

# Supporting Schools With The Relevant Updated 2025 RSE Government Guidance: A Dignify Summary (Secondary)



## Introduction

This document presents a bullet-point overview of the Department for Education's July 2025 statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education. It is intended to support governing bodies, headteachers, senior leadership teams, and teachers in understanding the updated expectations and preparing for implementation. The guidance replaces the 2019 version and will become statutory from 1 September 2026. While curriculum changes are not required during the 2025–2026 academic year, early preparation is encouraged. As stated in the guidance, schools must “have regard to” the statutory expectations and be able to justify any deviation.

In light of these changes, Dignify - a charity committed to helping young people thrive in healthy relationships, free from the harms of pornography and sexual objectification - is available to support schools in navigating these changes, offering evidence-based workshops, training, online anonymous student surveys, Parent/Carer surveys (in development), and resources that respond to the new guidance and promote student wellbeing.

Please note, in line with Dignify's specialist focus, this document highlights key areas where we offer targeted support to schools—specifically in helping young people thrive in healthy relationships, free from the harms of pornography and sexual objectification. We recommend consulting the updated government guidance for a comprehensive overview of other key areas relevant to your curriculum and to further strengthen your provision.

## Applies to Secondary Schools

Issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and Section 403 of the Education Act 1996; schools must have regard to the guidance and justify any deviation.

Applies to:

- Governing bodies (maintained/academy)
- Proprietors of independent schools, free schools
- PRUs and alternative provision providers
- Headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, school nurses, and relevant local authority staff

**Implementation Timeline:** Schools have until **31 August 2026** to fully implement, while the previous 2019 guidance remains operative until then. - Schools are not required to make any changes to their curriculum during the 2025–2026 academic year.

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## Our Service: Dignify School Survey

An online pupil survey, which is helping schools across the UK meet their Ofsted requirements and gain a clearer understanding of the challenges their students are facing:

- 10-minute, anonymous, online pupil survey
- Full Report covering Social Media use, Sexual Harassment and Objectification, Sharing Nudes and Experiences of Pornography, including quotes from pupils
- Recommendations and Action Plan to address issues highlighted

## Relevant Updated 2025 RSE Guidance Summary Points

1. Pupil engagement – Develop RSHE by consulting pupils so content feels relevant and inclusive.

“Engagement with pupils. An inclusive and well-sequenced RSHE curriculum should be informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.” - RSE Updated Guidance, July 2025, Section: Guiding principles for relationships, sex and health education, Page: 5

2. Schools are being told to review their current provision with their pupils and parents and that RSE is to be built from engagement with both pupils and parents.

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## **Our Service: Dignify Parent/Carer Survey**

Currently in development with plans to be implemented from January 2026

## **Relevant Updated 2025 RSE Guidance Summary Points**

1. Schools are being told to review their current provision with their pupils and parents and that RSE is to be built from engagement with both pupils and parents.

“Engagement and transparency with parents. Schools should engage with parents on the content of RSHE and be transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE.” - RSE Updated Guidance, July 2025, Section: Guiding principles for relationships, sex and health education, Page: 5

2. Parental support to be encouraged when talking about online safety and RSE education.

3. Policy development: Every school must have a written RSHE policy, reviewed and consulted on with parents

4. Parental involvement: Transparent communication, parental access to materials, and clear withdrawal procedures.

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## Our Service: Dignify School Workshops & Assemblies

Engaging and interactive workshops and assemblies, covering Dignify's umbrella topics of Harmful Impacts of Pornography, Championing Healthy Relationships and Defying Social Norms of Sexual Harassment and Objectification.

## Relevant Updated 2025 RSE Guidance Summary Points

1. Emphasis on respect, self-esteem, resisting peer pressure, and delaying sexual activity until legal age – Dignify workshops incorporate themes such as respect and self-respect, self-esteem, and peer pressure.
2. Pupils are using AI tools for learning and, increasingly, emotional support. Risks include false intimacy and harmful advice. Nudity apps, deepfakes, and unsupervised chatbot use also pose safeguarding concerns - Dignify include relevant guidance on the growing risks around AI, nudity apps, deepfakes, and chatbot use within our workshops to help pupils navigate these technologies safely and responsibly.
3. Emphasising victims of naked image sharing - we must teach they will be treated as victims rather than perpetrators- even if a person took their own picture- if the image gets spread, the person in the picture will be first treated as a victim - Dignify Workshops integrate up-to-date guidance on image sharing, ensuring children are well-informed and equipped.

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4. A stronger emphasis on teaching about sexual harassment, sexual violence, and the law - **Dignify Workshops cover sexual violence, harassment, and the law.**

5. Physical, emotional, mental health - your emotional wellbeing can be affected by the choices you make in relationships and sex; “the choices” are key - **Dignify Workshops highlight pupils’ choices are central to their emotional health and future resilience. Help them critically reflect, identify their values, and make informed, positive choices regarding healthy relationships.**

6. Incorporates incel culture, online misogyny, and the portrayal of gendered myths in “manosphere” spaces - **Dignify Workshops reflect current issues and guidelines, incorporating critical topics such as incel culture, online misogyny, and the portrayal of gendered myths within “manosphere” spaces.**

7. Encourages discussion of positive male role models and resilience to harmful online content - **Dignify “Misogyny” workshop encourages discussion around positive male role models and builds pupils’ resilience to harmful online content by highlighting respectful behaviours and challenging negative ones.**

8. Positive framing – Promote healthy norms and attitudes; avoid language that normalises harmful behaviour (e.g. gendered language that may normalise male violence or stigmatise boys) - **Dignify Workshops on Defying Social Norms cover themes such as gender stereotypes, misogyny, and other related issues (topics are illustrative, not exhaustive).**

9. Relevance and responsiveness – Curriculum should reflect local context, be age and stage appropriate, and be inclusive of community needs - **Dignify workshops are evidence based, age and stage appropriate and inclusive.**

10. Careful sequencing – Topics are introduced in a planned order, so pupils receive knowledge before they encounter relevant experiences - **Dignify’s vision is to see children thriving in healthy relationships, therefore, the Dignify approach is founded on both prevention as well as solution. Workshops reflect this commitment in both content and delivery.**

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11. Includes teaching that strangulation is illegal even without visible injuries, addressing sexual violence and abuse explicitly.

“That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone’s neck or covering someone’s mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.” - RSE Updated Guidance, July 2025, Section: Being Safe, Page: 18

“That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.” - RSE Updated Guidance, July 2025, Section: Being Safe, Page: 18 - **Dignify workshops and materials are designed to safeguard pupil wellbeing by addressing harmful behaviours, including those portrayed in online content. The content makes explicit that strangulation and suffocation are never safe and the normalisation of such acts in pornography is challenged. Dignify’s content reflects upcoming legal changes that will prohibit the depiction of strangulation in pornography.**

12. Consent alone does not always equal ethical integrity. Ethical behaviour also means showing care, understanding vulnerabilities, and being aware of power dynamics.

“The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn’t automatically make it ethically ok.” - RSE Updated Guidance, July 2025, Section: Respectful Relationships, Page: 14 - **“Ethical Pornography” to be incorporated into Dignify material regarding consent and pornography.**

15. Parental transparency – Schools must share lesson materials with parents, and parents can withdraw students from sex education (with re-entry allowed three school terms before age 16). - **Dignify can share material**

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## Our Service: Dignify Parent/Carer Workshops

Fun, interactive, informative workshops to increase parent/carers' confidence to raise digitally resilient children:

- Educate parents/carers
- Equip parents/carers to engage in relevant RSE conversations with the children in their care, helping to safeguard them.

## Our Service: School Staff Training

Dignify is developing staff training for school staff, with plans for implementation from January 2026.

## Relevant Updated 2025 RSE Guidance Summary Points

1. Parental support to be encouraged when talking about online safety and RSE education.
2. Parental involvement: Transparent communication, parental access to materials, and clear withdrawal procedures.

1. Skilled interactive delivery – Trained staff or vetted external providers should create safe, participative learning environments, with safeguarding knowledge for sensitive topics.

The guidance goes out of it's way to avoid saying RSE Educators need to be trained. However, it does say that RSE Educators must be appropriately trained in safeguarding. - *Dignify's specialist team delivers workshops designed to nurture safe, inclusive spaces where pupils feel supported to speak openly and honestly; the team is safeguarding trained and DBS checked, ensuring a high standard of care. In addition, Dignify is developing staff training for school staff, with plans for implementation from January 2026.*