

Fact sheet: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Framework consultation report release

28 October 2025

Priority 1: Establishing a knowledge-rich curriculum grounded in the science of learning.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Education developed a draft framework for relationship and sexuality education (RSE) in preparation for the refresh of the Health and Physical Education learning area of The New Zealand Curriculum.

Relationships and Sexuality Education framework and consultation

RSE sits in the Health and Physical Education learning area of The New Zealand Curriculum. As part of the refresh of this learning area, a draft RSE framework was developed by curriculum subject matter experts and quality assured by both internal and external experts. The purpose of the draft framework was for early consultation about the age-appropriate RSE content to teach at each year of schooling.

We asked the public for feedback on the draft framework between 11 April and 9 May 2025. The responses were collected independently by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and the Ministry was provided with an in-depth analysis report on the feedback to the framework.

What we heard

Through this consultation, over 7,500 responses were received from a wide range of people, including parents, teachers, students, and organisations. Two main perspectives emerged:

- “Less or later RSE”: This group of responses wanted less content or later introduction and emphasised the role of parents and family values.
- “More or earlier RSE”: This group of responses supported comprehensive RSE with more content on diversity, consent, and online safety, introduced earlier and built on over time.

Despite differences, both groups shared a concern for young people’s wellbeing and agreed that RSE plays an important role in supporting it.

Key themes

Age Appropriateness and Flexibility

What you said: People had different views on when RSE topics should be introduced. Some wanted content delayed until students were a bit older; others wanted it introduced earlier to reflect students' real-life experiences.

Diversity and Inclusion

What you said: Many wanted more content that reflects the diversity of sexualities, gender identities, family types, and cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand. Others were concerned about the potential inclusion of gender diversity.

Consent and Safety

What you said: There was strong support for teaching students about consent, but people's views differed on the definition of consent and how and when they believed it should be taught.

Online Lives and Critical Thinking

What you said: Students need support to navigate online spaces, including social media, pornography, and digital safety.

Support for Teachers and Parents

What you said: Teachers need more support and resources. Parents want to be informed and involved.

The full consultation report can be found under supports and resources on <https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/new-zealand-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education-curriculum/5637165585.c>

What we've done

We used the draft framework and the findings of the consultation to help develop draft curriculum content for the Health and Physical Education learning area, which includes RSE.

Following a knowledge-rich approach to refreshing the curriculum, the draft Health and Physical Education learning area aims to ensure RSE content is age-appropriate, evidence-informed, internationally comparable, and clear about what to teach and when.

This also responds to research by the Education Review Office (ERO) last year, which highlighted significant inconsistencies in the delivery of RSE across the country.

The draft Health and Physical Education Years 0–10 learning area is now available for consultation. The content is available here:

<https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/new-zealand-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education-curriculum/5637165585.c>

What RSE is and why it's important

RSE is critical to the learning, development, and wellbeing of New Zealand's young people. Well delivered, comprehensive RSE equips young people with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their lives and navigate important topics such as consent, healthy relationships, pubertal changes, and online safety.

When reinforced by open conversations at home with parents or family, RSE ensures consistent messaging and deepens students' understanding of themselves and others.

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act), schools are currently required to consult with their community on their planned health education programme. The Act also allows parents to withdraw their young person from all or any part of sexuality education by written request.

Why a framework was developed

The RSE guidelines were removed earlier this year as we focused on developing a knowledge-rich curriculum grounded in the science of learning. Feedback from the public and sector was sought on the draft RSE framework to inform decisions around the RSE teaching and learning to be included in the refreshed Health and Physical Education learning area. We thank everyone who took the time to provide feedback on the framework.

How we have developed the curriculum

The draft Health and Physical Education Years 0–10 learning area, including RSE, has been developed by subject matter experts, quality assured by both internal and external experts, and informed by analysis of the approaches of peer countries.

The new draft curriculum content emphasises discipline-specific, knowledge-rich content about the knowledge and practices of Health and Physical Education. It is designed to be clear, structured, evidence-based, and grounded in the science of learning.

More information about the draft Health and Physical Education learning area is available on Tāhūrangi <https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/new-zealand-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education-curriculum/5637165585.c>

What's next?

By drawing on the expertise of teachers, principals, education professionals, academics and associations, we aim to strengthen student progress and achievement.

An opportunity for wider feedback on the draft Years 0–10 learning areas will be provided during our consultation from Term 4, 2026, through to Friday, 24 April 2026, this includes the draft Health and Physical Education Years 0–10 learning area. Online feedback forms are available on Tāhūrangi <https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/new-zealand-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education-curriculum/5637165585.c>

Schools and kura will also be invited to participate in the in-class testing of the draft Years 0–10 learning areas during Term 1, 2026. More information on how to take part will be shared later in Term 4, 2025.

The final Health and Physical Education learning area is planned to be required for schools to use from the start of 2027. You can read more about the curriculum implementation timelines at https://tahurangi.education.govt.nz/teaching_basics_brilliantly_oct25

Contact us

If you have any questions or need guidance, please contact us at nationalcurriculum.refresh@education.govt.nz