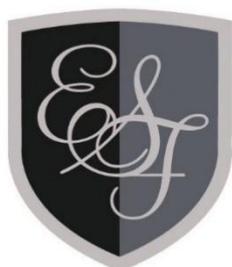


Note the programme outlined in this policy is for each school to amend in accordance with its delivery of education, and as such each policy will be different. The introduction and aims and principles are reviewed by Executive only.



EMMANUEL
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Relationships and Sex Education



Last review: October 2017
Board Approved: 8 November 2017
Next review: June 2019

Introduction

A foundation for relationships

Humans are made for relationships: with God and with each other. Indeed, at the heart of the Christian view of God is relationship. The Bible says that God is personal: one God in three Persons, and within God there are rich, personal relationships. As beings who are uniquely made in the image of God relationships are of central importance for us as well. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, his response affirmed the importance of relating well to – loving – both one’s Creator and one’s neighbour.¹ At the heart of the Christian Gospel lies the possibility of a restored relationship with God; alongside this comes an emphasis on positive, healthy relationships between human beings.

Building healthy relationships today

Our society is experiencing an ‘epidemic’ of loneliness. The sense of isolation that can arise in the modern world does not just impact the elderly however.² Such factors as rapid technological advance and the advent of online social networking present challenges to the relationships of the young. Living in a digital world can mean that an unprecedented connection to others goes hand-in-hand with a dissatisfaction with face-to-face relationships. As Sherry Turkle has written: ‘Tethered to technology, we are shaken when that world “unplugged” does not signify, does not satisfy...We build a following on Facebook or MySpace and wonder to what degree our followers are friends...suddenly, in the half-light of virtual community, we may feel utterly alone. As we distribute ourselves, we may abandon ourselves. Sometimes people experience no sense of having communicated after hours of connection...’³

Preparing for life in modern Britain

At Emmanuel Schools Foundation (“ESF”), we are committed to preparing our students for life in modern Britain.

Our country comprises people with diverse worldviews and identities – sexual, political, ethnic, cultural and religious – and widely varying practices and lifestyles. Our character education⁴ therefore equips students to understand different perspectives and to appreciate diversity. Students learn to respect and live peaceably with those who hold different, even mutually exclusive, views (such as members of the LGBT+ community, Jews, Muslims, humanists, social liberals and Christians). Our students learn to practise mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles.

We want our young people to pursue truth, learning to think for themselves rather than to accept ideas without critique in order to pass an examination. Alongside ensuring our students stay safe we seek to guide them to think through the choices they face in the realm of their relationships. As our young people move towards adulthood we want them to grow in wisdom, having considered the differing perspectives about what is the best and the right way to live. We emphasise the importance of character⁵ and the need to take responsibility for others as well as ourselves. We are committed to the Bible as God’s Word, and believe that in it God reveals himself to us, as well as his plan for human relationships. We recognise that sensitivity is vital as controversial ethical issues are considered, and we look to the example of Jesus and his love and compassion for all.

¹ Matthew 22:37–40: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (New International Version)

² In a March 2017 *Relate* report, the authors note: ‘social isolation and loneliness is a widespread issue that affects people of all demographics, and can have damaging impacts on health and wellbeing. Younger people (16-35) were less likely to report having ‘good’ quality relationships, and more likely to state they feel lonely ‘often or all of the time’ than older respondents.’ https://www.relate.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_way_we_are_now_-_youre_not_alone.pdf (p.4)

³ *Alone Together* pp.11-12, Basic Books, 2001

⁴ Church of England (2015) *The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education*. London: Church of England Education Office. https://churchofengland.org/media/2386307/fruits_of_the_spirit.pdf

⁵ Mark Pike (2017) *British values and virtues: schooling in Christianity and character?*, *British Journal of Religious Education* 39(3) (published online 3 Aug 2017).

DOI: [10.1080/01416200.2017.1352485](https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2017.1352485)

Relationships and sex education at ESF

In our relationships and sex education (RSE) we seek to help our students flourish in all their relationships (with friends and family; with adults and colleagues at ESF; with those they interact with less often; as they enter the world of work) and our core values sum up the essence of healthy relationships. We teach about sexual relationships in a way that is consistent with our Christian ethos: sex is a good gift of a good God who wants what is best for people he loves; sex is more than just a physical act, and involves the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of our being; right and wrong exist; humans are moral beings who are responsible for the decisions they make; commitment is of vital importance and marriage is the right context for sexual relationships; all people are valuable; we need to take responsibility for others and treat them with respect. In British law marriage is between two consenting adults, but we recognise that many Christian churches understand the Bible to teach that marriage is the union of one man and one woman for life. As well as this being the position of the Church of England⁶ and the Roman Catholic Church, it is also the teaching of other faiths.

Delivery

Our relationships and sex education involves the science department: the national curriculum's science programme of study is followed at key stage 3 and the subject content from the GCSE in biology is taught at key stage 4.⁷ A trained team of teaching staff, who will discuss the ethical issues in discrete sessions across all year groups, will supplement the factual content taught in science. Many of the content will be delivered through the PTE department also through their Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education element of RSE, but not the national curriculum covered as part of science or PTE; they should make any request in writing to the Principal.

Aims and Principles

Five aims of our relationships and sex education

We aim to help our students to become:

1. **Knowledgeable** Students who have a sound knowledge of physiological and biological aspects of sex and reproduction
2. **Thoughtful** Students who reflect with maturity on the differing perspectives on relationships and sexual ethics
3. **Discerning** Students who are empowered to make wise choices in life relating to relationships, sex and sexuality
4. **Confident** Students who have an appreciation of their own self-worth and dignity and know where they can turn for help and advice
5. **Selfless** Students who put the interests of others before their own

⁶ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/canons/section-b.aspx> Canons of the Church of England Section B: 30 *Of Holy Matrimony* 1. The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side...

⁷ National Curriculum in science: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study#key-stage-3>; AQA Biology specification: <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/biology/specifications/AQA-8461-SP-2016.PDF>

Five principles that we seek to uphold in all aspects of our programme of relationships and sex education

Our programme will be:

1. **Age appropriate** We seek to ensure that our delivery will be structured so as to protect children's innocence without compromise to clarity.⁸
2. **In partnership with parents/carers** We are privileged to have immense support from the parents of our students; indeed, the partnership that exists between ESF and home is one of the strongest features of ESF life. Our relationships and sex education will be significantly more effective as parents also spend time discussing the issues with their children. We encourage parents to teach their children about relationships and sex *before* they learn about it at school, or from any other source.
3. **Pastorally sensitive** We recognise that our students will have experienced a variety of home backgrounds and we are wholly committed to ensuring our support for parents as they seek to give their child the best possible start to life. We are fully aware also of the diversity of views on moral issues that exists in the modern world and our aim is to be entirely sensitive in areas where there is disagreement.
4. **Consistent with our ethos** We believe that the Bible outlines the best for human relationships and ESF is not required to promote views that are contrary to its ethos.⁹ But the Bible could not be clearer also about the value, worth and dignity of all, regardless of their views or their moral decisions; as such, we will treat all of our students with the same care and compassion.¹⁰ We also acknowledge that an exposure to different viewpoints is important as we seek to make up our mind.
5. **Well planned and expertly delivered** We seek to ensure that experts deliver our relationships and sex education, and we prize a delivery that communicates the facts that exist clearly; setting up straw men is counter-productive and refusing to acknowledge strengths in an opposing point of view or argument likewise.

⁸ In its March 2017 policy statement the Government expressed its commitment 'to ensuring that the education provided to pupils in Relationships Education and RSE is appropriate to the age of pupils and their religious background'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595828/170301_Policy_statement_PSHEv2.pdf (p.4)

⁹ *Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils: supplementary information* Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools November 2014: 'It is not necessary for schools or individuals to 'promote' teachings, beliefs or opinions that conflict with their own, but nor is it acceptable for schools to promote discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinion or background.'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380396/Improving_the_spiritual__moral__social_and_cultural__SMSC__development_of_pupils_supplementary_information.pdf (paragraph 8, p.7)

¹⁰ See the ESF British Values Policy: <http://www.emmanuelsschoolsfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/British-Values-Policy.pdf>

Programme

Starting out...

In years 7 and 8 students consider what human beings are and the influences on us as we grow up, how to appreciate, establish and build healthy relationships in all areas of life, how we make decisions relating to the best and the right way to live, and they are introduced to adult relationships.

Year 7: science

In science students study the topic: **reproduction in animals**.¹¹ Students gain a knowledge of the biological mechanism of sexual reproduction in humans and the physical changes that take place during puberty. Curriculum subject matter includes: gametes and fertilisation; the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems; the menstrual cycle (without details of hormones); gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta.

Year 7: RSE

In **RSE** students consider the following:

1. The nature of human beings: the nature and value of all human beings – whatever they choose to believe or however they choose to behave – as created in God’s image and therefore intrinsically precious; the importance of how we treat others (family/friends/acquaintances/colleagues/strangers); the importance of how we treat ourselves (including our minds & the way we think) and self-esteem.

2. Friendships: how to establish and grow healthy relationships with our friends.

3. Identity and image Identity: the factors that shape our identity: *what makes me who I am? Where do I find worth, value and security? How do I handle feeling insecure? How should I see myself?* Image: media representations of beauty and the difference between the images we are presented with – via the media/TV & film/online – and reality. The importance of self-respect and respect for others, and of taking responsibility for oneself as well as for others.

Year 7: online safety

The online safety curriculum¹² covers the following: password security; health and safety when using computers; an introduction to online reputation¹³; an introduction to cyberbullying; content selection and copyright.

¹¹ Science topics are taught in rotation: all year 7 students cover the *reproduction in animals* topic before the February half-term holiday.

¹² Alongside the content delivered in science and in relationships and sex education, an online safety curriculum is taught in key stages 3 and 4. In years 7 and 8 the teaching of online safety takes place during students’ business education lessons.

¹³ An ‘internet etiquette’ session is delivered to students in years 7-9 who have experienced issues in this area. Based on the *Thinkuknow* session **Your Digital Tattoo**, it aims to develop students’ understanding of the concept of ‘online reputation’ and the various possible consequences of sharing content online, and knowledge of ways to get unwanted content removed from the internet.

Year 8: RSE

In RSE students consider the following:

1. The importance of families and parents: the importance of appreciating/honouring your parents/carers; the possibility of rich family experiences in addition to those with your mother & father; the idea that *'it takes a village to raise a child'*: respecting & valuing grandparents and the elderly within your community; a visit to ESF schools by senior citizens from the local community.

2. An introduction to adult relationships: the beauty and challenge of **singleness**; the importance of commitment in **intimate relationships**; the seriousness of engaging in, and the benefits of delaying, sexual activity. Some key questions: *How do we decide what is right and wrong generally? Where do we look to for information on the facts and the moral choices we face? What does the law say about sexual intercourse?*

3. Sex and the way we *speak* as well as *act* Language: the importance of the way we speak about other people (when they are present and when they are absent); the casual use of sexualised terms; unacceptable homophobic comments; the zero tolerance approach towards bullying at ESF; the importance of boundaries; *What do we do if something is concerning us (personally or in relation to a friend)?*

Year 8: online safety

The online safety curriculum covers the following: digital literacy; online contact; cyberbullying and reporting; reliability of information.

Thinking further...

In years 9 and 10 students consider the issues relating to sexual relationships in greater depth; including, in science, the facts concerning sexually transmitted infections and contraception, and, in SRE, the issues relating to the nature of sex, when it is right to engage in sexual activity and how to live well in light of the pressures of the modern world.

Year 9: biology

In **biology** students study the topic: **infection and response**. *Context:* this topic introduces students to concepts relating to communicable disease; in doing so a variety of diseases are studied, such as measles, salmonella and malaria, alongside which sexually transmitted infections are considered. Curriculum subject matter includes: explaining how the spread of diseases can be reduced or prevented, including HIV and Gonorrhoea; explaining the use of antibiotics and other medicines in treating disease.

Year 9: RSE

In RSE students consider the following:

1. (What humans are and) what sex is: a good gift from a good God (cf. the notion that sex is a bad thing); dealing with misconceptions: sex is not as it is sometimes portrayed (including by Christians/the church at times). The right context for sex: *when is it good/right to have sex? What different views do people hold?* The traditional Christian view (including what the major churches say): singleness and celibacy, abstinence until marriage, lifelong marriage with sex for intimacy and procreation; other religious views on marriage; civil marriage; civil partnerships (since 2004) & civil marriage (since 2013); cohabitation; exclusive (non-cohabiting) relationships; sex outside of a committed relationship (with a stranger/paying for sex); sex alone; the issue of monogamy & polygamy. *What is the law in the UK about sexual activity and marriage?*

2. Purpose: *What is the purpose of sex? Can it ever be 'just sex'?* Sex is more than a physical act: it is a mental/emotional/spiritual act and, as such, always matters; it is about creating and maintaining a lifelong bond.¹⁴ Key issue: *What level of commitment should there be before I have sex with someone else?* Key question: *What are the benefits of delaying sex for a committed relationship?* The notion of delayed gratification and the benefits of delaying sex until a relationship of real commitment: it serves to *protect* us and to *provide* for us. The notion of marriage as a covenant in which two people give themselves to each other.

¹⁴ The Roman Catholic Church teaches that there must always be the possibility of new life after sexual intercourse; the majority Protestant view is that sexual intercourse is as concerned with intimacy as procreation.

3. Consent: the meaning of consent; the law on consent, the attitudes that exist in today's world; sexual abuse & exploitation; bullying, harassment & violence against women; forced marriage. Key questions: *How do we deal with unwanted physical contact (from people we know as well as strangers)? How do we deal with a situation in which someone is being pressured into engaging in sexual activity they do not want? What do we do if something is concerning us (personally or in relation to a friend)?*

Year 9: online safety

The online safety curriculum¹⁵ aims to develop students':

1. Speed friending: critical understanding of the nature of 'friending' online; skills and confidence in evaluating the reliability of online information, identifying concerning or risky online behaviour, and applying safety messages during interactions.

2. Things you see online: awareness of the impact of some kinds of online content on self-esteem and image, and sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of others; knowledge of sources of support for those upset by something they have seen online.

Year 10: biology

In **biology** students study the topic: **homeostasis**. *Context:* the human body responds to internal and external changes through the nervous system and endocrine system; the latter employs chemical messages called hormones; the production of specific hormones affects fertility. Applications of this knowledge include the role of hormones in fertility treatment and contraception. Students would be required to develop skill in evaluating associated personal and social implications, making decisions based on the evaluation of evidence and arguments. Curriculum subject matter includes: knowledge of fertility being controlled by a variety of hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception; descriptions of the roles of hormones in human reproduction, including the menstrual cycle; evaluating the different hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception; explaining the use of hormones in modern reproductive technologies to treat infertility (higher tier only).

Year 10: RSE

In **RSE** students consider the following:

1. Contraception: *what is it, what different methods are there & what different ideas exist about when it is right to use it?* Types of contraception: artificial contraception, emergency contraception, natural family planning or natural contraception; arguments about the use of contraception; the unexpected consequences of sexual activity, such as sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, and avoiding the unwanted consequences (alcohol etc.)

2. Enjoying healthy relationships *In intimate relationships:* right expectations; trust; commitment; communication; clarity; friendship; depth; love; self-giving and sacrifice; time; compromise. *Peer & media pressure: are we always being told the truth or is there, at times, some kind of distortion? Is everyone having sex and am I missing out? Relationships with friends and in other relationships in adulthood:* with friends; at work; in the local community.

3. Sex and the way we think How to think about and respond to the sexualisation of society (& the increased sexualisation of children); the commodification of sex and the objectification of others: pornography¹⁶; online relationships: the internet, social media and respecting others and yourself; healthy and wise online relationships/interactions, and staying safe online.

Year 10: online safety

The online safety curriculum aims to develop students':

¹⁵ In years 9 and 10 the teaching of online safety is delivered by a trained team in a series of discrete classroom sessions. The sessions utilise activities from Thinkuknow (www.thinkuknow.co.uk), an education programme from Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP), a command of the National Crime Agency.

¹⁶ A Childline survey (2015) of 2000 young people aged 11-17 found: 1 in 5 children aged 12-13 think that watching porn is normal behaviour; nearly 1 in 10 children aged 12-13 are worried they might be addicted to porn; around 1 in 5 of those surveyed said they'd seen pornographic images that had shocked or upset them; 12 percent admitted to making or being part of a sexually explicit video (<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/LLN-2015-0041>, p.4). An Institute for Public Policy Research survey (2014) of 18-year-olds on attitudes to sex and relationships found: 70% think pornography can have a damaging impact on young people's views of sex or relationships; 72% think pornography leads to unrealistic attitudes to sex and 70% think pornography encourages society to view women as sex objects (<http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/attachments/OP4391-IPPR-Data-Tables.pdf?noredirect=1>, pp.18, 27).

- 1. Selfies exposed:** understanding of why someone might take a naked selfie, why it might get shared, and what impact and consequences this could have for them, in order to help them make mature and safe choices in future.
- 2. Private pics go public:** understanding of issues around sharing intimate pictures online, including trust, privacy, responsibility and the role of the media; knowledge of the law on sending and sharing sexual images.
- 3. When chat goes wrong:** ability to identify behaviour typical of sexual offenders on social media; understanding of the risks posed by talking to strangers online; knowledge of sources of help and support, and how to report abuse.

APPENDIX: Relationships and Sex Education Guidance in the UK

The Emmanuel Schools Foundation's sex education policy was approved by ESF directors in July 2017. The following guidance was consulted in devising the policy:

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils: supplementary information Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools, Department for Education, Nov 2014

http://c4m.org.uk/downloads/DfE_EducationRegulations_IndependentSchoolsGuidance_HIGHLIGHTED.pdf.

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/gd.13.103-4_schools_24-03-14.pdf.

Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, Jul 2000:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283599/sex_and_relationship_education_guidance.pdf

The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities, Department for Education, May 2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Key Points

1. Obligations upon all maintained schools

“The governing body and head teacher shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered pupils at a maintained school, it is given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.

“The Secretary of State must issue guidance designed to secure that when sex education is given to registered pupils at maintained schools—

(a) they learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and

(b) they are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.”¹⁷

2. Obligations upon schools with a religious character

“Schools with a religious character can continue to deliver sex and relationship education in accordance with their particular religious doctrines or ethos. They must do so in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way.”¹⁸

“No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law.

Subject to the above, nothing in the Act affects the rights of schools with a religious character to continue to teach about marriage according to their religious doctrines or ethos. Any views expressed about marriage of same sex couples, by governors, teachers, other school staff, parents and pupils, may reflect the religious ethos of the school.

¹⁷ Section 403, **Education Act 1996:** <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/403>

¹⁸ **The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education, Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance, 2014, p.5** https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/gd.13.103-4_schools_24-03-14.pdf

Governors, teachers and non-teaching staff in schools, parents and pupils, are free to hold their own religious or philosophical beliefs about marriage of same sex couples.”¹⁹

“ Parents will continue to have a right to withdraw their children from sex education. Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of the local community; and, as now, faith schools will continue to be able to teach in accordance with the tenets of their faith.”²⁰

“38% of teenage pregnancies ended in abortion in 1998 – almost 39,000 abortions. There are strongly held views and religious beliefs about abortion and some schools will apply a particular religious ethos through their sex and relationship education policy to the issue which will enable pupils to consider the moral and personal dilemmas involved. The religious convictions of pupils and their parents should be respected.”²¹

The standard does not mean, for example, that schools must promote alternative lifestyles or same sex marriage. Rather, it requires respect for other people, even if they choose to follow a lifestyle that one would not choose to follow oneself.²²

3. Obligations upon individual teachers

“Teachers, other school staff, governors, parents and pupils are all free to hold whatever personal views they choose on marriage of same sex couples, including a view that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. The Government recognises that the belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society.

Individuals are free to express positive or negative views about marriage of same sex couples, depending on the form of words used and the particular context in which they are used. This applies to all forms of communication in public and in the workplace. Individuals who express support for, or opposition to, marriage of same sex couples, in public or in work, should do so in reasonable and moderate terms, to ensure they are mindful of and do not breach the rights and freedoms of others.

Where relevant, teachers need to teach the facts about the legal meaning of marriage in England and Wales in a sensitive, reasonable and appropriate way to comply with professional and legal obligations, and school policies and practices. This will include providing accurate factual information about the law when delivering lessons.

... Freedom of expression is explicitly protected under the Public Order Act 1986 (POA) provisions concerning the offences of inciting hatred on the grounds of religion or sexual orientation (see Part 3A and sections 29J and 29JA POA). Under the Act, Parliament has further protected the rights of individuals to express their views on marriage of same sex couples through discussion or criticism without facing any criminal sanction under the POA, by inserting a new sub-section into section 29JA. In order to guarantee that simply giving a view on marriage of same sex couples is not caught by the offences of threatening behaviour and hate speech on the grounds of sexual orientation, the new Section 29JA (2) of the POA specifies that: 'any discussion or criticism of marriage which concerns the sex of the parties to marriage shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred.’”²³

¹⁹ **The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education**, Op.Cit., p.2,3

²⁰ **Justine Greening**, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, Sex and Relationships Education:Written statement - HCWS509, 1 Mar 2017: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-03-01/HCWS509/>

²¹ **Sex and Relationship Education Guidance**, DfEE, Jul 2000, p.16

²² **Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils**: supplementary information Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools November 2014, http://c4m.org.uk/downloads/DfE_EducationRegulations_IndependentSchoolsGuidance_HIGHLIGHTED.pdf p.10

²³ **The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education**, Op.Cit., p.6,7

“It is not necessary for schools or individuals to ‘promote’ teachings, beliefs or opinions that conflict with their own, but nor is it acceptable for schools to promote discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinion or background.”²⁴

“Many people’s views on sexual orientation/sexual activity are themselves grounded in religious belief. Some schools with a religious character have concerns that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos. Teachers have expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. There are also concerns that schools with a religious character may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils and parents when same sex relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring.

Schools with a religious character, like all schools, have a responsibility for the welfare of the children in their care and to adhere to curriculum guidance. It is not the intention of the Equality Act to undermine their position as long as they continue to uphold their responsibilities in these areas. If their beliefs are explained in an appropriate way in an educational context that takes into account existing guidance on the delivery of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Religious Education (RE), then schools should not be acting unlawfully. However, if a school conveyed its belief in a way that involved haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil or group of pupils then this would be unacceptable in any circumstances and is likely to constitute unlawful discrimination.

Where individual teachers are concerned, having a view about something does not amount to discrimination. So it should not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context (for example when responding to questions from pupils, or in an RE or Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) lesson). However, it should be remembered that school teachers are in a very influential position and their actions and responsibilities are bound by much wider duties than this legislation. A teacher’s ability to express his or her views should not extend to allowing them to discriminate against others.”²⁵

²⁴ **Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils**, Op.Cit. p.7

²⁵ **The Equality Act 2010 and schools**: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities, Department for Education, May 2014, p.22,23:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf