

faith + ॐ ☾ ✪ ✪

and relationships

Faith perspectives on Relationships, Sex and Health Education

A guide to support faith-inclusive Relationships,
Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in Nottingham Schools



Nottingham
City Council

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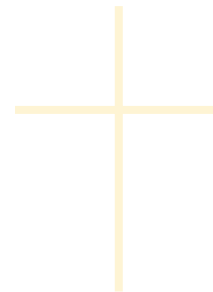


FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in commending this new resource to teachers to support their planning and delivery of quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) by being able to access information about the faith perspectives of children and young people in their care. The contribution from our key local faith leaders to this area of school and community life is invaluable in our shared endeavour to promote respectful, positive healthy relationships, and to develop a city, community and society where all are welcome, accepted and understood.

Nottingham has been rightly recognised for this high quality work. The development of an RSE Charter for schools and the now national RSE Day, which started in Nottingham in 2018 have both received national acclaim. Regular staff training and support with resources, advice and guidance for schools has increased our collective knowledge, skills and confidence in this vital area. I am grateful to our communities of faith for the dialogue we have had over RSHE and for their willingness to contribute so proactively to this helpful document. Nottingham is proud of its ambitions for RSHE and this is a further example of our creative partnership work to give our children and young people the best possible experience of Relationships, Sex and Health Education at home and at school.

**Cllr Neghat Khan, Portfolio Holder for Early Years, Education & Employment & Chair,
Nottingham SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education)**



“Children should be made aware of the importance of human relationships and how people will live differently, so we can embrace diversity and respect each other despite our differences.”

Dr Musharraf Hussain
CEO and Chief Imam Karimia Institute



CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT

During 2019/20 representatives from Nottingham's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and other local faith leaders worked together to explore the roll-out of the new Government Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) Guidance 2019. Leaders discussed how to engage positively with the diverse community in Nottingham around RSHE and several actions were taken as a result: training offered to Nottingham school governors around RSHE; and, the production of an example RSHE curriculum framework and

policy to give more information on what might be covered in each year group.

Another key action from the sub-group was to develop a resource to help teachers reflect different faith perspectives in their delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education. It was felt that this would give teachers confidence to explore faith in RSHE and reassure parents that different perspectives were being considered.



An initial survey of teaching staff identified key areas of focus for faith leaders to address in the resource.

We recognise that within any religion there will be diverse views, therefore the information contained in this document is intended as a summary of some key ideals, values and beliefs that are generally agreed. The views here are not meant to represent all people of those faiths. Indeed, the document also does not represent all faiths or all denominations within faith communities or the range of views held within them.

HOW TO USE

This guide is designed as a reference for teachers delivering RSHE to pupils in primary, secondary and special schools. Before delivering RSHE it would be helpful for teachers to read through the key faith perspectives on the topics relevant to their lesson. This will support them in representing different views but also in understanding how pupils in their class may understand and respond to the content being delivered.

It is not expected that teachers will run through every faith belief for every topic, however there are common themes that can be summarised.

For example, when exploring puberty, the teacher may say "Some faiths have specific celebrations or coming of age ceremonies when a child reaches the age of adolescence". Depending on the cohort of pupils, it may be appropriate to reflect some faith teachings in more detail.

The guide is also designed to help teachers respond to pupils' statements and questions around faith. For example, a pupil may say "In my faith we are taught that sex should only take place when you are married.", the teacher could respond with "Yes, some people believe that sex should only take place

within a marriage, this is the teaching of many faiths, some people believe that it is ok to have sex outside of marriage. We are all different and have different views. The law says that people in this country can choose to have sex when they reach the age of 16 regardless of whether or not they are married."

FAITH AND EQUALITY IN THE NEW STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR RSHE

The new guidance states that 'in all schools, when teaching these subjects (RSHE), the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics that are included in the core content are appropriately handled.' (DFE RSHE Guidance 2019)

There is scope for all schools to teach about faith perspectives in their delivery of RSHE. Faith schools may teach the 'distinctive faith perspectives on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious'

The guidance is very clear that in all schools teaching 'should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.'



Schools must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Under this act schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristic (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation).

Schools must also foster good relations between those who share a particular characteristic and those who don't, this might take the form of awareness-raising, celebrating uniqueness, and through British Values work. Within the RSHE guidance there is scope for schools to take positive action to 'deal with disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic'.



“God designed the world to be beautiful. Love between people is one of his great ideas. Yet in our fractured world, too often relationships break up or cause pain, and that was never God’s plan. RSHE is important in helping our young people to think about how to love in ways that are right, good and follow our maker’s instructions.”

Nigel Frith, Diocesan Director of Education for Southwell and Nottingham

DELIVERING RSHE SAFELY

It is vital that RSHE is delivered in a safe environment where every child and young person feels valued and able to contribute. To support this aim teachers should develop a set of rules or a code of conduct for how pupils behave during lessons. A 'group agreement' or set of 'ground rules' can be developed with the class to ensure they have ownership of these behaviour rules. Some sample rules might be 'Show respect to all' or 'Use kind words'.

Inevitably, discussion about relationships, sex, and growing up will highlight differences of opinion. There will be values that are shared by all and some that conflict. Recognising the diversity of views is important to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to develop respect for others.

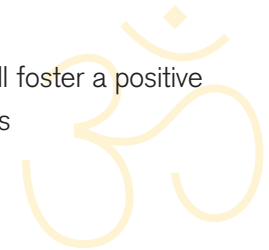
In an RSHE session, it is important that these diverse views and values are managed sensitively so that all pupils continue to feel valued.

RSHE should be delivered in a balanced and non-judgmental way reflecting diverse views but also the law. So for example, a teacher may reflect diversity in the following way... 'some people believe X, some people believe Y, the law says Z.'

Pupils should be encouraged to hold, develop and

express their own views and values. They should also learn about a range of other views and values and how to show respect for those different from themselves.

All pupils should feel equally valued within a classroom, the group agreement will foster a positive environment and support the teacher in challenging hurtful words and behaviours



CROSS-CURRICULAR APPROACHES

As well as the expected curriculum teaching time for religious education set out by the DfE, Acts of Collective Worship offer the perfect opportunity to explore both faith perspectives and also common threads for healthy relationships across faith and non-faith communities. Topics such as commitment, respect for self and others, and love are common to all.

The current Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council RE syllabus, Religious Education for All 2021-2026 makes clear links between RSHE and RE. In developing your RSHE curriculum it is useful to make these links clear. Teachers should support pupils to make connections between the subjects.



LINKING WITH FAITH GROUPS

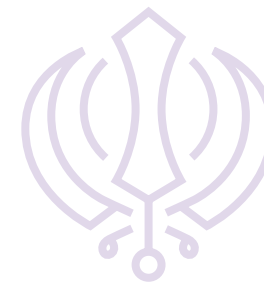
Within the DFE RSHE Guidance it states that 'All schools may teach about faith perspectives.' One way to do this would be to engage with your local faith groups to explore how they could support your work in schools. There are three clear ways that this could happen:

1. - Faith leaders in school: invite faith leaders in to school to give talks about particular aspects of their faith, for example marriage celebrations, family life, etc. The RE Syllabus provides schools with links and a risk assessment for visiting places of worship.
2. - Faith leaders supporting your RSHE programme in the community: Informing local faith groups about your school curriculum, what is delivered and when, helps them to explore the topics raised and put within their own faith context. Faith leaders tell us that they would like to complement the RSHE delivered in schools.
3. - Encouraging discussion with faith leaders: at the end of RSHE sessions teachers can reflect on what pupils have learnt about UK laws and diverse faith perspectives and encourage those who are part of a faith community to discuss their learning with their families and faith leaders.

COMMON VALUES

Across all faiths there are some common goals and values, many of which will form the foundation of an effective RSHE programme. Establishing these goals within a school's RSE policy helps parents and community members to see how what is being delivered through RSHE links to their own faith, cultural or family teachings.

Please note that in any classroom there will be children from families of no faith, or who hold world views that are not based on religious beliefs. It is important to acknowledge this, to recognise that these families will also have goals, values and expectations about how RSHE is taught, and to reflect this in the curriculum.



KEY TENETS OF FAITH

Each faith has some key tenets for followers. Below you will see the key tenets of faiths represented in this guidance.

Christian (Anglican)

- God created humans in his own image.
- God created humans to be in relationship with him and one another.
- Humans have been given authority as stewards of creation – authority over the created order, but a responsibility to care for and nurture it.
- God gave the gift of sexuality and sexual expression.
- Children are seen as a gift from God.
- God through Jesus, demonstrates his acceptance of all people.

Christian (Roman Catholic)

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- God created humans to be in relationship with him and one another.
- Humans have been given authority as stewards of creation – authority over the created order, but a responsibility to care for and nurture it.

- God gave the gift of sexuality and sexual expression.
- Children are seen as a gift from God.

Hinduism

- The true self is the eternal, spiritual soul (atman), which is distinct from the body. Yet, being entrapped by illusion (maya), the soul identifies with matter in the form of the body, and impelled by lust, greed, and anger, undergoes the cycle of repeated birth and death (samsara).
- Each soul creates its own unique destiny according to the universal law of action and reaction (karma), and moves through the species in higher and lower planets under the influence of eternal time (kala) and the three material qualities (gunas).
- The goal of most Hindus is liberation from the perpetual cycle of birth and death (moksha), achieved through re-identification as spirit (Brahman).
- Hinduism accepts different paths toward this common goal, but stresses adherence to practicing one's ordained duty (dharma), usually established with guidance from the spiritual mentor (guru) in accordance with scripture.

- The Hindu perspective on gender identification and gender roles within this world is that while it is desirable to move toward the spiritual world, away from the dualistic material world with its phenomenon of bodily identification that includes the consideration of gender, for the practical running of society and with a mood of mutual cooperation—not a mood of exploitation—members of society need to be assigned different roles according to their innate psycho-physical make-up and inclination for work. This principle must be applied sensitively and flexibly according to time, place and circumstance, taking into account current societal norms, and preserving spiritual progress, not sensual gratification, as the aim. Therefore, although traditionally gender roles are very distinct in Hinduism with physical and psychological differences recognised, there is room for some adaptation. For example, nowadays more Hindu women hold professional positions and are allowed to perform religious ceremonies that were previously performed exclusively by men.



KEY TENETS OF FAITH CONTINUED

Islam

- Belief in Allah as the one and only God
- Belief in angels
- Belief in the holy books
- Belief in the Prophets - Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final prophet.
- Belief in the Day of Judgement - when the life of every human being will be assessed to decide whether they go to heaven or hell.
- Belief in Predestination... That Allah has the knowledge of all that will happen. This doesn't stop human beings making free choices.

Orthodox Jewish

- There is only one G-d, Creator of Heaven and earth and everything therein.
- All people are created in G-d's image.
- Everyone has the responsibility to help make this world a better place.
- Actions are more important than beliefs.
- Jewish people have a guidebook - the Torah - setting out their particular requirements.

- The rules are called Mitzvot. Through each action we are able to connect to G-d. There are 613 commandments or connection points.
- Although all have different roles, by fulfilling our individual missions, we can all - regardless of faith - acquire a place in Heaven.
- Conversion is permitted for someone with genuine conviction but Judaism does not outwardly seek to convert anyone.

Note:

The word G-d is written this way as it is forbidden to erase G-d's name, therefore it is not written in any place where it may be discarded. Although on a computer it might not be printed (and G-d is only a translation of the actual Hebrew name), out of reverence it is customary to not write the full word unless absolutely necessary.

Even in conversation members of the faith try to use the word Hashem, meaning 'The Name' just so that they are constantly aware of the Reverence of G-d and it doesn't become mundane.

Progressive Jewish Tradition

- God is everywhere and God is One.
- We, humans are created in God's image.
- One of our roles is to make the world a better place.

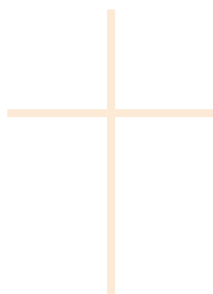
Sikh

- There is one Universal creator.
- Humans are part of the creator – Monism.
- There is not only a universe but god has created a multiverse.
- The multiverse is part of God however when the multiverse ends god still exists – Panentheism.
- It is due to ego, the sense of I that we believe we are separate.
- Human life is the only chance we have to remove our ego and merge back with the creator.
- Sikhs are to selflessly serve the one (seva).

RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

Christian (Anglican)

Marriage rituals can take place in a church or other registered places. Marriage takes place in the presence of God and God blesses the marriage relationship. The Bible says that sexual relationships before marriage should not take place but some Christian churches have a more relaxed view on this. They would say that it is faithfulness and commitment to one another that matters. How to respond to same sex relationships is proving challenging for some Christians. The Bible advises against same sex relationships and many churches are still debating what their approach should be. Some churches will permit same sex marriage, others will not. In some churches, clergy are permitted to be in same sex relationships and these relationships are acknowledged and celebrated, in other churches same sex relationships amongst its clergy are not permitted. In all of this, Christians believe that God loves everyone.



Christian (Roman Catholic)

The Church teaches that love, with its accompanying security, is the first basic need of the newborn child. This is best supplied and experienced in the unit of the mother, father and the child(ren) that we know as 'the family'. This natural and traditional unit of society provides the balanced care of both male and female to promote the child's growth to autonomous and mature independent. In single parent families, that exist for whatever reason, the lone parent does his/her best to supply for the missing parent.

Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and is a life-long exclusive commitment between one man and one woman.

The Church upholds the dignity of every individual and utterly condemns any unjust discrimination or abuse directed against people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB); on the contrary they must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. However, the Church teaches that sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is wrong. It must be quite clear that identifying as LGBT must never be considered sinful or evil in itself. The Catholic Church does not recognise or celebrate same-sex marriages.

Hinduism

The purpose of Hindu marriage is to create an optimum environment for family members to thrive in, particularly children. In Hinduism, the begetting and raising of children is taken with a great sense of responsibility, and marriage is taken to be the setting within which procreation should take place through the union of husband and wife. For this reason same-sex marriage is not prescribed in Hindu scripture, and is not a tradition.

Both husband and wife are encouraged to develop themselves personally and professionally to their full potential, but not at the expense of the family's welfare. Both have a spiritual responsibility to their children. Additionally, the husband leads and is the main provider; the wife creates a peaceful and pleasing environment in the home.

Because of the aim of producing committed partnerships, relationships between men and women prior to marriage are conventionally kept formal with no sexual intimacy.



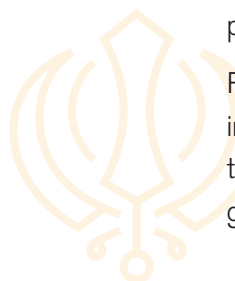
RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE CONTINUED

Islam

Family is the most important unit of our society. It provides a loving, warm and resourceful home for nurturing good citizens. The place where moral, social and spiritual values are practiced.

The Quran declares that a man and woman can enjoy intimacy and a loving relationship only through marriage. Marriage is a most cherished relationship and the dowry symbolizes its importance. Only marry a believing woman, the Quran declares. Marriage is a wonderful institution where two people share pleasures and sorrows. The ingredient for a successful marriage is honesty. It is a legal contract based on the spiritual foundation of love. However, when things don't work out in marriage divorce is permissible.

Pre-marital boy/girlfriend relationships are prohibited as is same-sex marriage for believers.



Orthodox Jewish

The Torah believes that a healthy marriage and family group is the ideal setting for people to grow, thrive and fulfil their mission by contributing positively to society.

Adam and Eve were created as one unit and then separated; similarly, marriage is seen as the reconnection of two halves of one soul. Separated at birth, reunited under the wedding canopy.

The purpose of marriage is not for the ethical management of the sexual drive, nor is it a concession to human weakness. Jewish marriage makes its appearance within the natural order of creation, as a directive from G-d. The purpose for the creation of marriage is stated clearly: It is not good for man to be alone. In a healthy marriage G-d is a third partner.

Having children is a biblical commandment (mitzva). More children bring more blessings. For those unable to have biological children, this mitzva can be fulfilled through adoption.

Although the Torah prohibits same-sex relationships (amongst other forbidden relationships), an LGBT person is welcomed equally into the community.

Physical contact is only permitted between immediate family members. Amongst other things this helps enhance the sense of loving touch, and greatly reduces instances of unwelcome touch.

“Catholic education puts the formation of the individual at the centre of its mission and RSHE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, through RSHE we will endeavour to raise pupils’ self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves: In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a “positive and prudent sexual education” which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.”

Moira Dales

Director of Performance and Standards, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE CONTINUED

Progressive Jewish Tradition

The very first Commandment of the Torah is “to be fruitful and multiply” hence Jewish tradition believes that procreation is one of the most important Commandments of the Torah and that the union between man and woman is sacred and most important in fulfilling that Commandment. Families and children are a very important and integral part of any Jewish community. Progressive Judaism (Reform and Liberal) supports same-sex marriages and welcomes same-sex couples into their communities. Progressive Judaism understands that in modern society people sometimes live together before they become officially married. What is most important is that the two people are faithful to each other and that they love and respect each other. Although there may be traditional elements included in the ceremony, Progressive Judaism makes a special celebration for each wedding so it can reflect each couple’s unique union. These ceremonies are conducted in Hebrew and English.



Sikh

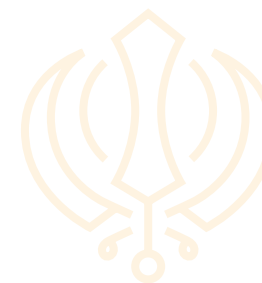
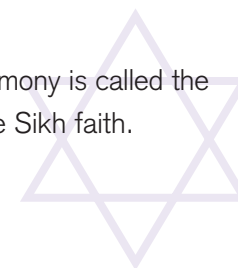
The Sikh faith impresses to control desires including those of a sexual nature. Sexual relationships before marriage are not recommended.

Married life is an approved lifestyle in the Sikh faith as opposed to celibacy or casual relationships. Family life is central to the Sikh faith, known as living as a householder - Gristi Jeevan as said in the Sikh scripture - the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. In India when visiting the Gurdwara, worshippers sit within family units.

The Sikh scriptures remain silent on same sex marriage, however the same commandment applies to all about controlling lust, the only approved outlet for sexual relationships is marriage, which is defined between one man and one woman. Polygamy or multiple wives are not permitted in the Sikh faith, neither are boyfriend and girlfriend relationships (dating).

Marriage takes place in the gurdwara. The Sikh marriage ceremony is called the Anand Karaj- it must be between two people who believe in the Sikh faith.

The marriage ceremony joins the couple to God.



PUBERTY (INCLUDING MENSTRUATION)

Christian (Anglican)

Some young people around the age of 13/14 may decide they want to be confirmed in the church. This is an opportunity for them to make the promises made on their behalf at their baptism, for themselves. This is called confirmation – confirming promises already made.

There are no specific rituals connected to puberty or menstruation in Christianity.

Christian (Roman Catholic)

Christ gave us a two-fold commandment 'Love God with your whole heart...and your neighbour, as yourself'. The Church teach you cannot give to others what you do not possess; a healthy love of self must come first. This is simply defined as 'looking after ourselves, taking care of our bodies and minds and avoiding stress as much as possible' (Dr Jack Dominion). We cannot exaggerate our own worth; but this must be balanced by a truthful recognition that every person is unique and God-loved, otherwise love of self can become selfishness which fails to acknowledge and respect others.

Hinduism

Coming of age in Hinduism generally signifies that the boy or girl is old enough to understand his or her responsibility toward family and society.

Boys of the higher social classes may celebrate a spiritual coming of age by undergoing their sacred thread ceremony (Upanayana), following which they may take part in performing religious rites.

Many branches of Hinduism celebrate a girl's coming of age at the point of her first menstruation with a Ritusuddhi ceremony, at which the girl is given gifts and generally wears a half-sari for the first time. The girl may continue to wear a half-sari until she marries, at which point she begins to wear a full sari.

Islam

Puberty marks a special milestone in the life of the young person from now on they become 'responsible' (Mukallaf). Therefore, they are obliged to pray five times a day and obey all the laws of sharia. They transit from a child to an adult.

Girls become women and start experiencing menstruation which the Quran describes as a "sore state" and therefore sexual intimacy is not allowed, "It is a sore state of women, so stay away from sexual intimacy with women during menstruation, and do not approach them for that purpose until they are clean again. Once they are clean, come to them as Allah has allowed you. Allah loves those who repent and stay clean" (Al-Baqara:222) During menstruation women do not have to pray or fast during the month of Ramadan.



PUBERTY (INCLUDING MENSTRUATION) CONTINUED

Orthodox Jewish

In Judaism the transition from child to adult takes place at age 12 for girls and 13 for boys. This is the age when they become obligated in the instructions of the Torah. The earlier age for girls is because in general they mature physically earlier.

Progressive Jewish Tradition

The two special and most important ceremonies in Judaism to mark the age of the beginning of adolescence, according to Jewish tradition, are the ceremony of Bar and **Bat Mitzvah** (Son and Daughter of the Commandments) and do not necessarily coincide with the puberty of each individual. In Progressive congregations, the ceremony takes place at 13 years old for both boys and girls and they all read from the Torah on the Shabbat morning closest to their 13th birthday in the synagogue service.

After this, young people have traditionally been considered to be old enough to take responsibility for their own religious education and their commitment to the Jewish tradition. At the age of 15/16 in the Progressive movement there is an additional ceremony called **Kabbalat Torah** (Acceptance of Torah – a form of Confirmation) in which the

participants, now a bit more mature since their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, make a public declaration of their faith from a more adult viewpoint.

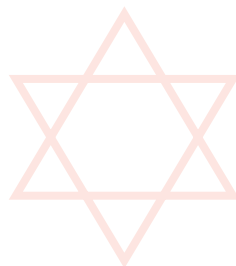
In the Torah, menstruation is referred to as “the way of women”. Menstruation constitutes a state of impurity in Judaism. Progressive Judaism treats women’s periods as an important part of her birth-giving cycle and women are allowed to be called to the Torah and read from it. Women can also use the ritual bath (**Mikveh**) after their period if this ritual is a meaningful way to mark the end of their period. Women can create other meaningful rituals to help them to either mark the age of their puberty or the beginning/end of their period if they wish to do so.

Sikh

In the Sikh faith there is total equality between males and females as stated by the first Sikh Guru, ‘from women kings are born’. Men and women can equally lead services. There is no concept of ritual purity such as we do not believe a woman is unclean when she is menstruating.

The Sikh faith does not believe in compulsion of religion, a child will only become a baptised Sikh when they are old enough to take the decision for themselves

Traditionally when a Sikh reaches a certain age a ceremony called ‘Dastar Bandhi’ (turban tying) is performed at the Gurdwara with family where the Ardas (Sikh prayer) is recited.



GENDER AND GENDER ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Christian (Anglican)

In most families men and women are treated as equals. In the home most will share responsibilities of caring for the home and for children. Most Christian men and women would say they both have a nurturing role in the home in relation to their children – each role complementing the other.

Many churches recognise the role of women in leadership in the church. In the New Testament there are writings about this which clearly suggests that men should be in authority. However, many churches now hold the view that in a changing culture with regards to roles of women, it is important that the church also recognises this.

Church teaching on issues of transgender is still not universal. Some churches will accept that being transgender is acceptable for Christians based on the teaching of Jesus that all are welcomed and accepted by God. However, this would not be the case for all churches. Some churches would accept people who identify as transgender but would not permit them into leadership roles.

Christian (Roman Catholic)

The Catholic Church teaches that God created us, male and female, and that our bodies, souls and identities as male and female are all integral to who we are as human persons.

It is our most fundamental belief that every human being has been created in the image and likeness of God and has inestimable value and dignity. No one should be an object of scorn, hatred, or violence for any reason, including those who seek gender transition or who do not identify as either male or female. The Church teaches that we must be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life however we must accept and respect our identity as it was created.



Hinduism

In home and faith settings, Hindus today still tend to specialise in gender roles, particularly when it comes to raising children. Most Hindu mothers, though often as qualified as their husbands professionally, take years out from their careers to be home for their children while they are young, whilst their husbands fulfil the role of breadwinner.

There are historical accounts dating back to ancient times of a transgender Hindu community existing in India, which included eunuchs amongst others. By all accounts, these individuals were treated with respect and even honour.

Hinduism celebrates the male gender and female gender equally with a pantheon of gods and goddesses, and depicts the powerful and exemplary acts of both men and women in scripture, glorifying the concept of servant leadership, showing how power and humility go hand in hand.

GENDER AND GENDER ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

Islam

Muslims believe that God created man and woman as a complementary pair: inter-dependent. "People, be mindful of your Lord, He created you from a single person and created his partner from him, and then from the pair He spread countless men and women throughout the world." (Al-Nisa: 1). Both are equal in God's sight in terms of their spiritual status and human rights. However, some Muslim scholars assert that they have different roles: men well suited for being the breadwinners and women home builders. But others believe there is no such distinction between men and women. Motherhood is a special status that is honoured and hugely respected in a Muslim society, the Prophet said "paradise lies at the feet of your mother".



Orthodox Jewish

Whilst the public synagogue roles are fulfilled by men, women are very much the heart and soul of Jewish life. In fact, there were female Judges, prophetesses and rulers in Judaism going back over 3000 years!

While men and women are different, and may have different roles and missions to accomplish, all are equally precious to G-d.

The Torah tells us that women are more spiritually attuned than men. While men may excel in physical prowess, women are far ahead when it comes to spiritual strength. Women are more sensitive to matters of the soul, more receptive to ideas of faith, more drawn to the divine than men. This is why G-d told Abraham, the first Jewish man, "Whatever Sarah your wife tells you, listen to her voice." She was the greater prophet, her soul more intuitive than his.

Men may have stronger bodies, women tend to have stronger souls.

Men have a lot more mitzvot to fulfil than women; the rabbis recognised the importance and time-restrictions of raising a family, so limited their other obligations.

Whilst some households retain some of the more 'traditional' roles with the man being the breadwinner, roles are generally divided as each family sees fit. Religious Jewish women hold many key positions in community and business life.



GENDER AND GENDER ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

Progressive Jewish Tradition

In Progressive Judaism roles within each family are divided according to the agreement and the needs of each family. In Progressive services men and women, boys and girls, sit together. Women can be ordained as religious leaders of a community and, ordained or not, can be called to the reading of the Torah and participate in leading prayers during services. Women play a full part alongside men in the management and leadership of Communal activities.



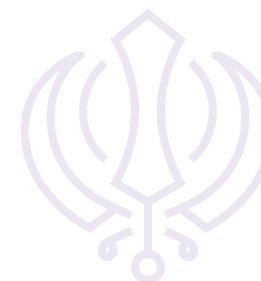
Sikh

The Sikh faith advocates equality between men and women as stated by the first Sikh Guru 'don't speak bad of women as from women kings are born'.

A man is bound to a woman i.e mother, wife. Only God is not bound to a woman

Sikhs believe in equality but also respect the difference between men and women, Guru Gobind Singh Ji has given all males the title Singh meaning lion and all females the title Kaur meaning princess, this reflects the equality and the uniqueness of both genders.

In the Sikh faith, men and women can carry out the exact same duties in the home and place of worship. Traditionally mothers would look after the children and household whilst fathers would be breadwinners. Men and women attend worship together and also can lead the congregation interchangeably, women also take a forefront in leading the community.



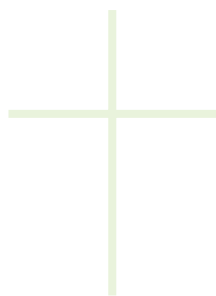
SEX, CONTRACEPTION AND TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Christian (Anglican)

The Bible teaches that sex is to happen within a marriage relationship. However, some churches and Christians now consider that commitment is what is important and if two people are in a committed relationship then sex within that relationship would be acceptable.

Christian belief is that all life is precious and is given by God so terminating a fetus would go against God's will and purpose. However, there would be circumstances where Christians would decide that it was not in the best interests of the mother or the child for that pregnancy to continue and so, reluctantly, would agree for an abortion to take place.

There is no specific teaching in Protestant Christianity on the use of contraceptives and the majority of Christians would not be opposed to their use.



Christian (Roman Catholic)

Since the Church considers that the place for sexual intercourse is only within marriage, contraception is considered as the 'regulation of births' for example, the spacing of births within the family (Change to Catechism of the Catholic Church 2368). A distinction is made between natural and artificial means of contraception. Natural is the use of the infertile periods of the wife; artificial is the use of condoms, the pill, the cap etc. 'Natural' because it is in accordance with nature, is approved; artificial means are against the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Human life is so precious and unique that it must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. From this moment Christians have recognised the human being that God is forming in the womb, as sacred and inviolable. Therefore, the Catholic Church teaches that the deliberate termination of a pregnancy is gravely wrong.

The sign of the covenant of Marriage and also the sacrament is sexual intercourse. This is the deepest, most intimate and wonderful of all human signs; it is the language of love. In teaching that sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage, the Church is protecting its dignity and worth; for it is the only way that God, who is Love, has decided to create a new human being.

Hinduism

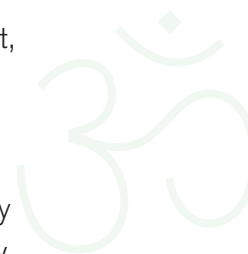
Because sex drive is such a strong bodily demand, unrestricted sex is considered detrimental to spiritual progress. Therefore, while sex is celebrated as a pleasure, it needs to be regulated, and procreation established in the forefront as its primary function.

From a young age, boys are taught the art of celibacy, and this preparation later goes a long way toward preventing the problem of unwanted pregnancy without the need for contraception.

Hindu couples are enjoined to have sex once a month with the wish to create a child. This approach is a natural and positive form of birth control.

The soul enters the child's body at the time of conception, so the fetus in the womb is accorded the same rights as a person who has been born. Abortion is in general, therefore, not sanctioned.

The use of contraception is not supported because its purpose is to enable unrestricted sex.



SEX, CONTRACEPTION AND TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Islam

A husband and wife relationship in marriage is a mutual relationship of rights and responsibilities where both must consult one another about the size of their family. Contraception is allowed by most scholars but not by all. Abortion is only allowed in situations which pose serious threat to the life of the mother.

Orthodox Jewish

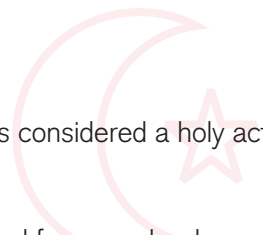
Sex within marriage, and with the appropriate mindset, is considered a holy act in Judaism.

Pre-marital sex is not permitted. Physical intimacy is reserved for a couple who are committed to one another in marriage. The test of a good marriage is not compatibility in bed, but compatibility in life. Torah also has an inbuilt mechanism to prevent relationships going stale. Physical intimacy is avoided for about half of every month, (during menstruation and for a week afterwards). This gives the couple important personal time and forces them to communicate in non-physical ways. It also strengthens their desire for each other once they can resume intimacy.

As stated earlier, Torah advocates having children, as many children as possible. Children are considered the greatest source of blessing and who doesn't want more blessings? The Torah enjoins us to be fruitful and multiply and we want to do this to the best of our ability, by having as many children as we are granted by G-d.

This general rule changes in situations where it would be detrimental to a woman's health or emotional wellbeing to have more children, and (certain methods of) birth control may be permitted. Every family should have a competent and caring rabbinic couple to whom they can turn who can advise them objectively on the Torah's position, specifically for their situation. None of us is a carbon copy of another, and each of our situations is different.

This is strictly forbidden in Judaism, unless having the child could cause severe physical or mental damage to the mother, when it could even be recommended. This must be discussed with an authority who is competent in both the Jewish and medical aspects.



SEX, CONTRACEPTION AND TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Progressive Jewish Tradition

Traditionally, people are expected to have sex after their marriage and sex is looked upon positively within the legal union. In Jewish Law people are considered married through an official document (**Ketuba** the marriage contract - like a marriage certificate), and/or a public ceremony with rings being exchanged and after intercourse (between two Jewish people). So technically, two Jewish people can be considered as married if they've had sexual intercourse.

In Jewish tradition, the beginning of life is considered with the birth of a child. The fetus is considered to be part of a woman's body according to the Jewish Law so every time when a mother's life is in danger, her life takes precedent over her fetus. Abortions are not encouraged, but if there is a good reason for it, they are not forbidden.

Having children is one of the most important commandments of the Torah, hence it is forbidden to waste seed (prevent conception) and Jewish couples are encouraged to have as many children as they can. Progressive Judaism allows birth control and couples can choose for themselves which contraceptive method suits them best.



Sikh

The main form of contraception for Sikhs is to have control over their lustful desires therefore erasing the need for contraception. Sex between husband and wife is seen as a positive act as it creates the future generations and contributes to society.

The Sikh scripture is silent on contraception but has the view all life is valuable therefore abortion is not advocated. Aborting female fetuses due to their sex is highly condemned by the Sikh Gurus.

Sikhs are not against abortion for medical reasons for the safety of the mother.

“As many of our Network members know being different can be hard when growing up, whether LGBT or otherwise. Good RSHE is the key to letting younger people learn about diverse relationships, and challenging ignorance and misunderstanding that, frankly, can make their lives unbearable. Effective RSHE education helps make life better for the current generation of LGBT young people, particularly those across all faith communities, now, and in the future. We welcome the multi-faith approach taken here that focuses on the positive values all traditions share, and the key message that although we all have different ideas, we all have the same rights: rights that must be respected. Thank you to all the contributors who worked on this resource.”

Nottingham City Council LGBT network

SUMMARY OF KEY LEGISLATION AROUND RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND MARRIAGE IN ENGLAND

Within RSHE a school can explore the diverse faith perspectives on different topics, some of which are outlined in this document. They must also ensure that pupils are aware of the law as it relates to these topics. Below is a summary of relevant legislation around these topics in England.

Age of consent

The age of consent in England is 16. The Sexual Offences Act outlines that it is a criminal offence for sexual activity to take place between two people where one person is under 16, regardless of sexual orientation or gender of those involved. This law is designed to protect children from abuse and is not intended to prosecute teenagers who are close in age who have decided they are ready for sex.

Access to contraception advice and treatment

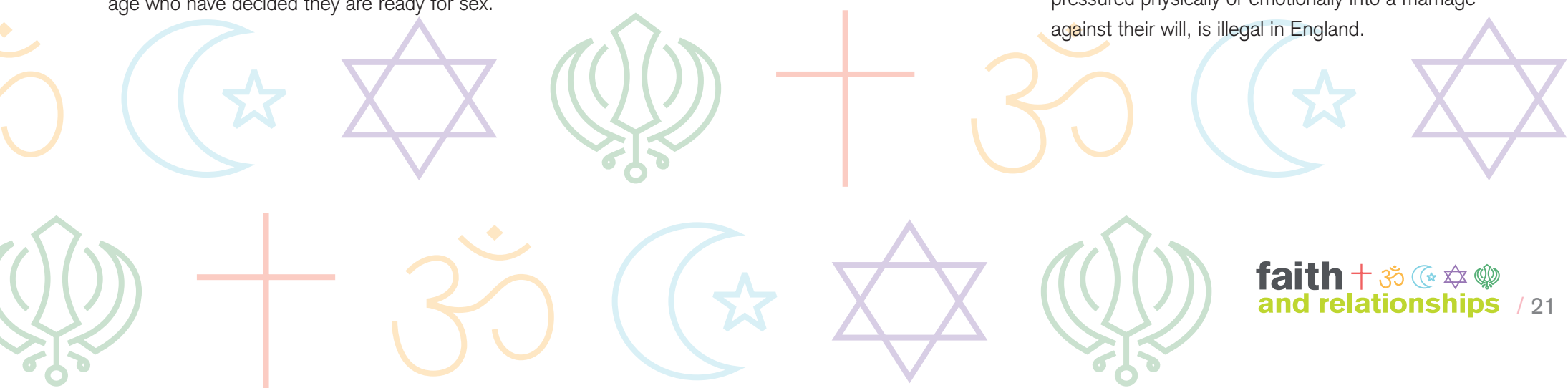
People under 16 years old are able to access free and confidential contraception and termination services, if a healthcare professional deems them mature enough to understand the information and consent to treatment. Healthcare professionals use the Fraser Guidelines to guide their decisions in this respect. Young people will be encouraged to speak to parents but it is not a requirement. If a professional believes there is a risk to the safety and welfare of a young person they will follow safeguarding protocols.

Marriage and civil partnership

People in opposite sex couples can get married in civil or religious ceremonies. Same sex couples can get married in civil ceremonies, or in religious ceremonies where the religious organisation has agreed to marry same sex couples. People can marry from age 18, or aged 16 or 17 with parental consent.

A civil partnership is a legal relationship between two people who are not related to one another. It gives a relationship legal recognition. As with marriage those aged 16 or 17 can enter into a civil partnership with permission from parents.

Forced marriage, which involves someone being pressured physically or emotionally into a marriage against their will, is illegal in England.



USEFUL LINKS

Resources:

[RSHE guidance](#)

[Support for Nottingham City Schools around RSHE](#)

[‘Valuing all God’s Children – Guidance for C of E schools to prevent homophobic, biphobic & transphobic bullying’](#)

[The C of E Vision for Education](#)

Religious Education for All 2021-2026. The Agreed Syllabus for RE in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, Intentions, Implementation and Impact – due for launch, Autumn 2020



Useful organisations:

www.southwell.anglican.org

www.dioceseofnottingham.uk

www.karimia.com

www.chabad.org

www.nottinghamhaktivah.org.uk

www.nottinghamliberalsynagogue.com

www.hinduismeducationservices.co.uk

www.diversechurch.website

www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk

www.sarbat.net

www.jglg.org.uk

www.hidayahlgbt.co.uk

www.stonewall.org.uk/category/faith-religion

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(SCYS - Sikh community and youth services)

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