tender
acting for healthy relationships

Ready for RSHE?



Tender Report | November 2026

Are schools ready to teach the new RSHE guidance?

Revised statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) came into force on 1 September 2026. This report sets out the key changes the new guidance introduces and asks whether schools are ready to deliver them, in light of the Government's September 2026 plan for schools to tackle misogyny. It draws on published evidence from teachers, school leaders and young people, and on Tender's own data from school staff, students, and parents and carers.

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Summary

About Tender

Tender is a charity that since 2003 has been working to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence through healthy relationships education. We use drama and the arts to help children and young people explore healthy and unhealthy relationships and rehearse the skills they need for safer, happier relationships. Through our whole-school programme, RE:SET, we also work with school leaders, staff, and parents and carers.

In the past 12 months we have delivered over 200 healthy relationships projects and 120 teacher training sessions in more than 200 schools across 47 boroughs, reaching 22,000 young people, 3,200 school staff and 2,000 parents and carers.

Our ambition is for every child to receive quality relationships education from the age of five.

The new Relationships & Sex Education Curriculum

The new guidance came into effect on 1 September 2026. It replaced the first-ever RSHE guidance introduced in 2020, and brought in additional and updated content. For the first time, it names stalking, strangulation and suffocation, virginity testing and hymenoplasty as criminal offences to be taught; addresses misogyny, gendered power, pornography and incel and influencer culture directly; and covers AI-generated sexual imagery.

In September 2026, the Government also announced a misogyny taskforce, support for a whole school approach to tackle misogyny and a new RSHE expert advisory group. Tender's response to the misogyny taskforce is outlined in Appendix A at the end of this report.

Are schools ready?

Not yet. The new content is welcome but more complex to teach, and it has not been matched by additional time in the curriculum, by ringfenced funding or by specialist training for teachers who will deliver it. In our own data, a quarter of staff who teach RSHE said they had not received adequate training. This is an essential gap, since evidence shows that staff who are trained report feeling far more confident teaching all aspects of RSHE. And students say they want more RSHE, not less. Schools booking Tender projects most often ask for support with misogyny. These findings point to key actions needed to ensure the new guidance can be effectively implemented in all schools.

An update to the guidance was overdue and is welcome. The world in which children and young people learn about and develop their own relationships has changed considerably in just a few years. In short, the new guidance asks schools to teach more, and more difficult, content: it names specific criminal offences, addresses misogyny and gendered power directly, and covers AI-generated sexual imagery for the first time. Whether these changes reach pupils depends on whether teachers are equipped to deliver them.

Recommendations

1

Fund evidenced, practical RSHE training

Gives teachers in every school practical tools to teach RHSE. Our data shows training makes a real difference to teacher confidence.

2

Prioritise primary schools

Age-appropriate support for younger children and primary school teachers, who are missing from the new guidance, pilot projects and the misogyny framework.

3

Fund specialist external providers

Public funding is needed so that expert delivery alongside school staff does not depend on a school's budget.

4

Give the RSHE advisory group a clear remit

Include the VAWG sector and youth voice, cover primary schools, fully cost teacher training, advise Ofsted and publish a timetable.

5

Make the misogyny framework work

A practical, whole-school, intersectional approach, backed by funded training, not resources alone.

6

Consistent Ofsted approach

Assess RSHE consistently and give it the weight it deserves.

7

Support for parent engagement

Support schools to engage with parents/ carers to ensure they are kept up to date with the new curriculum and have opportunities to ask questions and support with positive messaging.

8

Listen to students

Design RSHE around what students say works: active teaching methods, and difficult topics taught through a framing of relationships, friendships and fairness.

Methodology

This report combines a review of published evidence with Tender's own programme data from the 2025-26 academic year.

Staff data

- Staff confidence: RE:SET staff audits, completed in schools taking part in our whole-school programme, ask staff to agree or disagree with a set of statements about RSHE in their school. Figures on confidence and training relate to staff who teach RSHE.
- Training needs: staff were asked about their further training needs, with a list of training options. 239 staff gave a substantive answer.
- Training feedback: 1,453 staff who attended Tender CPD and INSET training completed a feedback.

Student data

- Students completed questionnaires before and after Tender healthy relationships workshops, reporting how much they knew about key topics and how confident they felt. Figures show the proportion who said they knew "a lot" or "a good amount", or who felt very or extremely confident.
- Open-text answers on what students liked (secondary base 1,395; primary base 1,938) and what they wanted more of (secondary base 875; primary base 1,329) were coded by theme. Answers could be coded to more than one theme.

Parent and carer data

- 236 parents and carers at participating schools completed a survey in 2025-26, including an open question on the challenges children face in relationships (183 answers, coded by theme). Comparisons are made with the previous year's survey.

Limitations

Tender's data comes from schools that chose to work with us, and may not be representative of all schools. All measures are self-reported. The comparison of pre- and post-workshop responses shows change among participants but, without a comparison group, cannot on its own establish that the change was caused by the workshop. Similarly, the link between training and staff confidence is an association: confident staff may also be more likely to seek out training.

The new RSHE guidance

In 2025, the Government published revised statutory guidance on relationships and sex education and health education (RSHE), which came into effect on 1 September 2026 ("**the New Guidance**"). This replaced the previous, and first ever, RSHE guidance, published in 2020.

An update was overdue and is welcome. The world in which children and young people learn about and develop their own relationships has changed considerably in just a few years. In short, the New Guidance asks schools to teach more, and more difficult, content: it names specific criminal offences, addresses misogyny and gendered power directly, and covers AI-generated sexual imagery for the first time. Whether these changes reach pupils depends on whether teachers are equipped to deliver them.

Key changes

Overall, the shift from the 2019 to the New Guidance is best understood as a move away from broader, high-level guidance towards more legally specific and up-to-date content. In addition to the content guidance, the update formalises three new guiding principles which were not explicit in the 2020 guidance (pupil engagement, parental transparency, and positivity), signalling an intent to make the curriculum more responsive to pupils and more visible to parents, even as the content becomes more complex to deliver.

Primary schools

As with the 2020 guidance, primary schools are expected to deliver RSHE, but much of the content for primary schools remains the same. Sex education is still not compulsory in primary schools, though there is a recommendation that it is taught in Year 5 and/or Year 6.

Legal clarity in secondary schools

The most significant changes to relationships and sex education guidance apply to secondary schools. The New Guidance is clearer in naming legal principles: stalking, strangulation and suffocation, virginity testing and hymenoplasty are all now named as standalone criminal categories and sexual, criminal and financial exploitation are explicitly linked together in a way that 2020's narrower grooming-focused framing did not attempt. Domestic abuse content is tied explicitly to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including recognition that children who witness or experience the effects of abuse are victims in their own right.

Gender, power and misogyny

The New Guidance also includes a focus on gendered power dynamics, misogyny, pornography, the role of harmful attitudes, incel and online-influencer culture, and the laws around AI-generated sexual imagery.

Misogyny becomes a named, recurring term, paired with a new delivery instruction that staff should "challenge the ideas, rather than the person expressing them", and a parallel instruction to

promote positive masculinity without stigmatising boys or using language that might normalise male violence.

The New Guidance states that most sexual violence is committed against women and girls and that it often has a gendered component, "manifesting an inequality of power between men and women". It also recognises that anyone can be affected by sexual violence, an important acknowledgement for pupils in same-sex relationships and for boys who experience abuse. It introduces new content on how pornography can normalise harmful sexual entitlement, "especially" towards women, and names incels and online influencers as a distinct source of harmful sexual ethics for the first time.

But while the New Guidance sets out what pupils should learn about misogyny, it says little about how staff should tackle it in practice.

Online and AI-generated harms

The New Guidance introduces a requirement to teach about AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes of real people (including the fact that keeping or forwarding such an image of someone under 18 is a crime even if AI-generated or apparently "consented" to), the general phenomenon and detection of deepfakes, and AI chatbots as a named risk for creating "fake intimacy" or offering harmful advice. This sits alongside a broader instruction that pupils should be able to critically assess new technologies as they emerge, framed as an ongoing skill rather than fixed content, in implicit acknowledgement that specific platforms and tools will keep changing faster than any guidance document can.

Safeguarding

On safeguarding, the 2020 framework primarily focused on keeping children safe in general terms, with some more specific guidance on mental health and suicide prevention. The New Guidance goes further, placing a heavier emphasis on the mandatory, legal duty to report safeguarding concerns, although this is somewhat undermined by the vague nature of the guidance on some of the newer legal changes.

Are schools ready?

A mandatory RSHE curriculum has been in place since 2020, so the requirement for RSHE is not entirely new to schools. The New Guidance was published in Summer 2025, to be implemented by September 2026. But this does not mean that schools and teachers are necessarily ready and able to fully, effectively and safely implement the New Guidance already.

Barriers to implementation: time, training and funding

Teaching unions have consistently raised significant barriers to effective implementation, in particular funding and training capacity. There is a clear concern about whether already-stretched teachers can adequately cover the new and expanded content in the New Guidance.

The Youth Select Committee's 2025-26 inquiry into PSHE education in secondary schools, to which Tender contributed evidence, heard similar concerns. The inquiry examined PSHE as a whole, but much of its evidence relates to RSHE, the statutory element of PSHE. NASUWT official Darren Northcott told the Committee that teachers in Scotland appeared to have greater access to training than those in England, including protected time for training during the school day. This was echoed by the Committee's own survey. Witnesses told the Committee that many teachers were unsure how to approach new topics such as deepfakes, and that schools with more funding could invest in better provision, such as workshops and external speakers.

Tender told the Committee that schools were "ill-equipped" to manage the influence of the internet and social media on young people.

A Teacher Tapp survey of secondary teachers, published by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) in May 2025, found that 55% of teachers cited a lack of confidence or expertise as a main barrier to delivering high-quality PSHE and RSHE. Among teachers who teach PSHE or RSHE, over a quarter reported not being confident in teaching children how to leave an unhealthy relationship (27%). Almost half (45%) reported not being confident in teaching children how to intervene if they were to witness a sexual assault.

This shows that many teachers are not receiving the support they need to deliver RSHE. The Department for Education's own September 2024 study of RSHE implementation found that a "sizeable minority" of teachers lacked confidence in some content areas, and that school leaders reported a lack of staff confidence (45%) and a lack of access to high-quality training (32%) as major challenges.

What school staff tell us

During delivery of our whole school approach programme, RE:SET, we sought feedback from staff on training and delivery of RSHE. We also routinely collect data on training needs and training feedback from staff who attended Tender training. These data give us an insight into staff views on RSHE.

Training makes the difference

Evidence from our own RE:SET programmes shows that teachers' confidence in teaching RSHE has not caught up with the curriculum. Only 20% of staff who teach RSHE agreed they felt confident delivering all aspects of RSHE. Training made the biggest difference to confidence: among staff who agreed they had received adequate training, 91% felt confident delivering all aspects of RSHE, compared with only 32% of those who had not. It is possible that confident teachers are also more likely to seek out training, but the size of the difference suggests that statutory content without funded training will not be well delivered. Over a quarter (26%) said they had not received adequate training or support to deliver RSHE.

Staff confidence in teaching RSHE, with prior training and without

91%

of staff who had received adequate training felt confident delivering all aspects of RSHE

32%

of staff who had not received adequate training felt confident delivering all aspects of RSHE

> ***'I don't feel trained in delivering those sessions in an interactive way with students.'***
>
> School staff member, before taking part in Tender project

More support needed to tackle misogyny

The emerging topics which the New Guidance expects teachers to cover correspond closely with the topics on which teachers are asking for training. In our survey, 42% of teachers named misogyny, toxic masculinity, the manosphere or related issues (of 239 respondents). A further 24% named control and coercion, and 17% named online harms.

> ***'How to tackle misogynistic language targeted at a teacher.'***
>
> ***'Peer on peer abuse and how to talk to young people regarding abuse, especially when it comes to the idea of it being "just banter".'***
>
> ***'I would like to know more about how to discuss misogyny in an age appropriate way.'***

Three specific requests recur which the New Guidance does not, by itself, answer: how to challenge harmful behaviour that is presented as humour; how to deliver RSHE in primary schools; and how to challenge misogyny directed at female teachers. Staff are not alone in this. In Girlguiding's 2025 survey, a third (32%) of girls aged 11 to 18 had seen a teacher or member of school staff receiving sexist or misogynistic comments or abuse. The Government's new misogyny framework must answer all three requests directly.

Staff value practical, skills-based training

Staff value CPD on RSHE topics. Of 1,453 staff who gave feedback on Tender training, 95.1% rated trainers' skills and knowledge good or very good, 92.5% rated the content good or very good, and 82.7% found the session very or extremely useful for their role. Training participants consistently ask for more time in CPD sessions to explore these topics, and for more practical tips on delivering RSHE. This is particularly true in primary schools. In their feedback, participants focus on the practical techniques they will take away from the training:

> *'The [session] explain[s] why 'throw away comments' should still be challenged too.'*
>
> *'Always ask questions to help you understand why a child had said something prior to challenging their statement.'*
>
> *'I really liked the suggestion of asking young men who idolise Andrew Tate for his money and status how the world would look if everyone had that. I'll be using that in sessions for sure.'*

These comments show that what staff value most is not only information about a topic, but the chance to practise how to have the conversation: how to open it, how to respond when a pupil says something harmful, and how to challenge the idea without shaming the pupil. In other words, staff are asking for support with the very skill the New Guidance asks for when it tells staff to challenge the ideas rather than the person.

Students' experience of RSHE

Pupil-facing evidence points to a consistent failing: young people have repeatedly reported patchy, inconsistent and insufficient RSHE. Most of this evidence relates to the 2020 guidance, and there is little indication that the new, more comprehensive and complex curriculum comes with the measures needed to close this gap. Without proper investment in teacher training, the new curriculum is likely to face the same challenges.

A Sex Education Forum poll of 1,001 young people aged 16 to 17, published in December 2025, found that 72% had learned nothing or not enough about deepfakes, and 72% nothing or not enough about the law on strangulation and suffocation. Both are new topics under the New Guidance. Satisfaction with RSHE has stagnated despite years of prior improvement. Sex Education Forum's Chief Executive Lucy Emmerson warned that this reflected a lack of teacher preparedness rather than pupil disengagement, saying progress "appears to have slowed down", and urged government investment in training so that teachers "feel confident to broach challenging new topics" before technology "hurtles along" faster than schools can keep up.

SafeLives found a similar pattern in a 2022 survey of over 1,000 secondary students and 60 RSE teachers.

Only 52% of young people felt their RSE lessons gave them a good understanding of toxic and healthy relationships, just 24% recalled being taught about coercive control, and no single topic was rated as "taught well" by a majority of students. One student told researchers: "we're being taught this stuff too late... either we learnt it from our parents or we learnt it on the internet because the school really doesn't do much to help us with these types of topics." SafeLives is currently researching how the new RSHE curriculum is being received in secondary schools, so more direct pupil-voice evidence on the 2026 changes may emerge in the near future.

Girlguiding's 2025 Girls' Attitudes Survey of 2,640 girls and young women shows that girls want schools to do more. Almost three in four (72%) girls aged 11 to 16 want more discussion about consent in schools, and 76% think there needs to be more discussion and education with boys about the impact of sexism and misogyny on girls. Only 26% of girls aged 11 to 16 agree that sexist comments are dealt with seriously at their school, while 50% disagree. One in ten girls aged 11 to 16 have missed or avoided school to avoid sexual harassment, and this is more likely for neurodivergent, LGBTQ+ and disabled girls. Inadequate RSHE, and an inconsistent response to sexism, therefore fall hardest on girls already facing other forms of inequality.

What young people say nationally

72%
of 16 to 17 year olds learned nothing or not enough about deepfake

Sex Education Forum, 2025

72%
learned nothing or not enough about the law on strangulation and suffocation

Sex Education Forum, 2025

52%
felt their RSE gave them a good understanding of toxic and healthy relationships

SafeLives, 2022

24%
recalled being taught about coercive control

SafeLives, 2022

76%
of girls aged 11 to 16 want more education with boys on sexism and misogyny

Girlguiding, 2025

26%
of girls aged 11 to 16 agree sexist comments are dealt with seriously at school

Girlguiding, 2025

What students tell us

We have drawn on surveys completed by students before and after our healthy relationships projects to understand their views on RSHE.

Demand is high

88% of secondary students rated the workshop 4 or 5 stars. 87.6% of secondary and 77.1% of primary students said they would like more workshops like this, and mean workshop ratings were 4.8 and 4.4 out of 5 respectively.

88% of secondary school students wanted more workshops about healthy relationships.

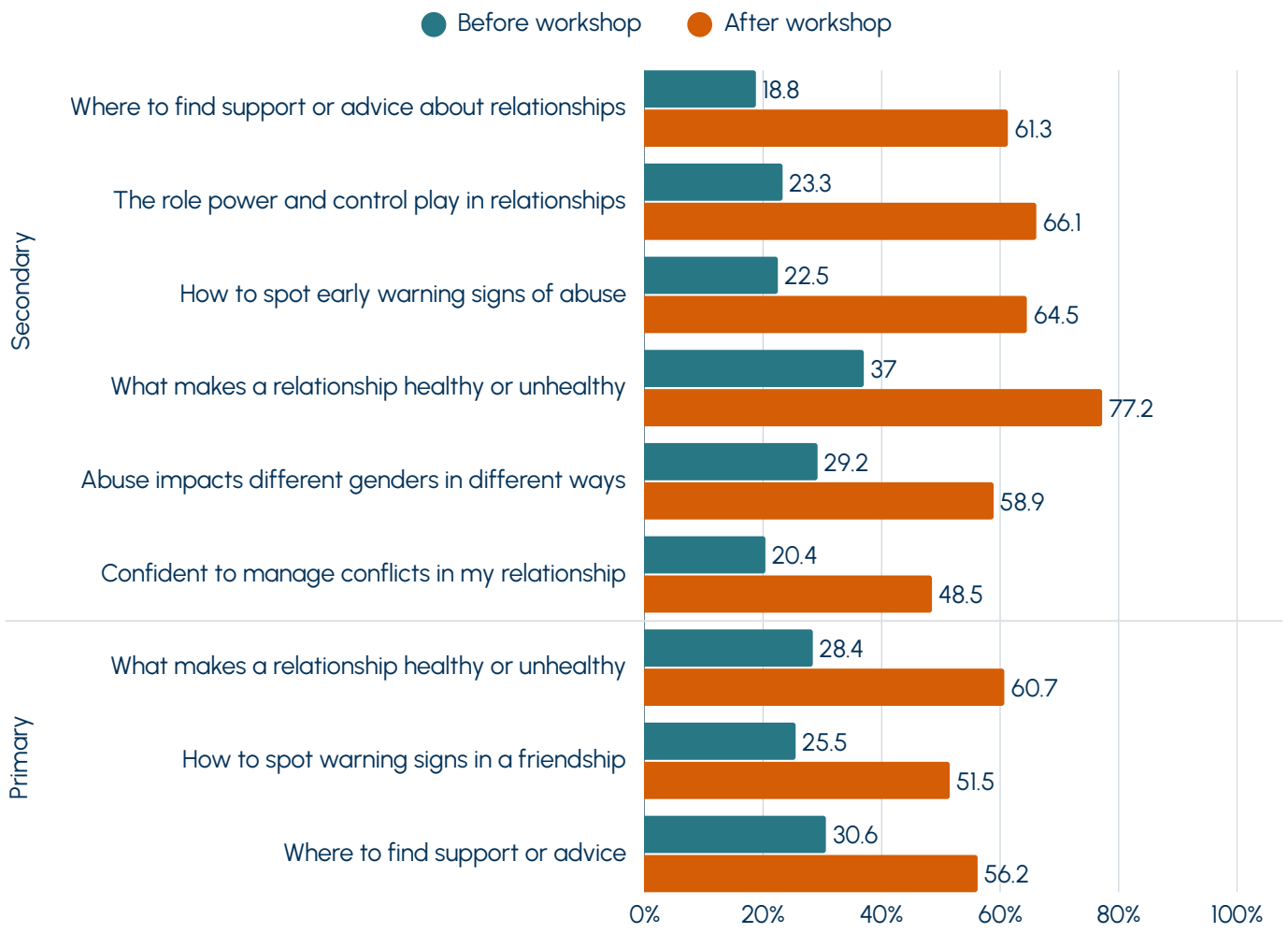
Current provision leaves gaps

Pre-project responses suggest relatively low confidence in students' knowledge and skills relating to RSHE. Before a Tender workshop, only 19% of secondary students said they knew a lot or a good amount about where to find support or advice about relationships, 23% about the role of power and control, and 22% about spotting early warning signs of abuse. Well-taught RSHE can shift this knowledge. After the workshop, those figures were 61%, 66% and 65% respectively.

Confidence in the relational skills RSHE is meant to build was similarly low. Before the workshop, 14.8% of secondary students were very or extremely confident expressing their feelings to others, and 20.4% managing conflict in their relationships.

These patterns are similar in primary schools. 28.4% knew a lot or a good amount about what makes a friendship healthy or unhealthy, 25.5% about spotting warning signs, and 18.3% were very confident expressing their feelings.

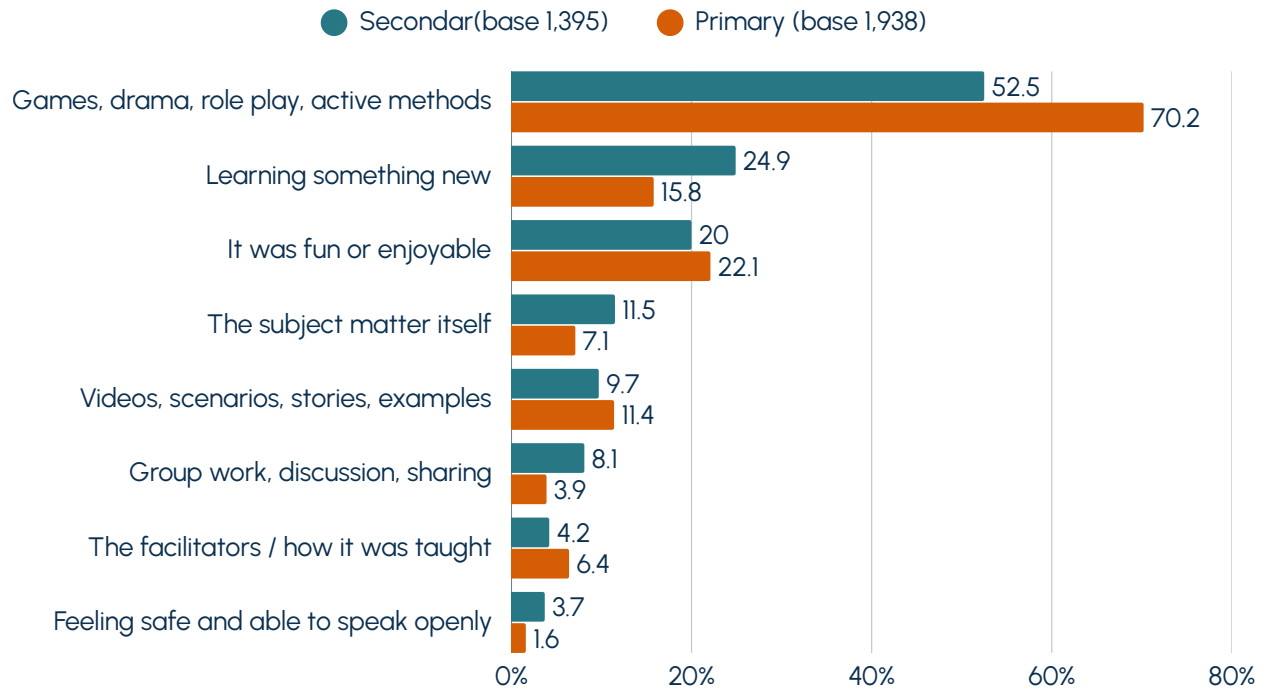
Figure 1: Students who knew a lot or a good amount (or felt confident), before and after a Tender workshop



RSHE must be engaging

Asked unprompted what they liked, 53% of secondary and 70% of primary students named games, drama, role play or other active methods. Asked what they did not like, the most common answers were sitting, listening and slides, and lessons feeling long or repetitive.

Figure 2: What students liked about Tender workshops



Students regularly name active, participatory, drama-based methods when asked what worked well, and they indicate that passive delivery (slides, sitting, listening, worksheets) is not engaging.

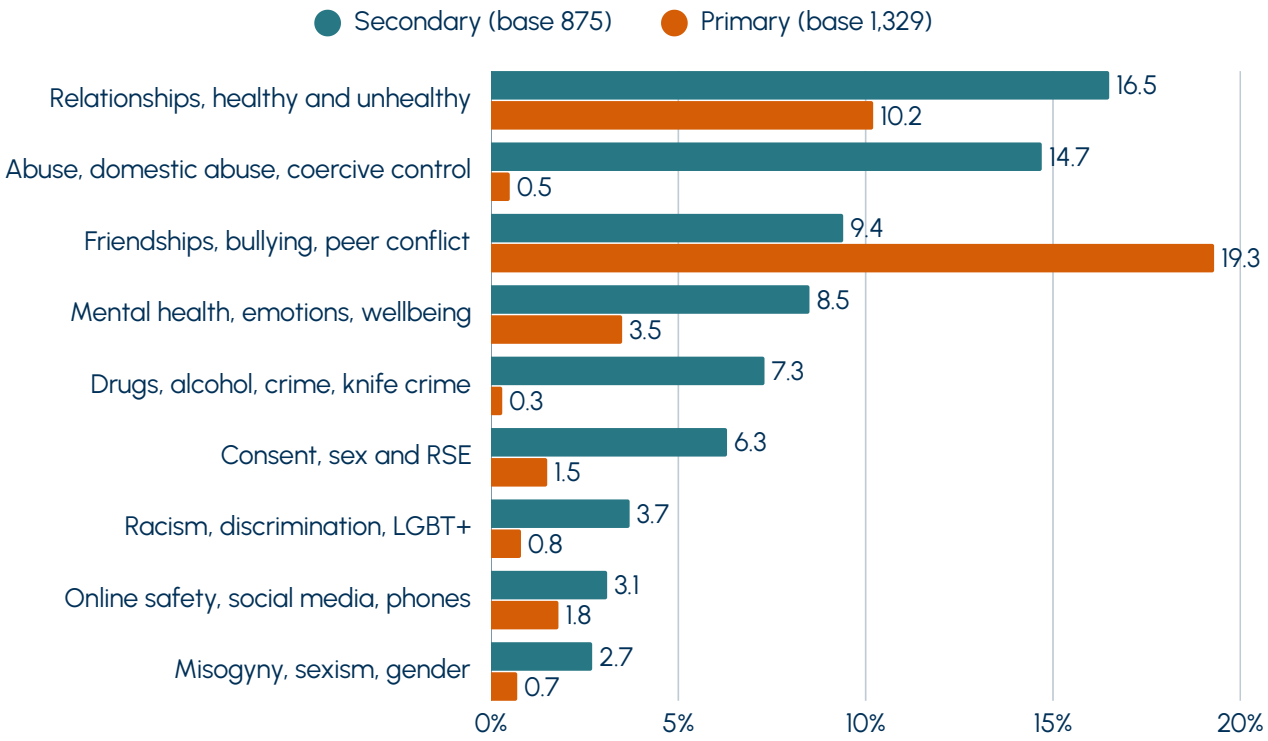
> ***'How interactive it is.'***
>
> ***'We explored things with respect and workers were very respectful and understanding.'***
>
> ***'It was a fun balance of games and education.'***

Students want more of the challenging content

Students ask for more of the challenging content, not less: abuse and coercive control is the second most requested topic among secondary students. They rarely name misogyny or online harms as topics they want, even though teachers name misogyny more than anything else and parents name social media more than anything else.

These topics should therefore be taught through the framings students do reach for, such as relationships, friendships and fairness, rather than as standalone topics. The new misogyny framework should reflect this.

Figure 3: Topics students want more of



Starting early: the case for more support for primary schools

The case for prioritising support for, and scrutiny of, RSHE in primary schools is strong, yet primary schools receive the least attention in the New Guidance and in current government funding.

What the guidance says about primary schools

The New Guidance leaves primary content largely unchanged. RSHE remains compulsory, but sex education is only recommended in Year 5 and/or Year 6. The most significant new content on misogyny, gendered power, pornography and online harms is aimed at secondary schools. Meanwhile, the two VAWG Prevention Programme pilots that began in September 2026 work with secondary-age pupils, and the Government's September 2026 misogyny plan does not yet say how it will reach primary schools.

Why it is essential to start early

Our data shows that primary school children, like their secondary peers, are starting from a low base. Before a Tender workshop, fewer than a third of primary students knew a lot or a good amount about what makes a friendship healthy or unhealthy (28.4%) or how to spot warning signs in a friendship (25.5%), and fewer than one in five (18.3%) were very confident expressing their feelings.

Primary school staff are already encountering the attitudes the New Guidance asks secondary schools to address. Staff ask specifically how to challenge misogyny and harmful "banter" in primary settings, and in age-appropriate ways. The single most repeated criticism of the CPD

content staff receive is that examples are pitched at secondary level; staff working with younger children repeatedly ask for age-appropriate language and examples about early warning signs and healthy relationships. Girlguiding's 2025 survey found that a third (32%) of girls aged 7 to 10 had experienced a comment from boys at school that made them uncomfortable. The misogyny framework must therefore include specific, age-appropriate support for primary schools.

> **A third (32%) of girls aged 7 to 10 had experienced a comment from boys at school that made them uncomfortable.**
>
> *Girlguiding Girls' Attitudes Survey 2025*

The role of specialist external providers

Specialist external providers can bridge the gap between what the New Guidance expects and what staff currently feel equipped to deliver. They bring specialist knowledge, skilled and trauma-informed facilitation, and practical CPD, and they relieve pressure on staff who are already stretched. The Government itself relies on external providers: its healthy relationships pilots will be delivered by them.

What the wider evidence says

A YEF review of evidence found that school-based relationship violence prevention activities, such as lessons, staff training and school-wide awareness campaigns, can reduce dating and relationship violence by an average of 17%.

With regard to who should deliver this work, the evidence YEF draws on found that outside facilitators had "a more consistent knowledge level" than school-based staff, while school-based facilitators helped to embed the work in the curriculum. It also found that "having support from an outside violence prevention organisation" aided implementation. YEF has called for funding so that schools can "bring in specialist external providers and train other staff members". The evidence therefore supports a combined model, in which specialist providers work alongside, and build the confidence of, school staff.

Access to this support is currently unequal. Witnesses told the Youth Select Committee that schools with more funding can invest in better provision, such as workshops and external speakers, while schools in disadvantaged areas cannot. Without public funding, the children who most need high-quality RSHE are the least likely to receive it.

What our own evidence says

Our programme data shows what specialist delivery can achieve. After a Tender workshop, the proportion of secondary students who knew a lot or a good amount about where to find support, the role of power and control, and early warning signs of abuse rose by over 40 percentage points (Figure 1). Students named facilitators and feeling safe to speak openly among the things they valued (Figure 2).

An independent evaluation of the Inclusive and Nurturing Schools programme in London, which included our RE:SET whole-school programme, found that school staff valued having a named, expert contact, and that local authority staff described the knowledge and expertise schools encountered as "really strong". Soon after our Healthy Relationships workshops, there was an indication that some pupils felt a greater sense of safety in school and a stronger sense of trust in their relationships with teachers, which was sustained four months after delivery.

Specialist delivery also builds staff capacity. Following teacher training sessions, 93% of teachers said they understood the nature and prevalence of abuse, 84% understood its impact on young people, and 80% felt motivated to improve their setting's environment.

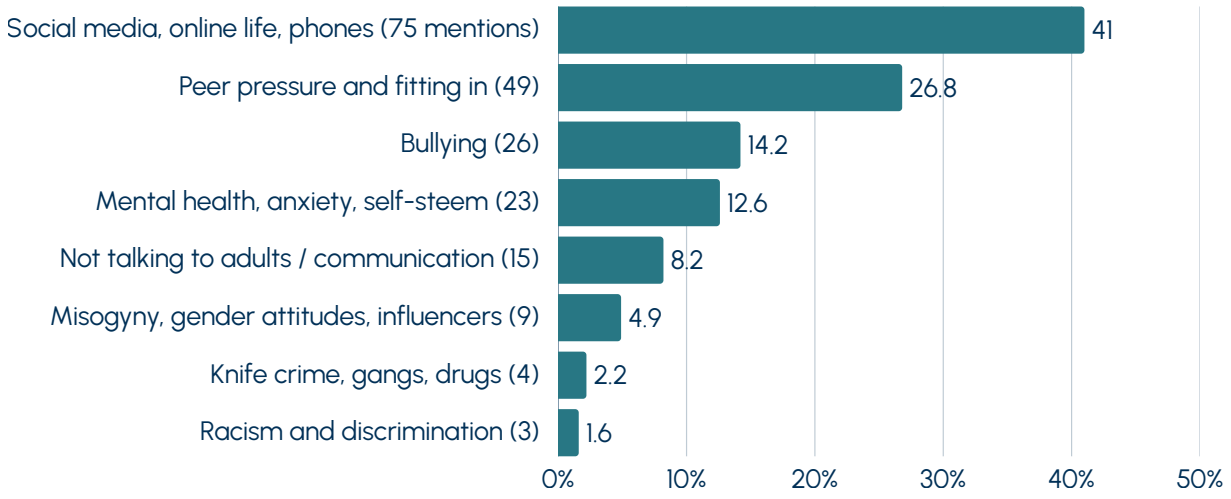
Parents and carers

> **92% of parents and carers agree it is important for children to learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships**

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly behind RSHE. In 2025-26, 92% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for children to learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships, with 78% strongly agreeing.

More is needed to support schools to meet the New Guidance's principle of parental transparency. Only 62% of parents and carers agreed that the school tells them how RSHE is taught, and just 50% agreed that the school gives parents space to feed back on the RSHE curriculum. Parents want to be more involved: 85% wanted an information session on healthy friendships and relationships, 78% on managing strong emotions and 73% on keeping their child safe online. The parent support promised in the Government's misogyny plan should build on this demand.

Figure 4: What parents and carers see as the challenges facing children in relationships



Recommendations

For effective implementation of the New Guidance, schools need funding and support now.

1 **Fund evidence-based, practical RSHE training for teachers in every school.** Statutory content without funded, practice-based training will not land. 91% of RSHE teachers who felt adequately trained were confident to deliver all aspects of the curriculum, against 32% of those who did not. A quarter of RSHE teachers still say they have not had adequate training.

2 **Prioritise primary schools.** Primary schools are underserved, and are not the focus of the New Guidance, the announced pilots or the misogyny framework. Staff working with younger children repeatedly ask for age-appropriate language and examples about early warning signs and healthy relationships, and need support to address these issues when they arise, not just when the New Guidance says they should be addressed.

3 **Fund specialist external providers to support schools with RSHE delivery.** The evidence supports specialist providers working alongside school staff. Well-delivered sessions produce large gains: after a Tender workshop, secondary students' knowledge of where to find support, the role of power and control, and early warning signs of abuse rose by over 40 percentage points. Public funding is needed so that access does not depend on a school's budget.

4 **Give the RSHE expert advisory group a clear remit to drive implementation.** The new group should go beyond producing resources. It should: include the specialist VAWG and prevention sector, including "by and for" organisations, alongside youth voice; cover primary as well as secondary schools; set out what practice-based training every school needs and what it will cost; advise on how Ofsted should assess RSHE; monitor implementation of the New Guidance, including staff training and pupils' experience; and publish its work programme and timetable.

5 **Make the misogyny framework practical, whole-school, intersectional and funded.** Misogyny is where school staff say they most need help: 42% of staff named misogyny or related issues as a training need. The framework should equip staff to tackle "banter", the manosphere and incel content, and misogyny directed at female teachers; include age-appropriate approaches for primary schools; address how misogyny intersects with other inequalities; and be backed by funded training, not resources alone.

6 **Ensure a consistent Ofsted approach to RSHE.** Ofsted should assess RSHE consistently and give it the weight it deserves, so that implementation of the New Guidance does not depend on individual school choice.

7 **Help schools deliver on parental transparency.** Parents overwhelmingly support RSHE, but only half feel they have space to feed back on the curriculum. Schools need support to inform and involve parents and carers, who are asking for sessions on healthy relationships, emotions and online safety.

8 **Listen to students: they are not the obstacle.** 88% of secondary students want more of this teaching, and abuse and coercive control is among the topics they most often ask for more of. RSHE should be designed around what students say works: active methods, and teaching difficult topics such as misogyny and online harms through the framings of relationships, friendships and fairness.

APPENDIX A

The Government's plan to tackle misogyny in schools

In addition to Tender's consideration of schools' readiness for the new RSHE curriculum, we outline below our reflections on the Government's plan to tackle misogyny in schools through a taskforce, and how the taskforce can also enable our recommendations on the implementation of the RSHE guidance.

The proposals

On 26 September 2026, the Department for Education announced a new plan for schools to tackle misogyny. It includes:

- a practical framework to support schools to tackle misogyny, with practical guides, teacher training and parent support, taking a whole-school approach from classroom teaching and enrichment to pastoral support and "interactions beyond the school gates";
- a new RSHE expert advisory group, with £150,000 of funding, bringing together expert organisations and practitioners to develop new resources to help teachers deliver sensitive and complex topics confidently;
- two pilot programmes under the £16 million VAWG Prevention Programme, which began in September 2026: one working with secondary pupils on healthy relationships, and one working with boys to challenge harmful attitudes and negative online influences; and
- Youth Endowment Fund programmes with children aged 12 to 16, and strengthened media literacy teaching through future curriculum reforms.

The announcement cited new data showing that half (50%) of girls heard misogynistic comments from other pupils during a week at school in May 2026, and that nearly a third (30%) of Year 10 and 11 pupils had recently heard comments that made them worry about the safety of girls.

We welcome this plan, and in particular its recognition that tackling misogyny requires a whole-school approach rather than lessons alone. But the announcement does not yet say what the framework will contain, when it will be published, how teacher training will be funded, or how it will reach primary schools. The pilots and the YEF programmes focus on secondary-age pupils, and £150,000 for the expert advisory group is a modest sum against the scale of the task. The evidence in this report points to what the framework and the advisory group need to deliver.

Our recommendations for the misogyny plan

Based on direct experience from school staff, students and parents during our projects, the framework should:

- **Build practical skills, not only knowledge.** Staff need training that lets them rehearse how to challenge misogynistic ideas without shaming the pupil, including harm presented as "banter" or humour.
- **Start in primary schools.** It should include age-appropriate language and approaches for primary and Early Years settings, where staff are already encountering these attitudes.
- **Support staff who are targets of misogyny.** It should address misogyny directed at teachers, and set out how schools will support them.
- **Take a whole-school, consistent approach.** It should cover leadership, behaviour and safeguarding policies, recording and responding to incidents, and a consistent response across staff, so that pupils see sexist comments taken seriously. We have co-developed principles for an effective whole school approach with the sector.
- **Be intersectional.** It should address how misogyny intersects with racism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism, since girls who are LGBTQ+, disabled or neurodivergent report feeling less safe at school
- **Engage boys positively.** In line with the New Guidance, it should work with boys as part of the solution, without stigmatising them. We endorse the principles for working with men and boys developed by End Violence Against Women Coalition and Beyond Equality.
- **Involve parents and carers,** building on the support the announcement promises.
- **Recognise the role of specialist external providers,** and provide funding for training and delivery, not just resources.

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