

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE2225](#): Urgent Independent Safeguarding Review and Temporary Suspension of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education in Scotland, lodged by Mandy McGurk

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petition is concerned with the provision of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education (RSHP).

The content of the curriculum, and the way in which the curriculum is taught, is largely a matter for classroom teachers and schools. There is statutory guidance on RSHP as well as Scottish Government-funded resources for teachers on [rshp.scot](https://www.rshp.scot).

Education Scotland is currently undertaking [a wider review of Curriculum for Excellence](#).

Statutory guidance

[Revised statutory guidance on delivering relationships, sexual health and parenthood education in Scottish schools was published in February 2026.](#)

This guidance suggests a “whole school approach” RSHP and that “schools and settings are expected to work collaboratively with children and young people, as well as parents and carers, when developing their RSHP education programme.”

It also notes that what is taught and how the content is taught is a matter for professional judgement. It says:

“Each individual is unique, and to ensure effective practice in the delivery of RSHP education, teachers and practitioners will need to use their professional judgement to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual children and young people’s educational needs, ensuring they receive an age and stage appropriate education in line with their peers.”

The guidance highlights the following areas of learning:

- Consent and Healthy Relationships
- Faith and Belief

- Gender Equality Education
- LGBT Inclusive Education.

The guidance also includes “Thematic Outcomes” which are replicated in the annexe to this briefing.

The statutory guidance also highlights a range of policy, guidance and learning and teaching resources.

rshp.scot

A non-statutory resource was launched in 2021, rshp.scot. The RSHP resource has been developed by a partnership of local authorities and health boards, with advice from Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. [The Scottish Government news release for the launch of RSHP.scot](#) stated—

“[RSHP.scot is a] new teaching website that strengthens the quality, consistency and relevance of education on relationships, sexual health and parenthood ... It aims to give teachers greater confidence in having valuable and engaging age-appropriate conversations with their pupils.”

This resource includes activity plans aimed at all levels of schooling, from pre-school/P1 up to the end of secondary school. Whether teachers or schools use these resources is a matter for those teachers and schools.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- COSLA
- Teaching unions
- Connect

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 August 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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Annexe: Statutory guidance: ‘Thematic Outcomes’

[Schools: guidance on the delivery of relationships, sexual health and parenthood education](#) includes a number of ‘Thematic Outcomes’. These are:

- **Consent and Healthy Relationships**
Children and young people learn to build healthy, positive and respectful relationships by developing a strong understanding of consent, personal boundaries and the laws that protect them. Teaching should begin with helping pupils recognise bodily autonomy and appropriate behaviour, and progress to understanding different forms of abuse, digital consent and the legal implications of sharing intimate images. This supports learners to identify harmful behaviours, challenge harassment and inequality, and know where to get help, empowering them to make informed, safe and consensual choices both online and offline.
- **Faith and Belief**
Children and young people explore how relationships, values and identities are shaped by the diverse religious, belief and non-belief traditions found within their school community. Learning is designed to be balanced, inclusive and sensitive so that pupils encounter multiple perspectives, understand how beliefs can contribute to wellbeing and develop respect for others’ values. By representing diversity, promoting open discussion and addressing the impact of prejudice and stereotypes, teachers help ensure all learners feel included, valued and safe in expressing their viewpoints.
- **Gender Equality Education**
Children and young people learn to recognise, question and challenge gender stereotypes and unconscious bias, understanding that gender must never restrict a person’s interests, ambitions or opportunities. Teaching should highlight how stereotypes shape experiences and choices, promote equality of opportunity, and encourage pupils of all genders to take part in dismantling harmful norms. This helps create inclusive classroom environments where responsibilities are shared fairly, diversity is represented, and all pupils are supported to develop positive identities free from limiting gender expectations.
- **LGBT Inclusive Education**
Children and young people learn within an environment where LGBT identities, families and experiences are recognised, respected and included across the curriculum. Learning is factual, relevant and age-appropriate, helping pupils understand diversity, challenge prejudice and recognise the impact of discrimination on LGBT young people. Teachers foster safe, supportive spaces for discussion, are alert to confidentiality needs and respond sensitively to disclosures. By

embedding inclusive content across subjects and modelling respect, teachers help ensure every learner feels seen, valued and able to develop a confident sense of identity.