

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	30 March 2023
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide information on the recent changes to Sex Education and the introduction of RSE in Curriculum for Wales (CfW). To ensure that as a Local Authority (LA) we have a suitable RSE policy that can be adopted and adapted by schools to support them in embedding the new curriculum and provide support, information, consistency and clarity.
REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:	To update Scrutiny on the current situation as regards RSE and draft policy

BACKGROUND:

RSE became a statutory element of CfW for all primary schools and those secondary schools that have committed to the roll out of the new curriculum from September 2022. This will be a phased approach for secondary schools, beginning with Year 7.

For some, RSE is a sensitive subject. A group named Public Child Protection Wales have challenged Welsh Government on the provision for RSE with a date for a Judicial Review mid November 2022. An interim review to enable parents to withdraw their children from RSE until the review in November was denied by the court in September 2022.

What is it?

RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values that will empower learners to:

- support their health and well-being
- develop healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships of all kinds, including those with family and friends, and in time, romantic and sexual relationships
- navigate and make sense of how relationships, sex, gender and sexuality shape their own and other people's identities and lives
- understand and support their rights and those of others to enjoy equitable, safe, healthy and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives and advocate for these

This section of CfW framework contains:

- The RSE Code: this sets out the mandatory learning at developmentally appropriate phases

- The supporting statutory guidance: this provides support in developing RSE in a curriculum both as essential learning in its own right and also as a cross-cutting element in all Areas

This code contains mandatory requirements, the legal basis for which is set out in the legislation summary of CfW framework guidance. It sets out the themes and matters that must be encompassed in RSE:

- relationships and identity
- sexual health and well-being
- empowerment, safety and respect

The above strands incorporate 6 themes: relationships, rights and equity, sex gender and sexuality, bodies and body image, sexual health and well-being, violence, safety and support.

RSE provision helps to ensure learners develop a positive understanding of relationships and sexuality and to recognise misconceptions. RSE aims to empower learners in line with their needs, experiences and wider development. Through discussion and by responding to learners' questions and needs, it can provide safe and empowering environments that enable learners to reflect on and express their views and feelings on a range of issues, whilst also ensuring that the content is developmentally appropriate.

Teaching and learning in RSE should be supported by a whole-school approach to RSE and this is critical in supporting learners' well-being. This means effectively linking all aspects of school, including the curriculum, policy, staff, school environment and community to support learners in their relationships and sexuality education. Schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of children's rights as protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A rights-based approach supported by equity should be embedded in the learning. In line with the mandatory requirements of the RSE Code, RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. This of course includes gender equity and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ (LGBTQ+) inclusivity.

There are legal requirements for RSE to be developmentally appropriate, therefore responding to learners' needs, experiences, and evolving knowledge at appropriate times and ages, which also includes the resources schools use in implementing RSE. Each Area of the curriculum, and the range of subject disciplines within them each have a unique contribution to learning in RSE and across 3 phases, linked broadly to age.

- Phase 1: from age 3
- Phase 2: from age 7
- Phase 3: from age 11

The principles of progression across the Health and Well-being AoLE offer guidance to progression in RSE. 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. 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.

Why RSE is needed?

The world around us is evolving rapidly and significantly. As a society we are becoming ever more aware of:

- changing family structures and relationships
- shifting social, cultural and religious norms in relation to sex, gender and sexuality
- advances in technology including the rising influence of social media and increased use of digital communications and devices
- changing laws and rights around relationships, sex, gender and sexuality

In this context, RSE is an important support in enabling learners to navigate these changes. Understanding how relationships are formed, developed and maintained, enables children and young people to develop skills and attitudes to support them in their own relationships throughout their lives.

High-quality RSE provision will support learners to critically engage with what they are learning and experiencing. This supports them to understand their values and beliefs and to advocate for respect and understanding of others. WG believe all children and young people have the right to receive high-quality, holistic and inclusive education about relationships and sexuality. High-quality, holistic and inclusive RSE is associated with a range of positive and protective outcomes for all learners and their communities.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The current policies do not reflect the changes to Curriculum for Wales and need to be adapted. Schools are required to share information with stakeholders e.g. parents, and a policy is needed to support the wider school community and ensure everyone is aware of the expectations and procedures and ensure consistency across the county, as well as ensuring that there is a whole school approach to RSE. The draft policy has been developed by a number of contributors e.g. schools, Ceredigion Inclusion staff including ALN, deprivation and safeguarding, Brook Sexual Health Charity and Healthy Schools coordinators. Schools have received a 'draft' copy of the policy and welcome the opportunity to adopt the policy following scrutiny.

[Polisi Drafft Cymraeg](#)
[English Draft Policy](#)

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

Summary:

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- i) To agree to adopt the contents of the Ceredigion RSE policy
- ii) That any comments proposed by the Welsh Government are included as amendments to the RSE Policy

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To comply with the legal requirements of Curriculum for Wales and provide a clear overview of the responsibilities of schools, to ensure a consistent and high quality approach to delivering RSE across Ceredigion.

Contact Name: Laurie Hughes Meinir Ebbsworth

Designation: Wellbeing Advisory Teacher

Date of Report: March 30

Acronyms:

CfW: Curriculum for Wales

LA: Local Authority

RSE: Relationships and
Sexuality Education

WG: Welsh Government

AoLE: Area of Learning and
Experience