



Call for Evidence: review of the RSHE statutory guidance

Parent Zone's submission June 2023

About Parent Zone

Parent Zone sits at the heart of modern family life, providing advice, knowledge and support to shape the best possible future for children as they embrace the online world. We were founded in 2005 and since then have gone on to collaborate with many organisations who share our vision. The online world offers enormous opportunities to children, young people and families. But we also know it can pose huge challenges.

Our mission at Parent Zone is to improve outcomes in a connected world, so that children will be:

- safer online
- resilient to the challenges of the online world
- educated for a digital future

If your proposal is related to a current barrier to effective teaching caused by the guidance, please explain how the guidance could be changed to remove this barrier and what topic this relates to.

The support, or lack thereof, from parents for the teaching of RSHE has the potential to be a huge barrier to its successful teaching. While many parents support its inclusion in the curriculum, they need to be reassured that it is being delivered well in an age sensitive way using high quality materials. A combination of reports, press coverage and parents' own experiences have led to concerns that that is not currently the case.

Parents worry that agendas are being pursued that are not primarily child and young-person focused and do not reflect best practice pedagogy but rather adult agendas of various kinds. However true these reports are, and however limited the actual cases, it would be very unfortunate to lose the backing of parents for something they want and need, and which educates young people about sexual health and encourages them to value relationships of reciprocity and care.

Parental buy-in should not be seen as a 'nice to have' or an afterthought. It is absolutely central to the successful teaching of the subject. Parents were well-disposed towards RSHE but that support is fragile and conditional and has been shaken.

We have been conducting focus groups with parents and heard strong messages from them that they are not being kept informed - much less consulted - and whilst they might support what is being taught they don't always have confidence in the quality of the teaching and they don't feel they have enough opportunity to raise questions or concerns.

Please provide the exact text that you would like to see in the statutory guidance, and the paragraph and page number in the [existing statutory guidance](#) which your proposal relates to.

Paragraph 24 page 13 - Schools should also ensure that when they consult with parents, they provide examples of the resources that they plan to use and **provide opportunities for parents to ask questions and voice their concerns** as this can be reassuring for parents and enables them to continue the conversations started in class at home.'

Paragraph 42 page 17 - **Schools should ensure that timely, regular opportunities are provided for parents** to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum.

Please summarise key evidence, published in the last ten years, to support this change.

There is much evidence which demonstrates the link between parental support for children's education and their attainment. Studies have been carried out across the globe in countries ranging from Chile to the Canary Islands, and across age ranges, in both primary and secondary school.

The support of their parents is considered one of the most fundamental reasons for academic success, and it should be taken into account when developing the RSHE statutory guidance, and when the teaching is being carried out. To ensure that the pupils are benefiting from their RSHE lessons to their full potential, we need teachers to be supported by parents.

Research papers from the last ten years which support this include:

- [Parental involvement and educational success among vulnerable students in vocational education and training](#)
- [Social Class and Educational Inequality](#)
- [Effect of Parental Involvement on Children's Academic Achievement in Chile](#)
- [Parental Involvement as a Important Factor for Successful Education](#)