and PSHE, subject to the further engagement) from September 2019. The current statutory guidance for Sex and Relationships Education was introduced in 2000 and is becoming increasingly outdated. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online.

Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of their pupils and the local community and in the case of faith schools, in accordance with their faith.

We expect faith schools to work in partnership with parents in drawing up their RSE policy. In line with current position relating to faith schools operating in the secondary maintained sector, faith schools will be required to have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance when teaching SRE and schools of a religious ethos may choose to reflect that in their sex and relationship education policy. We do not plan to change these arrangements and the new guidance will set out advice for all schools including faith schools. Schools should ensure that their RSE policy reflects the needs of the community they serve, whilst still being consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act.

E-safety is now covered at all key stages in the computing curriculum. Children in primary schools are taught how to use technology safely and respectfully, how to keep personal information private and where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies. The introduction of e-safety content in key stages 1 and 2 reflects the fact that children are increasingly accessing the internet from a young age and is intended to inform pupils of good practice in staying safe online from an early age.

Pupils in secondary schools are taught a range of ways to use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly and securely, including protecting their online identity and privacy, how to recognise inappropriate content, contact and conduct and know how to report concerns. All schools, including primary schools, can choose to teach children about the dangers of social media in an age-appropriate way. The content was developed with input from e-safety experts including Childnet, NSPCC and the UK Safer Internet Centre.

I hope this information is helpful.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2017-0052802. If you need to respond to us, please visit: <https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus> and quote your reference number.

As part of our commitment to improving the service we provide to our customers, we are interested in hearing your views and would welcome your comments via our website at: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/YBK1O/>

Yours sincerely

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Ministerial and Public Communications Division

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