

Review of Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) Education

Response Form

The closing date is: 30 November 2011

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education website (<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>).

Information provided in response to this request for representations, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name

Martin Ward

Organisation (if applicable)

Association of School and College Leaders

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the PSHE review you can contact the public enquiry unit on:

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

e-mail: PSHEEducation.review@education.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the review process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk

Please tick one category that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> School Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Governor
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Association/Union	<input type="checkbox"/> VCS Sector/Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

Professional association.

About You

Please use this space to tell us about yourself and your job role.

Comments:

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 15,000 members of the leadership teams of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. This places the association in a unique position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of secondary schools.

Please supply up-to-date evidence to answer any or all of the questions in the review. You may want to focus on only those questions most relevant to you.

Q1) What do you consider the core outcomes PSHE education should achieve and what areas of basic core knowledge and awareness should pupils be expected to acquire at school through PSHE education?

Comments:

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 2-4.

**Q2) Have you got any evidence that demonstrates why a) existing elements and b) new elements should be part of the PSHE education curriculum?
Your answer should provide a summary of the evidence and where appropriate contain the title, author and publication date of research.**

Comments:

a)

It is important that there be a minimum level and content for sex and relationships education to protect schools from being put under pressure (for example by conservative religious groups) to abandon this important element of education or reduce it below a sensible level.

b)

ASCL sees no need for further additions to this element of the curriculum. Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 4, 10 and 12.

Q3) Which elements of PSHE education, if any, should be made statutory (in addition to sex education) within the basic curriculum?

Comments:

There is no need for further statutory elements to be added.

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 3-5, and 9-12.

Q4) Are the National, non-statutory frameworks and programmes of study an effective way of defining content?

✓ Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 3-7.

Q5) How can schools better decide for themselves what more pupils need to know, in consultation with parents and others locally?

Comments:

Schools for the most part make these decisions well already, in consultation with their communities and stakeholders. There is, of course, always room for improvement, and a sharing of good practice could, as ever, help with that. Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 11-13.

How do you think the statutory guidance on sex and relationships education could be simplified, especially in relation to:

6 a) Strengthening the priority given to teaching about relationships?

Comments:

Schools already teach sex education in the context of building stable and satisfying adult relationships. There is no real need to strengthen this element in statutory guidance. Nor does the statutory guidance need to be simplified, the existing guidance, whilst no doubt not perfect, is sufficiently well attuned to schools' need to render any changes at the present time quite unnecessary, and a distraction from other more urgent priorities.

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 7 and 11-12, and the answer to question 2a above.

6 b) The importance of positive parenting?

Comments:

This is, of course, a very important element, and one in which it can be difficult to engage young people (for whom their own experience as parents is uncertain and in the possibly distant future). There may well be a value in further guidance in this area, but not statutory guidance – these are subtle areas of work that do not lend themselves easily to regulation. There would be a significant danger of doing more harm than good by issuing further statutory guidance about this. Schools might well honour the letter of such guidance rather than its spirit, and tick the box, but not unlock their creativity at the local level.

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 9-12

6 c) Teaching young people about sexual consent?

Comments:

This is a very sensitive area. The existing statutory guidance has worked well, and ASCL sees no need to vary it, which would potentially create difficulties that do not exist and disrupt currently effective provision.

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 7, 9 and 12.

Q7) Have you got any examples of case studies that show particular best practice in teaching PSHE education and achieving the outcomes we want for PSHE education?

Your answer should be evidence based and provide details of real-life case studies.

Comments:

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraph 13, for a specific example. ASCL is willing to seek further examples from schools run by its membership if that would be helpful.

Q8) How can PSHE education be improved using levers proposed in the Schools White Paper, such as Teaching Schools, or through alternative methods of improving quality, such as the use of experienced external agencies (public, private and voluntary) to support schools?

Comments:

There is no need for an intervention from central government, using these or any other 'levers', and such an intervention would be likely to disrupt effective provision and do more harm than good. The present government is committed to a reduction in such interventions, which policy ASCL supports.

If outside agencies can help with this provision it is more likely that they will do so if approached or hired by individual schools than if given a central government contract to improve the quality of PSHE.

These are very sensitive areas where many external agencies in the third (and to a lesser degree in the private) sector have agendas of their own (political, religious or from an attachment to a particular approach). They therefore need to be involved only with care and under the supervision of the leadership of the school in question.

Q9) Have you got any examples of good practice in assessing and tracking pupils' progress in PSHE education?

Your answer should be evidence based and provide details of real-life case studies.

Comments:

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraph 13, for a specific example. ASCL is willing to seek further examples from schools run by its membership if that would be helpful.

Q10) How might schools define and account for PSHE education's outcomes to pupils, parents and local people?

Comments:

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraph 12.

Q11) Please use this space to provide us with your views and any other comments about PSHE.

Comments:

There is no urgent need to make changes to the statutory framework in this area, and no proposed changes have clear benefits. ASCL therefore suggests that there be no such changes, but a period of stability.

Please see the ASCL written response, paragraphs 2-3 and 9-12.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ✓

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓ Yes No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations and reviews are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, Tel: 01928 438060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this request for representations

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 30 November 2011

Send by post to: Department for Education, Consultation Unit, Area 1C,
Castle View House, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: PSHEEducation.review@education.gsi.gov.uk

Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education (PSHE)

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 15,000 members of the leadership teams of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. This places the association in a unique position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of secondary schools.
- 2 ASCL strongly supports the presence of Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education (PSHE) in the curriculum, and the promotion of good practice in this area.
- 3 Existing practice is already good in the great majority of schools, and at this time of many other curricular changes and financial stringency this is not an area that should be subject to further upheaval. There is no need for further statutory requirements beyond that for sex and relationships education. In particular a statutory programme of study for PSHE should not be introduced as the non-statutory guidance for KS3 and 4 which was included in the 2007 secondary revised curriculum is well formulated and effective.
- 4 These non-statutory programmes are extremely comprehensive and ASCL does not know of anything that could or should be added. The programmes of study enable schools to plan for the inclusion of PSHE within their curriculum in the way which best suits their context and enable them to be flexible in their planning.
- 5 Many schools have developed innovative approaches to the curriculum, using the flexibility provided by the 2007 National Curriculum orders. They need to have this flexibility to organise the whole curriculum in the way which best suits the needs of their learners. This may mean organising the curriculum by subjects or by cross-curricular work for part of the time. We would not want to see any compulsion about time allocated to PSHE or the way it should be organised.
- 6 This flexibility has made it much easier to involve outside agencies in PSHE as it is easier to bring in guests when a whole day is allocated to a topic for a year group rather than inviting guests in for shorter timetabled lessons with individual classes. Most schools engage with agencies such as health services, local employers, the police, the fire service and voluntary groups as a regular part of their PSHE teaching. The main problem in this area is that such agencies are now finding it difficult to spare staff for this very important work as a result of staffing cut-backs.

- 7 It is particularly important in sensitive areas such as drugs and sex education that schools have a broad framework with opportunity to add to the recommended content to suit their particular context and community.
- 8 ASCL members are happy with key concepts being provided as a starting point and that schools are able to introduce additional material and to contextualise and interpret according to their individual ethos.
- 9 Regulation should not include prescription of content, but indicate areas, and these should be kept general to allow for a reasonable degree of flexibility.
- 10 The temptation to add more and more topics (as has often happened in the past) should be resisted, or this area of work will become a series of boxes to be ticked rather than one in which local creativity can flourish and local needs can be met.
- 11 Most schools already involve their local community in their planning, including parents, students and governors, to ensure that sensitive areas of the curriculum are approached in a way that will enable as many students as possible to participate.
- 12 Schools are expected to consult parents and students, and to work with governors in developing the curriculum. There is no need for further regulation in this area.
- 13 An example of good practice can be found at Chelsea Academy. Andrew Yarrow, Principal, is happy for Jeannette Simpson, PSHE leader, to be contacted directly on Jeannette.Simpson@chelsea-academy.org

I hope that this is of value to your consultation, ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

Martin Ward
Public Affairs Director
Association of School and College Leaders
30 November 2011