

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION
ADVICE FOR TEACHERS FROM STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

We have written this guide to give you tips and information about what you need to think about when you are teaching us Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). When we started this project with Dr Sophie King-Hill from the University of Birmingham we were going to design a resource for RSE but when we talked about it we realised that it isn't a resource that is needed but a guide with tips for teachers about how to teach us this subject so we get the best out of it.

We hope that you listen to what we are saying as we want good RSE to support us in our lives ahead and we want to learn as much as we can about it.

It's really important to us all that you get this right!

TEACHERS SHOULD
TAUGHT HOW TO BE
OR IT DOESN'T WORK





We hope that when using these tips you will be able to:

- Identify issues in your teaching that you can change to make Relationships and Sex Education make sense for us.
- Establish good teaching practice when teaching Relationships and Sex Education.
- Modify what you already do to make it better and help us learn.
- Develop new ways of teaching Relationships and Sex Education with us supporting the design and taking part in the lessons rather than teaching at us.
- Recognise that it is ok not to want to teach Relationships and Sex Education and that the school should allow teachers to opt out.

FOR HEADTEACHERS, GOVERNORS + THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

We need sessions frequently. Weekly lessons and not just one off sessions so that we can build on our knowledge and also gain the confidence to ask questions and build trust with the teacher.

- Make sure we can get valuable time on RSE so that we can receive more information.
- Make sure you have professional teachers that know how to explain everything around RSE properly so it is less awkward for us to share ideas and not be embarrassed to speak up with our queries.
- Teachers need to be taught how to teach these sensitive subjects – give them training and guidance.
- Make sure teachers are comfortable teaching these subjects – if the teacher is embarrassed then it is awkward for all of us and nobody learns.



RSE WAS JUST TOO
EMBARRASSING TOO
OF THE TEACHER BECAUSE

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Don't force teachers to teach RSE if they don't want to – you have to allow them to opt out. Don't wait for them to come to you, ask them and give them the choice.
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Good sessions are the ones where the teacher is confident with what they are teaching.
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Give teachers more training on training days. Remember this is just as important to our future as English and Maths.
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Let the students and teachers plan and teach these sessions together. Give them time to do this. We can help you make lessons interesting, relevant and useful to us.
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Involve us in writing your policy. We can tell you what you need to do to get the best learning outcomes for all of us.

FOR THE TEACHERS

Make sure that everyone is comfortable with what you are teaching. Including you and us.

If you don't want to teach RSE then tell the head. There is nothing worse than a teacher who is awkward with this subject – it makes us cringe and can make sex and relationships feel shameful. No-one learns anything when this happens it is awful for everyone. So if you feel awkward then don't teach it!

Laughter is normal – don't punish it. This is so important to us. We understand it is an important topic but we will laugh as it is embarrassing sometimes and laughter helps us feel more comfortable.

Co-design sessions with your students and let them share the teaching with you – that will make sure it is appropriate and we can get the most out of it.

Don't make it a silent lesson – let people talk to each other, share ideas and experiences in a safe space.

Spend time to build bonds with your students, gain their trust – if appropriate give some of your own stories about growing up to show them we are all the same.

Don't just use boards and Powerpoints. We really need to discuss these topics to understand them and how they apply to our lives.



Don't judge us – whatever is happening for our generation and in our lives we can't change. Support us with this and let us ask the questions that we really need the answers to.



Give detail and be straight to the point. That will help us stay engaged.



Let your students be open without fear of consequences. This worries us a lot and sometimes we just say what you want to hear. Make group agreements about this with the teachers part of these too. Put yourself in our shoes – get our opinions and value what we tell you.



We understand that you have to report if you think we are at risk. This has to be made clear. Sometimes you don't need to report things if there is no danger to us and we just want to talk. This will make sure we ask the questions we really need the answers to.



We are really fed up of learning about things in RSE that we already know from our friends and the internet – teach us what we want to know.

You should do this by asking us – we think you should do this in two ways:



When you are planning a topic in RSE then send out a basic survey that is anonymous to find out what we know and what we want to know about the topic you are planning. We can't tell you what the answers will be as every school is different.



When you have the survey information get a group of us together to discuss and plan how the session should look. Involve us in the teaching – we can learn so much doing it this way.



At the end of your sessions make sure you get our feedback and constructive criticism.



The things that we have suggested are not difficult for you to do and they won't take you long to put in place.

At the moment these things aren't happening and more needs to be done to support us in Relationships and Sex Education lessons.

We can't change things alone.

We need teachers, heads and schools to start listening to what we need so that we can carry on to have happy and healthy lives.

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