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**CALL FOR EVIDENCE (CONSULTATION) ON CHANGES TO THE  
TEACHING OF SRE, S & RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION  
(TO BE CALLED RSE) AND PSHE**

שליט"א HaRav Shimon Winegarten Approved by

**Submissions must be submitted by Monday 12th Feb 11:59am as outlined below**

For assistance please email [rse@najos.org](mailto:rse@najos.org) or call +44 203 488 0468

**A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND  
SUPPORTERS OF STRICTLY ORTHODOX JEWISH SCHOOLS**

**BACKGROUND**

Early in 2017, a new law was passed within the Children and Social Work Bill, mandating **all schools** to teach RE in primary schools and RSE in secondary schools from September 2019. The legislation was clear that RSE must be able to be taught “within the tenets of the faith” of each school. It is essential that as many supporters of Torah education as possible respond to this Call for Evidence. This is the opportunity to not only respond in volume but also state clearly what “within the tenets of the faith” means to us.

According to the Equalities Act 2010, schools are compelled to be just as tolerant to faith requirements as they are to all other protected characteristics. Responding to this call for evidence is our community’s opportunity to define what our cultural sensitivities and no-go areas are.

Our Daas Torah guides that there is no ‘age-appropriate’ way to teach primary or secondary school children about same-s marriage or transgenderism. We should be teaching young children broad values of respect and tolerance, not ordering them to accept adult s relationships which they are far too young to understand. Nor should schools be encouraging young children to question their biological gender.

Whilst the issues concerning PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) are less contentious, stakeholders need to respond to these questions by asserting their rights to conduct PSHE in a culturally appropriate environment whilst (for schools in particular) to demonstrate how PSHE is already an intrinsic item in our school curriculum

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This “Call for Evidence” has gone out to all stakeholders: school leaders, teachers, parents and all those concerned about education.

## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

The online consultation portal is available at this address:

[www.bit.ly/RSE-EVIDENCE](http://www.bit.ly/RSE-EVIDENCE)

If for exceptional reasons you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may send us your views by email to

[PSHE-RSE.consultation@education.gov.uk](mailto:PSHE-RSE.consultation@education.gov.uk)

or one can also submit a hard copy and send to

**RSE and PSHE Team, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, 2nd Floor, Great Smith Street London. SW1P 3BT**

**All evidence must be submitted by: Monday 12th February at 11.59 am.**

NB When submitting to the call for evidence, one does not have to respond to every question.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

As part of a wider consultation process in which NAJOS and other community representatives are directly involved, the Government is currently deciding what its new subjects of Relationships Education (Primary schools) and Relationships and S Education (Secondary schools) will look like in practice. Formal guidance will be issued by the Secretary of State for Education later this year so that schools can prepare themselves for compulsory RSE starting September 2019. This call for evidence is to help shape this guidance.

This guide is intended to help educators, parents and supporters of our ethos, who may be unfamiliar with some of the terminology decipher the questions used in the call for evidence, and relate the content to halokho and mesorah, highlighting areas where these may be affected. This guide is not a substitute for your opinion or experience. The call for evidence requests that respondents consider their personal knowledge and experience of the English education system and their communities and how these inter-relate.

## **MAIN FOCUS POINTS**

- Relationships Education (RE) for children between five and 11 at primary school. This would be compulsory with no parental right of withdrawal and apply to all schools: state and independent, faith and secular.

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community:**

**Our response must indicate clearly that whilst we support a sound relationships education programme, this will not include familial structures which contradict our teaching.**

- Relationships and S Education (RSE) for children at secondary school. A right of parental withdrawal will be available covering s education.

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We continue to support sounds relationships education in secondary school which is age and culturally appropriate but again we will not teach about relationships which contradict the Torah. We support the right of opt-out for parents in s education as parents must be the primary decision makers in this subject.**

The topics to be covered include, in the Government's words:

- Different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships.

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We need to make reference to our approach to relationships and relationships teaching and the inappropriate context of teaching about intimate relationships in school.**

- How to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment (including marriage and civil partnerships), boundaries and consent, tolerance, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships, including bullying, coercion and exploitation.

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We are committed to the sanctity of marriage. We are also committed to educating our children to recognise the signs of abuse which will be dealt with in our schools in a culturally appropriate way adhering to our laws of tznius (modesty) in terms of speech; reference to terminology and body parts; and types of lesson delivery**

- Healthy relationships and safety online, including use of social media, cyberbullying, s--ting;

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We recognise that our children need to be prepared for life in Modern Britain. However the guidelines must not mandate reference to the particular vagaries of the internet; schools and parents must be given the leeway to decide what is appropriate and when.**

- How relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including the importance of good mental health and resilience

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We are aware that looking after emotional health and well being is important and necessary for our communities.**

- How relationships set firmly within the context of relationships, factual knowledge at secondary school about s, s health and s-uality.

### **Summary response from the orthodox Jewish community**

**We need to be allowed to conduct risk assessments in our schools to show how a tiny minority of our pupils may be s active, if at all, and how we will deal with this in a culturally appropriate way.**

# The Call for Evidence Questionnaire

**NB each response has a word limit of 250 words**

## QUESTION ONE

**Thinking about Relationships Education in primary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught for different age groups/key stages and why. Please include any considerations or evidence which informed your choices.**

**Context:** This covers Key Stage 1 (five to seven years) and Key Stage 2 (seven to 11 years).

**When selecting the three foremost considerations for your list of 3, please consider which of these you believe would be appropriate for very young children. You may wish to consider:**

- Learning broad principles of respect for and kindness towards others, concern for others, taking responsibility, honesty, altruism, loyalty, trust, different people, values and customs.
- The importance of friendships and how to maintain them; the importance of good peer relationships in our lives, recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships, getting on with each other, recognising own and others' feelings, the need for space
- Why bullying is wrong and how to react if it happens;
- How to stay safe with strangers and on the internet if appropriate;
- How to interact politely with others; effective communication and assertiveness
- The importance of strong family relationships including traditional marriage; recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships, getting on with each other, recognising own and others' feelings, the need for space
- Respect and support for other children who do not have two parents at home;

You may also wish to consider what would not be appropriate for children of primary school age. Daas Torah believes that children of this age are not able to critically assess complex adult s relationships, particularly same-s marriage, and so neither these nor transgenderism should be taught. Instead we believe that parents are best placed to determine how and when young children encounter these concepts.

In addition, feel free to demonstrate (if you are an educator) how principles and direct teachings of good middos and derech erez are not only woven deep in our Kodesh lessons but are exemplified and practised daily in all our behaviours.

## **QUESTION TWO**

**Thinking about relationships and s education in secondary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught for different age groups/ key stages and why. Please include any considerations or evidence which informed your choices.**

**Context:** This question covers Key Stage 3 (11 to 14 years) and the older age groups (between 14 and school leaving age at 16 to 18 – Key Stages 4 and 5).

**You may wish to consider and insert any item mentioned in response to question 1 and:**

- The importance of friendships and how to maintain them
- What makes a good adolescent relationships?
- Helping pupils to identify and offer support (via adults) to peers who may be suffering emotionally, physically or spiritually
- How to get on with parents (can also be connected to parenting education in adolescence)
- Managing peer pressure
- Initial discussions on preparing for marriage in terms of exploring components of good spousal relationships
- For older teens: how to identify a good prospective marriage partner

You should also mention the compulsion of parental opt-out and importance of involving parents in this sensitive subject.

You may also want to include your approach to same gender issues on which you will take your own Daas Torah. However what you need to emphasise is that it is essential that the guidelines allow each school to make decisions about what they will and will not teach in respect of RSE within the ethos of their own school. There must not be a mandatory, prescriptive curriculum or list of topics that must be covered.

### **QUESTION THREE**

**Are there important aspects of ensuring safe online relationships that would not otherwise be covered in wider Relationships Education and Relationships and S Education, or as part of the computing curriculum?**

**Context:** this covers all age ranges

#### **Considerations:**

- Our pupils do not, as a rule, have open access to the internet due to strict community guidance
- However we recognise that:
  - Some children will have open unfiltered access
  - Some children may be shown unsuitable material
  - Some children will remain completely internet access-free
  - We need to prepare children for when they leave school

Therefore, in a culturally appropriate way, schools may need to provide:

- A risk assessment to assess the internet access that pupils have
- Individual one-on-one teaching must cater for the above categories
- Teachers and counsellors who are trained specifically for the delivery of this education
- Preparation for the openness of the world-wide-web when they leave school including the dangers of social media, sharing photographs, chat rooms, grooming

NB: Again, we maintain that the guidance to schools must only provide the direction schools must take in protecting their pupils but must not be specific as to what must be included in school curriculum on this subject.

## QUESTION FOUR

**How should schools effectively consult parents so they can make informed decisions that meet the needs of their child, including on the right to withdraw of s education? For example, how often, on what issues and by what means?**

**Context:** This question asks how schools should involve parents in deciding what and how to teach RSE.

**Considerations:** It is absolutely imperative that parents retain the final say in deciding how and when children encounter complex adult relationships. In thinking about your response you may wish to recommend that:

- Parents should be consulted on entry to secondary school and at the beginning of each key stage (3 and 4) as to whether they wish to opt out of s education.
- Schools should consult with parents when drafting and reviewing their Relationships Education policy and ensure they are acting in accordance with parents' wishes;
- A briefing should take place at the start of each school year for parents to allow them to understand what will be taught and raise any objections;
- Explanations should be provided for parents of children at faith schools on how the school will adapt taught material to be consistent with the faith ethos of the school;
- Individual schools should demonstrate how, through system already established in their school, they are in touch with pupils and their parents regarding all aspects of their pupils' developing including their social, emotional and spiritual development.



# PSHE

PSHE is a planned programme of school-based educational opportunities and experiences that deal with the real life issues children and young people face as they grow up, typically covering personal wellbeing and economic wellbeing. The Department for Education are considering whether to make PSHE compulsory alongside Relationships Education and RSE. Many schools are already teaching these subjects well and are using their professional judgement to design a curriculum that suits the needs of their pupils.

Therefore, as the DfE is considering making PSHE compulsory, our community needs to be prepared to not only highlight the key areas they identify as crucial but also exemplify how they are already fulfilling this requirement through Kodesh, Chol and everyday activities in our schools.

**5. Thinking about PSHE in primary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught and why? Please include your reasons for choosing each subject area or evidence to support your suggestions.**

- Personal: looking after myself; being aware of my body; healthy lifestyles; protecting my space
- Social: social skills; what makes a good friend?
- Emotional: talking about my feelings;
- Economic: the value of money and how to use it wisely

**6. Thinking about PSHE in secondary schools, what do you believe are the three most important subject areas that should be taught and why? Please also include your reasons for choosing each subject or evidence to support your suggestions.**

- Personal: understanding your needs and looking after yourself; understanding body changes; managing time; managing studies; taking time for recreation.
- Social: social skills; importance of friendships; managing conflict; avoiding cliques; including everyone

- Emotional; the emotional triangle of pupils, staff and parents; talking about emotions; seeking help is a strength not a weakness; recognising positive and negative emotional; understanding stress; understanding the links between emotional and physical health
- Economic health: understanding money; savings; managing finance; lending; credit cards; exploring business and finance; managing a budget
- Careers education
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education

**7. How much flexibility do you think schools should have to meet the needs of individual pupils and to reflect the diversity of local communities and wider society in the content of PSHE lessons in schools?**

**Consideration:** We value the importance of teaching PSHE in our schools. However, we feel we should be able to evidence through our entire school day as PSHE is woven into the fabric of our education and chinuch. This is the place to give examples of how we nurture high standards of PSHE, particularly through *limmudei Kodesh*.

You may wish to include:

- Schools must be able to retain their faith and cultural identity in teaching PSHE
- PSHE will be evidenced through a variety of locations that exist throughout the school day
- PSHE must indicate themes, not prescribe statutory subjects
- PSHE must be culturally appropriate reflecting the culture and ethos of the school whilst preparing pupils effectively for modern Britain
- Schools must be able to use their faith teachings and practices as the lens to teach PSHE