

**Newham Together - the best place  
for Children and Young People**

## Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

RSHE is most effective when it is taught by trained professionals in regular sessions, is embedded into school policy and involves the input of young people and their families. (Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, 2018)



**Primary  
Factsheet**



From September 2020 it is statutory for all primary schools to teach Relationships and Health Education (RHE) and recommended that they also teach sex education (how a baby is conceived and born) (RSHE).

Everyone has a part to play in ensuring children and young people live in communities where they are happy, healthy, safe and can flourish.

Newham has long been a place that values diversity and where inclusion is promoted.

The different communities that call Newham home make it a very special place to live, grow, work and study.

Schools can ensure children and young people have a better understanding of physical and mental health, relationships and sex, as well as having knowledge of what is appropriate and inappropriate through high quality RSHE.

Children and young people need to have the confidence to be themselves, to seek help when needed, and this is what schools and families working together can provide.

**“We believe high quality, inclusive and respectful RSHE will equip our young people for life and support them to be happy, healthy and safe.**

**We are proud to be working with our family of Newham schools and with a wide range of community organisations to deliver a positive RSHE curriculum that will help to make Newham the best place for young people to grow up.”**

Cllr Rokshana Fiaz, Mayor of Newham

Cllr Sarah Ruiz, Cabinet Member, Education

Cllr Jane Lofthouse, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education

Cllr Canon Ann Easter, Commissioner for Interfaith & Inter-Religious Dialogue

Cllr Dr Rohit Kumar Dasgupta, Commissioner for Social Integration and Equalities

## WHY DO WE NEED TO TEACH RSHE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

Schools have a legal duty to teach RHE from September 2020 and have done so in one form or another for many years. Newham Council along with Ofsted and the DFE recommends that RSHE is taught in Years 5 and 6. We know that young people who have had good school-based teaching of RSHE are more likely to:

- **Have the confidence to seek and know where to go to get help and advice.**
- **Develop an understanding that will help them make intelligent and informed relationships choices.**

We also know that children who talk about RSHE with parents are also likely to have better sexual health outcomes. So, parents working in partnership with schools can achieve the best outcomes for pupils.

We know that good quality RSHE raises awareness of the risks and dangers of child sexual exploitation, cyber-bullying and abuse in

relationships and provides children and young people with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and seek help. They are more likely to understand, respect and see the value of diversity and equality.

In Newham we have many poor health outcomes that are likely to improve when schools give good quality RSHE lessons:

- **Childhood obesity rates in Newham are some of the highest in London.**
- **According to the Newham Mental Health Needs Assessment (2016-18), parental illness (including mental illness) impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of children within a household and Newham has the highest rates of parental illness in London and higher than England as a whole.**
- **Newham has the second highest rate of domestic violence in London. 65% of all child protection orders**

in Newham have domestic violence as a risk factor for the children involved. Domestic violence is also seen as a risk factor likely to steer young people towards antisocial behaviour and involvement in gangs and violent crime.

- Nationally the average age at which a child first views pornography, according to the NSPCC, is 11.

National evidence from the NSPCC (2018) shows:

- Almost one in 10 children have experienced cyber-bullying in the UK.
- In 2018, almost a quarter of young people said they had been contacted online by an adult they did not know.
- Children are potentially vulnerable to being abused by adults who contact them online.

## WHO IS INVOLVED IN RSHE?

The 'RSHE partnership' is supporting schools to get ready for the new law by September 2020. This partnership brings the Local Authority, Newham schools, and Newham's RSHE and Religious Education Advisors together. It is expected that the quality of RSHE in the borough will be stronger through this joined up approach.

Our guidance to schools is based upon our consultation with schools, councillors, unions, parents, pupils, governors and local community groups (including faith leaders and LGBT+ groups). We have liaised with our colleagues in neighbouring boroughs, as well as the DfE and Ofsted.

## WHAT AGE GROUPS OF CHILDREN HAVE RSHE?

Schools teach RSHE throughout a child's school life. The content will vary to ensure it is age appropriate.



## WHAT IS IN THE RSHE LESSONS?

Schools understand that they must teach pupils sensitively on:

- **Safeguarding.**
- **The national curriculum, including science.**
- **The statutory content of RSHE.**

Schools have been given guidance on where and how to include recommended content of RSHE in an age appropriate way. Everything

we teach will respect and reflect the diverse backgrounds our pupils come from.

Do pupils have to take part? Parents can remove their children from relationships and sex education until September 2020. After this time, they will still be able to remove them from sex education in primary and in secondary schools until their children are around 15.

## HOW DO SCHOOLS ENSURE THE INCLUSION OF ALL?

RSHE in school should be taught in a balanced way in line with our legal context for relationships and equality in the UK. Schools have a duty to ensure they are inclusive for all pupils, families and backgrounds. In practice, this means that schools will explore the range of backgrounds as well as the differing families. This will include diverse:

- **Religions or belief systems and cultures.**
- **Families that are made up in many different ways: parents (same or opposite sex), extended families, single parent families, grandparents, carers, foster parents and blended families.**

Good RSHE teaching and an inclusive school environment should meet the needs of all pupils, regardless of their protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act:

- **Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity.**

This will reflect life in modern Britain and supports pupils to develop tolerance and respect difference.

# The truth about working together

The Local Authority, Schools and Newham Religious Education and RSHE Advisors are committed to working hard, in partnership with parents and community groups, to make sure RSHE in Newham is of the highest quality and sensitive to the needs of all our children and young people.

## Who should I speak to if I have further questions?

Please contact your school and ask to speak to the head teacher.

## References

Macdowell et al, 2012, London.  
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<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1067/how-safe-are-our-children-2018.pdf>

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POSTNOTE 576, June 2018

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019

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**People at the Heart of Everything we do**