

# Paradigm Trust Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education survey executive summary and response

April 2020

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## Context

In September 2020 the government's new Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) guidance becomes statutory. To prepare for this, the Paradigm Trust PSHE network group prepared a proposed draft policy based on the new guidance. In March 2020, information meetings were held in each of the six Trust schools to engage with parents and carers, to inform them of the changes in the new guidance and to launch the engagement process on the Trust's proposed draft policy. Following on from this, a month long consultation was held where parents and carers could give their views on the changes. This document summarises those responses. A more in depth analysis of responses is given in an additional document and every comment made as part of the survey is listed in an appendix.

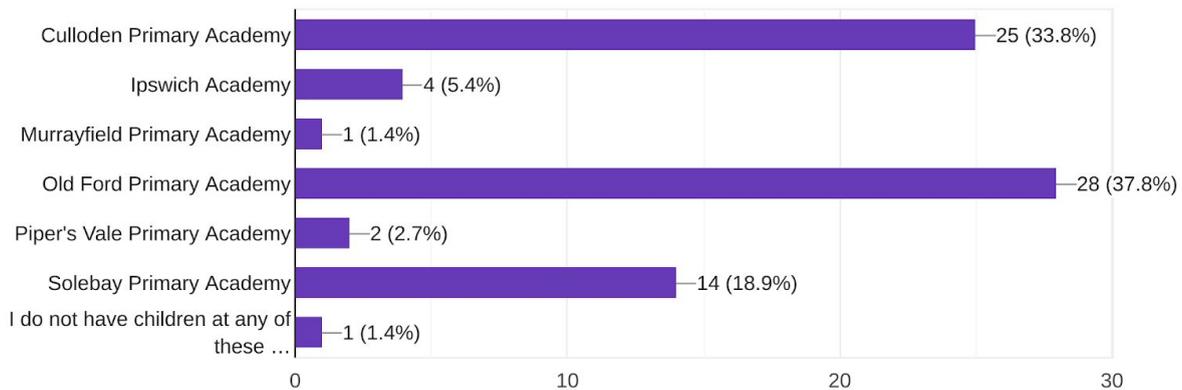
## Overview of responses

74 responses were received in total across all six Trust schools. This is approximately a 2.5% response rate. The school with the most responses

was OFPA with 28. The school with the lowest response was MPA with 1 response.

## 2. What school does your child/children attend? (tick all that apply)

74 responses



Questions 1-4 asked for the respondent's name (optional), which school the parent/carer's child attended and whether they had attended an information meeting. 57 of the 74 people responding attended one of the RSHE information meetings (77%).

All but four of the respondents were parents/carers with a child at a Trust school. 22 of the respondents gave their name, the remaining 52 answered anonymously.

The greatest number of positive responses was received for Question 12: 'Do you agree that the right to withdraw is explained in the draft policy with sufficient clarity?' 51% agreed or strongly agreed with this (38 out of 74 responses).

The greatest number of negative responses was received for Question 6: 'Do you agree with the Relationships Education content in the draft policy?' 62% of respondents (46 out of 74) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

	Agree/strongly agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree/strongly disagree
Q5 - Do you agree that the Paradigm Trust RSHE draft policy is an accurate reflection of the government statutory guidance?	30% (22)	17% (13)	53% (39)
Q6- Do you agree with the Relationships Education content in the draft policy?	26% (19)	12% (9)	62% (46)
Q7- Do you agree that the content of Relationships Education as set out in the draft policy will provide pupils with sufficient knowledge to help them have positive relationships?	24% (18)	20% (15)	55% (41)
Q8: Do you agree with the Sex Education content in the draft policy? (only relates to Year 6 and secondary pupils)	24% (17)	18% (13)	58% (42)
Q9: Do you agree with the Health Education content in the draft policy?	49% (36)	20% (15)	31% (23)
Q10. Do you agree that the Health Education content in the draft policy will provide pupils with sufficient knowledge to help them lead a healthy lifestyle?	46% (34)	20% (16)	32% (24)
Q11. Do you agree with the RSHE content taught as part of the statutory National	41%	5%	54%

Curriculum for Science?	(30)	(4)	(40)
Q12. Do you agree that the right to withdraw is explained in the draft policy with sufficient clarity?	51% (38)	15% (11)	34% (25)
Q13. Do you agree with the use of the Jigsaw scheme to deliver RSHE?	26% (19)	24% (18)	50% (37)

Although there were a wide range of comments given, they tended to follow certain themes. The following points summarise the reasons given for agreeing/strongly agreeing with the guidance and draft policy:

- the proposed draft policy is an accurate reflection of government guidance and the Trust is adhering to what is legally required
- the guidance/policy reflects modern society
- it is important for children to have knowledge of their bodies, the changes that will occur during puberty and how to have a healthy relationship
- children will be safe
- it will help them have healthy relationships
- the right to withdraw is explained clearly.

The following points summarise the reasons given for disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with the draft policy and guidance:

- it is not age appropriate. Too much information is being given at a too early age and children's 'innocence' is being taken away
- giving pupils this knowledge will make pupils curious and encourage them to experiment
- it is against the religion of the community. In particular the three schools located in Tower Hamlets serve a majority Muslim community
- parents'/carers' rights are not being respected
- parents/carers are the right people to teach this, not schools
- some parents/carers felt that not enough information on content was given out.

## Response to feedback

The first thing to note is the relatively low response from parents and carers. Even in the three London schools where the responses were highest, only 28 responses were received from OFPA, 25 from CPA and 14 responses from SPA. The highest number of responses from an Ipswich school was MPA with four responses. It is also important to note that this engagement process was about the proposed changes to the Relationships Education and Sex Education curriculum - not the existing National Curriculum for Science or Health Education curriculum. These areas were included in the engagement process in the interests of transparency and because there is some crossover between the areas.

In response to parents and carers who felt that not enough information was given, a full presentation was delivered at all Paradigm Trust schools where the new guidance and right to withdraw was explained in detail. A

full collection of documents relating to the engagement process was available on the Trust website for the duration of the engagement process. Hard copies were also available at each school. Parents/carers were encouraged to participate in the engagement process and were offered several methods of responding including paper and electronic methods. Translators were also offered to those who requested. As stated above, the Trust went above and beyond in engaging on what is recommended by the Department for Education.

The purpose of this process was not to look in depth at the curriculum but to engage on the new guidance and changes. It would not have been possible to go into detail on each year group's individual lesson content as part of these meetings. Where requested, an offer was made for parents/carers to look more in depth at content. Going forward, before the materials are taught, all schools will hold individual year group meetings where parents/ carers can look at the materials in much more detail. The schools where RSHE has been taught for some time have been doing this for years.

A common point made was that the proposed content is not age appropriate. Several of the respondents felt that Y1 and Y2 is too early for pupils to be learning the terms 'penis' and 'vagina' while others thought that puberty should be taught only in secondary school. The Jigsaw scheme of work used across the Trust comes recommended by the PSHE Association and is fully aligned to the DfE RSHE guidance. Jigsaw has a gradual build up of content and knowledge and teaches 'the right things at the right time.' The NHS state that: 'It's completely normal for puberty to begin at any point from the ages of 8 to 14. The process can take up to

4 years.’ The statutory guidance highlights the importance of teaching about puberty *before* it happens. Given that children are experiencing puberty as early as 8 or 9 years old, the PSHE Association state that 9 years old is the *latest* that puberty should be taught. In addition, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy. In the new statutory RSHE Guidance, the government has made age appropriate Relationships and Health Education compulsory in all primary schools. In secondary schools, Relationships and Sex Education will be compulsory. Health Education will also be compulsory in all state funded schools. Paradigm Trust believes that providing this education is vital in safeguarding and protecting our pupils.

Worldwide research shows that young people are much less likely to put themselves at risk through early sexual experimentation if they have received good relationship and sex education. (Kirby 2007, UNESCO 2009, NICE 2010)

Several respondents stated that the content taught conflicts with their religious beliefs and, by teaching it, we are going against the Equality Act (2010). Paradigm Trust follows the DfE RSHE Statutory Guidance (2020). In line with the guidance, Paradigm Trust wants to ensure that every child is valued, treated equally, equipped with an age appropriate understanding of the world and the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe. The Equality Act 2010 states that both religion and sexuality are protected characteristics. It would be wrong to prioritise one characteristic over another.

National consultation was carried out by the Department for Education to produce the new RSHE Guidance, including consultation with several religious bodies. The government carried out a public call for evidence which received 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts. This was followed by a Department for Education (DfE) public consultation, which had responses from over 40,000 people.

A number of respondents stated that their rights as parents were not being respected and that it is parents, not schools, who should be teaching children this content. Schools have a legal responsibility to follow the National Curriculum and to deliver RSHE in an age-appropriate manner. Parents are encouraged to further supplement the school teaching at home, in a manner which feels beneficial for their child. Indeed, one of the stated purposes of this engagement process was to engage parents and carers in their children's education. Parent/carer right to withdraw from sex education that goes beyond the National Curriculum will be permitted. This is only taught in Y6.

Going forward, we would recommend the board adopt the draft policy as it stands.