

Manchester City Council statement on Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Manchester City Council welcomes the new mandatory status of Relationships Education and Health Education for Primary Schools and Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education for Secondary Schools and agree with the Department for Education's aim that;

“Through these subjects, we want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe – we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society.”

Nationally, the guidance has been welcomed by Ofsted, and other key organisations, all of whom have released statements of support.

The Council recognises the excellent curriculum programmes that schools in Manchester have already developed that support the health and wellbeing needs of pupils, incorporating many of the aspects contained in the new guidance. Indeed, much of the content of the new guidance merely gives mandatory status to topics already delivered for many years by many Manchester schools and reflects our Safeguarding priorities.

It is important that our children and young people are supported to understand the world in which they are growing up, the importance of equality, developing positive relationships and are taught to have respect for each other and celebrate difference. This includes teaching about LGBT relationships as part of wider Relationship Education which is in the DfE guidance and is compliant with the duties of the Equality Act 2010.

Our City also has stark health inequalities, so educating our children and young people about healthy behaviours from an early age is one of the most important preventative steps we can take. Likewise, ensuring that our children and young people are supported to understand some of the risks and pressures they may face as they go through life, and develop the skills to deal with them, are key to their safety and happiness as they grow into adulthood.

The Council working in partnership with Manchester NHS organisations and the voluntary sector, continue to be committed to supporting our schools to develop and deliver curriculum content in line with the new guidance.

Specifically this support for schools includes:

- The Population Health and Wellbeing Team will continue to commission the Healthy Schools Team, now part of the Manchester Local Care Organisation, to support schools. This will build on the existing offer to schools and further develop high quality, age appropriate resources, deliver staff networking events and evidence based policy statements.
- Support for school leaders through linked senior officers and briefings for headteachers and governors
- Manchester Schools Alliance who will commission specific training on aspects of the new guidance available to all schools.
- Continued political leadership and support on this issue

To further support the new guidance, Manchester City Council will be promoting the development of five Skills for Life. Through this work, children and young people are encouraged to develop their self belief and confidence in their identity as well as developing good self management, communication, team work and problem solving skills, so that they are prepared for adult life and able to grow up happy, healthy, safe and successful.

The Council's expectation is that all Manchester schools will want to build on the great foundations they have already established and our excellent reputation in this important area of work and they will be fully supported by the Council and partners.