



# Newtownhamilton High School

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Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

## Re: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Consultation

You will likely be aware from recent media reports that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland made Regulations to amend the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order 2007 (Northern Ireland) ("the Order") to include additional topics to the RSE curriculum in post-primary schools (this does not include primary schools). It applies only to specific elements of the RSE curriculum at post-primary, namely that:

"The curriculum for every grant-aided school shall, in relation to key stages 3 and 4, include age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion."

The Regulations also make provision for, at the request of a parent, a pupil to be excused from RSE lessons that contain age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion.

The Department of Education has launched a full consultation for parents/guardians on the circumstances and arrangements which would enable excusing a child from these lessons. Considering that I have already received a number of calls and queries from community members about this matter, **I would encourage parents/guardians to respond to the consultation before the closing date of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**

Responses can be made online at: <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/de/rse-consultation>

The Consultation Booklet is also available to download from Consultations | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk) and can be emailed directly to the Department at: rseresponses@education-ni.gov.uk or posted to:

Curriculum Team  
Room S1  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR

This matter will be listed as an item for discussion at our next full meeting of the Board of Governors in October 2023 with the aim of submitting a response to the consultation. I am therefore happy to take any feedback from parents/guardians in advance of this meeting.

Finally, it is noted that while these Regulations came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, there is no expectation that schools should be addressing these additional RSE elements before the issuing of Department of Education guidance and support materials, by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. I can therefore confirm that we are not currently teaching these additional topic areas at Newtownhamilton High School.

Yours faithfully

*Neil Megaw* (Principal)