

Relationship Education Guidance for Primary Schools



Meeting Needs and Resolving Objections

STATUTORY GUIDANCE (for context):

“Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their ... policy”.¹

PARENT RIGHTS (for context):

“(As parents) you can express your opinion, and this will help your child’s school decide how and when to cover the content of the statutory guidance. It may also help them decide whether to teach additional non-statutory content. Schools are required to ensure their teaching reflects the age and religious background of their pupils.”²

CONFLICTS WITH BELIEFS (general): Some parents may voice general concern over Primary Relationship Education (especially due to media coverage) and believe lesson content will conflict with their beliefs.

Consider expressing the curriculum in alternative terms, for example:

- *SEEKING KNOWLEDGE* (Families & people who care for me)
- *FRIENDSHIPS* (Caring friendships)
- *GOOD MANNERS* (Respectful relationships)
- *BEING SAFE* (Online relationships and being safe)

This may demonstrate how the curriculum may actually be rooted in concepts very compatible with a concerned parent’s worldview and so alleviate their concerns.

BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND: Some parents may voice concern over teaching about boyfriend/girlfriend relationships in Primary Relationship Education (e.g. because of beliefs against relationships outside of marriage).

Consider the following:

- **OPTION NOT TO INCLUDE:** As the Statutory Guidance does not explicitly mention teaching about boyfriend/girlfriend relationships at the Primary phase, schools may choose not to include this optional content.
- **OPTION TO MAKE MORE INCLUSIVE:** Schools may choose to include content discussing, for example, good and bad reasons someone may choose a partner or friend (e.g. looks, wealth and personality). Many parents may not have concerns if the discussion includes pupils being able to consider a ‘future husband/wife’ scenario (instead of only a boyfriend/girlfriend option).

LGBT (general): Some parents may voice concern over teaching about LGBT in Primary Relationship Education.

Consider the following:

- **STATUTORY GUIDANCE:** “Pupils should know... that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care. ...(LGBT) content is (to be) fully integrated... rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson”.
- Schools may comply with Statutory Guidance by, for example, teaching about forms of families (e.g. single parent families, adoptive parents) – including those with protected characteristics (e.g. parents of same and different ethnicities, parents of same and different religions, married and non-married parents, same-sex parents etc) – in the context of teaching about **DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE/RESPECT**.

If the lesson is explained in terms of ‘seeking knowledge/ neighbourliness’ (relating to those in pupils’ community) and teaching ‘good manners’ (tolerance/respect), as well as the extent/integration of the LGBT element being explained, parental concerns may be alleviated.

LGBT - POSITIVE NARRATIVES: Some parents may voice concern over inclusion of positive narrative resources about sexual orientation or gender reassignment (e.g. a positive narrative storybook about an infant with two male parents) in Primary Relationship Education. This may be because some parents may not want their children considering a same-sex relationship or gender reassignment positively for themselves (e.g. because of beliefs related to their worldview or cultural stigma).

Consider the following:

- **OPTION NOT TO INCLUDE:** As Statutory Guidance does not necessitate the inclusion of LGBT positive narrative resources, schools may choose not to include such resources as whole class texts.
- **OPTION TO LINK AND BROADEN CONTEXT:** schools may choose to include positive counter-narratives to, for example, tackle prejudice and hate-crimes. Some parents may not have concerns if explained in this context. If context is broadened to celebrate wider diversity and tackle all forms of prejudice (e.g. includes positive narratives of religious communities and tackling prejudice that affects them), parents may be able to further empathise.

Resources:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>