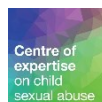


RSHE Review Safeguarding Statement July 2024

Signatories:



Responding to the review of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in England

“Sadly, too many children are facing abuse and exploitation, both on and offline. The CSA Centre has found that an estimated 500,000 children are sexually abused each year, and sexual offences against children, particularly our youngest children, are increasing. Findings from Ofcom and the Internet Watch Foundation show that there has been an exponential rise in online abuse of children as young as three years old.

This is why it is important that children receive high quality, age appropriate, and inclusive RSHE tailored to the realities of their lives. This should start early and continue throughout their education.

We campaigned for the introduction of mandatory RSHE and, in 2020, welcomed the statutory guidance that was introduced to support schools. This has delivered vital information to support children and young people in an age-appropriate way to navigate relationships and the online world in the twenty-first century.

The Department for Education is consulting on proposed revisions to the guidance. We will be sharing our evidence to inform changes to the guidance and are committed to working with the government following the General Election. We hope that updates will reflect the reality of children and young people’s daily lives and will be informed by their views and experiences.

It is essential the guidance enables schools to teach children about abuse in an age-appropriate way, building their knowledge and understanding – such as helping younger children to understand that their body is their own and to tell someone when something feels wrong, or helping teenagers understand meaningful consent to help them form their own healthy relationships.

There is strong global evidence that education programmes play an essential role in preventing child abuse. RSHE provides an opportunity to make sure children know that they have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and have the responsibility to treat others the same way. It should never be the child’s responsibility to keep themselves safe.

This new Government has an opportunity to shape this guidance to ensure it meets our shared responsibility to educate and support children and young people. We look forward to working with Government to ensure these changes are carefully considered and evidence based.”