

Subject:

**GUIDANCE ON RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY
EDUCATION (RSE)**

Circular Number:
2010/01

Date of Issue:
13 January 2010

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Summary of Contents:

This Circular provides an addendum to Circular 2001/15 which outlined guidance to schools on the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

Helen McConkey
Curriculum Support Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR BT19 7PR

Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
Advice
Curricular guidance for schools

Related Documents:
DE Circular 2001/15
CCEA Guidance Material

Superseded Documents:
None

Expiry Date:
Not applicable

DE Website:
<http://www.deni.gov.uk>

NI Curriculum Website:
www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Tel: 02891 279753
Fax: 02891 279100
E-mail:
helen.mcconkey@deni.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

1. Schools will be aware of the contents Circular 2001/15 on Relationships and Sexuality Education, which accompanied guidance material by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).
2. The purpose of this Circular is as follows:
 - To make schools aware of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Northern Ireland. All students/pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. This guidance, which relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 can be accessed at [http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/SOEducationguide1\(1\).pdf](http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/SOEducationguide1(1).pdf). In developing or reviewing their RSE policy, schools should take account of the Equality Commission's guidance.
 - To ensure that schools are aware that, with effect from 2 February 2009, the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, lowered the age of consent in Northern Ireland from 17 to 16.
 - To update schools about work being progressed by the Education and Training Inspectorate, to evaluate delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education in post-primary schools. At the start of November 2009 ETI issued an online survey to post-primary schools and the information gleaned from this survey will be used to inform a series of school visits scheduled for the 2010 summer term. The findings of this work will inform revised guidance for schools. It is intended that a similar evaluation will be undertaken with primary schools in the future.

Further Information

3. Any queries about this Circular should be addressed to Helen McConkey, Curriculum Support Team, telephone: 028 91279753.

SHARON LAWLOR
Curriculum Support Team