EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Let's talk about it:

Review of relationships and sexuality education
Technical report

December 2024

TE IHUWAKA | Education Evaluation Centre

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We thank the many experts and practitioners who have shared their understanding and experiences of relationships and sexuality education with us. We particularly acknowledge the diverse membership of our Expert Advisory Group who shared their knowledge and wisdom to help guide our evaluation and make sense of the findings.

About this report:

This technical report is a reproduction of the evaluation report with additional details on the evaluation design and the data sources and methodology. It also includes the sample size (n) for percentages reported. This provides greater insight into how we reached our findings and developed our areas for action.

Chapter 1: Evaluation design

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is required to be taught in all state and state-integrated schools. RSE is important to children and young people's physical and mental health, and their safety. However, there are differing views on what, when, and how much should be taught in schools, with a particular focus on sensitive RSE topics.

This technical report describes what we did to understand how well RSE is currently taught and how well it meets the needs of students, expectations of parents, and capabilities of schools.

This chapter discusses how we designed the evaluation, including:

1. what we looked at
2. how we decided what we would do
3. the overall approach
4. caveats
5. terminology
6. report structure.

1. What we looked at

a) Purpose of the evaluation

The Minister of Education commissioned ERO to undertake a review of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) to look at how RSE is working and to identify options for improving RSE.

b) Evaluation questions

This evaluation identifies options for improving relationships and sexuality education, how the current settings impact how RSE is currently taught, and how well it meets the needs of students, expectations of parents and whānau, and capability of schools.

Our research answers 7 key questions:

1. What is relationships and sexuality education and what is required of schools?
2. Why is RSE important and is teaching it in schools supported?
3. What are students taught in RSE?
4. Does RSE meet students' needs?
5. Does RSE meet the expectations of parents and whānau?
6. Is teaching RSE manageable for schools?
7. What improvements could be made?

2. Who we worked with

The Education Review Office (ERO) worked with the Ministry of Education to produce this report. Ministry of Education staff were on the Steering Group.

- → The **Education Review Office** is responsible for reviewing and reporting on the performance of early learning services, kura, and schools. As part of this role, ERO looks at how the education system supports young people's outcomes.
- → The **Ministry of Education** is responsible for managing policy and performance for the education system, and delivering services and support locally, regionally, and nationally. It does this to 'shape an education system that delivers excellent and equitable outcomes.'

We also worked closely with an Expert Advisory Group with a range of proficiencies, including academics, school leaders, and teachers.

2. How we decided what we would do

We engaged an Expert Advisory Group to provide specialist expertise and evidence-based perspectives to inform, critique, and support this evaluation. By drawing on the expertise of this group and other key stakeholders and methodology experts in ERO, we were able to determine which areas to focus our evaluation on.

This evaluation used a mixed method approach to ensure that our data is robust and that we are hearing the experiences of students, teachers, school leaders, and parents and whānau.

3. The overall approach

a) Mixed-methods

ERO used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative data (surveys), qualitative data (surveys, focus groups, and interviews), and a wide range of national and international evidence, triangulating the evidence across these different data sources. We used the triangulation process to test and refine our findings statements, allowing the weight of this collective data to form the conclusions. The rigour of the data and validity of these findings were further tested through iterative sense-making sessions with key stakeholders.

b) Data that informed the evaluation

The table below describes the data we used to answer the evaluation questions.

Key evaluation question	Data we used to answer this question
What is relationships and sexuality education and what is required of schools?	Curriculum and related documents from the Ministry of Education
	International and national literature
Why is RSE important and is teaching it in schools supported?	Surveys of school leaders, teachers, students, recent school leavers, and parents and whānau.
	Interviews and focus groups with school leaders, school boards, teachers, students, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Site-visits
	International and national literature

	New Zealand government data and statistics, e.g. from Ministry of Justice and StatsNZ
What are students taught in RSE?	Surveys of teachers, students, recent school leavers, and parents and whānau
	Interviews and focus groups with school leaders, teachers, students, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Site-visits
Does RSE meet students' needs?	Surveys of students, recent school leavers, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Interviews and focus groups with students, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Site-visits
	Surveys and studies around student experiences in school and the risks faced by young people, e.g. PISA, Youth19, NZ Youth and Porn
Does RSE meet the expectations of parents and whānau?	Surveys of parents and whānau
	Interviews and focus groups with parents and whānau
	Site-visits
Is teaching RSE manageable for schools?	Surveys of school leaders, teachers, and school boards
	Interviews and focus groups with school leaders, teachers, students, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Site-visits
	National literature about the experiences of schools, e.g. Dixon, R. et al. (2022). *New Zealand secondary school teachers' perspectives on teaching Relationships and sexuality education.* University of Canterbury
What improvements could be made?	Surveys of school leaders, school boards, teachers, students, recent school leavers, and parents and whānau
	Interviews and focus groups with school leaders, school boards, teachers, students, parents and whānau, and expert stakeholders
	Site-visits

c) Ethics

Surveys

Schools that were selected for participation in surveys were contacted via email approximately four weeks prior to being sent the survey links. This information included a brief information statement that schools could share with parents, including a note that for parents to contact the school if they did not want their child to be invited to participate in the survey.

Schools and parents and whānau that requested a copy of the survey questions were sent PDF versions of the surveys, prior to agreeing to participate. Some members of the public also requested information about the project, including survey questions. Information about the project and PDF versions of the surveys were provided when requested.

All participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation before they agreed to participate in the surveys. Participants were informed that:

- participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time
- permission to use their information could be withdrawn at any time
- any information provided would be anonymous.

In addition, the student survey consent information included the following:

- If this survey raises any issues for you, please talk to your parents, your teacher, another trusted adult or you can contact Youthline on 0800 376 633 or text 234.

The full consent information attached to the student surveys can be found in Appendix 1.

Interviews

All participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation before they agreed to participate in the interviews. Written parental consent was obtained before interviewing students in years 5-11 (under 16 years old). These student participants also provided written assent prior to the interview.

All participants were informed that:

- participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time
- their words may be included in reporting, but no identifying details would be shared
- permission to use their information could be withdrawn at any time
- interviews were not an evaluation of their school, and their school would not be identified in the resulting national report
- their information was confidential and would be kept securely subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982, Privacy Act 1993, and the Public Records Act 2005 on the release and retention of information.
- if information was shared that led to the researchers being concerned about issues related to child safety, or that anyone may be at risk of harm, the researchers may need to report this to the relevant parties at ERO.

The fieldwork team followed ERO's processes in any case of disclosure of suspected harm.

Interviewees consented to take part in an interview by submitting a written consent form to ERO, either prior to, or at the time the interview was conducted. As noted earlier, for students in years 5-11, written parental consent was obtained first. Their consent was also sought to record their interviews (audio only). If one participant in a focus group did not consent to recording, then recording did not take place. Participants

were given opportunities to query the evaluation team if they needed further information about the consent process, or the evaluation more generally.

Data collected from interviews and surveys data will be stored digitally for a period of six months after the full completion of the evaluation. During this time, all data will be password-protected and have limited accessibility.

d) Quality assurance

The data in this report was subjected to a rigorous internal review process for both quantitative and qualitative data. This was carried out at multiple stages across the evaluation process to ensure all methods were systematic and robust.

We used a survey company to survey 1,000 parents and whānau, in addition to the over 3,000 parent and whānau responses we had from surveys sent to our selected schools. We did this to ensure a representative sample of all parents and whānau, and so we could check for bias in the wider sample.

Where surveys were publicly shared (for example on websites and social media) we were able to see which unique link was being shared and remove responses from that link from our sample. We also found some surveys returned by the same IP address multiple times. These were removed from the sample.

Each school was provided with a unique link for the parent and whānau survey and the student survey. This allowed comparison between the unique link for each school and the school indicated in participant responses, in case that link was shared beyond the school community. We also monitored the number of responses returned from each unique link, to identify if there were any schools receiving unexpectedly large numbers of responses (compared to their student roll size).

Analysis of open-ended responses for the parent and whānau survey identified a small number of parents and whānau who chose to home-school their children. These were removed from the sample.

The parent and whānau survey was limited to one response per device. It was not possible to apply this limitation to the student survey in case students needed to share devices to complete the survey.

4. The caveats for this report

Surveys

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, not all year levels of students were asked about all topics, and the wording of some topics was changed for younger children. For the survey questions we asked of different year groups, and of parents and whānau, teachers, and leaders of different year groups, see Appendices 1-6.

See Appendix 7 for tables summarising which survey questions were related to each topic area, by student year group.

See Chapter 10 for discussion of limitations of this evaluation.

5. Terminology

Relationship and sexuality education guide: a guide for teachers, leaders, and boards of trustees that informs principals, boards and teachers on the requirements under the Education and Training Act 2020. It also assists schools to consult with their community on the ways in which health education should be implemented.

New Zealand Curriculum (NZC): the national framework that sets the direction for teaching and learning in New Zealand schools for students from Year 1 to Year 13 (ages 5-18). It outlines the principles, values, and key competencies to be included in schools' teaching and learning programmes. The New Zealand Curriculum outlines achievement objectives in different learning areas (English, the arts, health and physical education, learning language, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology). Schools design a localised school curriculum using these achievement objectives.

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa: the parallel curriculum document for Māori-medium schools (and was not included in this evaluation).

Abbreviations

- → **ERO:** Education Review Office
- → **The Ministry/MoE:** Ministry of Education
- → **RSE:** Relationships and sexuality education
- → **n:** number of responses

6. Report Structure

This report is divided into 10 chapters.

This chapter describes the **evaluation design.**

Chapter 2 describes the **analytical tools** which includes the sources of data collected and used in this report and how the data were analysed.

Chapter 3 set out the **context** of what RSE is and how it works

Chapter 4 describes whether there is **support for RSE being taught**

Chapter 5 describes **what students are being taught in RSE**

Chapter 6 describes whether RSE is **meeting students' needs**

Chapter 7 looks at whether it is **meeting the expectations of parents and whānau**

Chapter 8 describes whether RSE is **manageable for schools**

Chapter 9 shares our **key findings** and **areas for action.**

Chapter 10 discusses the **limitations of this report** including the scope, data collection and analysis.

Conclusion

ERO was commissioned to undertake a review of relationships and sexuality education to identify options for improving RSE.

We have taken a robust, mixed-methods approach, drawing on a range of data including surveys, interviews and focus groups, site visits, and national and international literature.

The next section describes the tools and analysis methods we used.

Chapter 2: Analytical tools – Data and methodology

This evaluation draws on a variety of data collected using mixed methods to answer the research questions. Data used included completed field visits to schools, focus groups and surveys with students, teachers, school leaders, board chairs, recent school leavers, parents and whānau, and experts along with a review of national and international literature.

This chapter sets out information about the tools used to collect this data, and how we brought together the multiple sources of information to understand what is happening with RSE in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter describes our data collection methods, and the analytical techniques used in answering our evaluation questions presented in the previous chapter.

This chapter sets out:

1. overview of the approach
2. data collection methods
3. analysis methods.

1. Overview of the approach

We used a mixed-method approach to collect the data used to determine our findings. To make sense of our findings and recommendations, we drew on the knowledge of subject matter experts.

a) Mixed methods approach to data collection

ERO used a mixed-methods approach, drawing on a wide range of national and international literature, site visits, surveys and interviews. This report draws on the voices of students, school leaders, teachers, board chairs, recent school leavers, parents and whānau, and experts to understand their experiences of relationships and sexuality education.

Our mixed-methods approach integrates quantitative data (surveys) and qualitative data (surveys, focus groups, and interviews) - triangulating the evidence across these different data sources. We used the triangulation process to test and refine our findings statements, allowing the weight of this collective data to form the conclusions. The rigour of the data and validity of these findings were further tested through iterative sense-making sessions with key stakeholders.

To ensure **breadth** in providing judgement on the key evaluation questions we used:

Surveys of:	Students in years 5-13	6,470
	Teachers	759
	School leaders	700

	Board chairs	344
	Recent school leavers	506
	Parents and whānau	3,809

To ensure **depth** in understanding of what works and what needs to improve we used:

Interviews and focus groups with:	Students	156
	Teachers	55
	School leaders	42
	Board members	19
	Parents and whānau	38
Site-visits at:	Schools	20

To help **focus** our interpretation of data, and provide **background information**, we interviewed and received submissions from 26 groups with an interest in RSE.

b) Sense-making through expert group discussions

Following analysis of the surveys and interviews, we conducted sense-making discussions to test interpretation of the results, findings, and areas for action with:

- → ERO specialists in reviewing school practice
- → the project's Expert Advisory Group, made up of school leaders, teachers, experts in relationship and sexuality education
- → the project's Steering Group, made up of ERO and Ministry of Education experts.

We then tested and refined the findings and lessons with the following groups to ensure they were useful and practical.

- → The project Expert Advisory Group
- → The project Steering Group

Additional stakeholders

For this study, in addition to speaking with students, parents and whānau, teachers, leaders, and school boards, we invited a wide range of stakeholders to speak with us. We heard from parent groups, external providers of RSE, agencies related to youth mental health, sexual health, and health more broadly, professional teacher associations, cultural and faith-based groups, non-government organisations (NGOs), and advocacy groups.

2. Data sources

We used data from existing and new data sources including:

a) surveys
b) interviews and focus groups
c) national and international literature
d) wider evidence from other Aotearoa New Zealand-based studies.

a) Surveys

For the evaluation of relationships and sexuality education, we administered surveys of:

→ students
→ teachers
→ school leaders
→ board chairs
→ recent school leavers
→ parents and whānau.

Survey links for students, teachers, school leaders, board chairs, and parents and whānau, were sent via email to schools to distribute.

Surveys were in the field from July to August 2024. All surveys were carried out using SurveyMonkey. The parent and whānau survey (with minor adaptions) was also distributed through Dynata.

Dynata was used to reach recent school leavers as ERO is unable to contact this population through schools. Additionally, Dynata was used in addition to school emails for the parent and whānau survey to ensure representativeness and size of the sample.

Our survey response rates, set out in the table above, are larger than normal – a very high response rate for students and parents and whānau. Full surveys can be found in the appendices (Appendices 1-6). We received responses from a range of different schools including, urban, rural, high Māori roll, high Pacific roll, co-educational, and girls' schools. We received a smaller number of responses from boys' schools.

Table 1: *Sample size*

Surveys	Number of responses[a]	Time period
Student	6,470	August 2024
Teacher	759	July – August 2024
School leaders	700	July – August 2024
Board chair	344	August 2024
Recent school leaver	506	August 2024
Parents and whānau	3,809	August 2024

[a] Number of usable, complete responses received and used in our analysis.

Student surveys

Students in Year 5 to Year 13 were invited to participate in the survey.

Links were sent to a sample of state and state-integrated, English-medium schools. Schools were asked to send the survey to their students.

Student responses were collected to be representative of different ethnicities, genders, and regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Teacher survey

ERO conducted the teacher and school leader surveys using Survey Monkey. Participants were invited on the following criteria:

- → teachers in state or state-integrated, English medium schools
- → involved in their schools RSE programme, through teaching.

ERO sent information and survey links to schools via email. Further boosting occurred through peak bodies sharing survey links with relevant teachers.

School leader survey

ERO conducted the school leader survey using Survey Monkey. Participants were invited on the following criteria:

- → school leaders in state or state-integrated, English medium schools
- → involved in their schools RSE programme, through teaching, organising, or consulting.

ERO sent information and survey links to schools via email. Further boosting occurred through peak bodies sharing survey links with relevant school leaders.

Board chair survey

ERO conducted the School Board Presiding Member (Board Chair) survey using Survey Monkey. Participants were invited on the following criteria:

- → current Presiding Member (Board Chair) in state or state-integrated, English medium schools.

ERO sent information and survey links to Board Chairs via their schools, and then boosted this further through the relevant peak bodies.

Recent school leaver survey

ERO conducted the recent school leaver survey using Dynata. Participants were invited on the following criteria:

- → Having left a state or state-integrated school in the last 4 years (between 2020 and 2024).

Dynata recruited these students from their panel.

Parent and whānau survey

ERO conducted the parent and whānau survey in two different ways. Parent and whānau survey links were distributed via schools, and we also contracted Dynata to recruit parents and whānau from their panel. Participants were invited on the following criteria:

- If they have children who are enrolled in a state or state-integrated school.

b) Site visits, interviews, and focus groups

For this phase of the evaluation, interviews and focus groups with school leaders, teachers, experts, students and parents and whānau, and employers were conducted from between late July and mid-August 2024, which is early in school Term 3.

Site visits

We visited 20 schools across the country. Schools were selected as part of a purposive sample. The research team then approached schools to invite them to participate. We selected schools to cover a range of school characteristics, including:

- co-educational, boys', and girls' schools
- rural and urban schools
- primary, intermediate, secondary, and area schools
- state and state-integrated (including faith0based) schools
- schools with high Māori roll
- schools with high Pacific roll
- schools across the country.

We made clear in all communication that:

- participation was voluntary
- consent is sought and anonymity is assured
- interviews and focus groups with students were undertaken with their agreement and parental consent (if under 16 years)
- interviews/focus groups could happen either online, over the phone, or in person.

c) National and international evidence

We drew on national evidence to understand more about how RSE is taught, what is and isn't working, and why. Sources of information include the New Zealand Curriculum, RSE Guidelines, Ministry of Education resources, and national literature.

We drew on international evidence to understand how aspects of RSE teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand align with key international jurisdictions.

Key sources of information included curriculum and policy documents from the departments of education for New South Wales (Australia), Victoria (Australia), Ontario (Canada), and England (United Kingdom).

3. Analysis methods

This section sets out how we analysed the data from:

- surveys
- interviews and focus groups
- international literature.

a) Survey analysis

The survey questions were designed to understand the evaluation questions from the views of Year 5 – 13 students, year 0 - 13 teachers, school leaders, board chairs, recent school leavers, and parents and whānau.

To answer the questions, we used:

- → descriptive statistics to report on the distribution of survey responses
- → inferential statistics to test for group differences and relationships between variables
- → thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses.

Weighting

The student survey respondents were disproportionately girls, particularly at years 9-13. To account for this, we used response weighting using an interlocked gender-age variable, that brought the split of boys and girls to an even amount for each grouping of year levels (Years 5-6, Years 7-8, Years 9-10, and Years 11-13).

Descriptive statistics

We generated descriptive statistics to understand the views of students, teachers, school leaders, board chairs, recent school leavers, and parents and whānau. Throughout the report, we report the descriptive analysis as follows:

- → For questions with a four-point agreement-disagreement scale, we report on the combined proportion of disagree and strongly disagree with the combined proportion of agree and strongly agree. This same method was used for easy and very easy, and challenging and very challenging.
- → For questions with a three-point response scale, we report the whole scale.
- → In some surveys we have a "don't know" option, which is reported where applicable.
- → Missing data across all survey were not included in the analysis.

Inferential statistics

To examine group differences between pairs of variables, we compared school-level (equity index group, urban-rural, school size) and person-level (e.g., gender, ethnicity, experience) characteristics using non-parametric tests relevant to the question and data.

- → K-wallis tests were used to compare group differences for ordered variables (i.e., agree-disagree). For example, k-wallis was used to test if inexperienced principals were more likely to find consultation with the community challenging.
  - Outcome variable/independent variable: How easy is it to consult the community on relationships and sexuality education?
  - Groups tested: School leaders with less than two years of experience / school leaders with two or more years of experience.
- → Dunn's test was used as a post-hoc test to identify where differences between more than two groups lie. For example, to test if there are differences between how challenging school leaders find delivering RSE across school size.
- → Chi-square tests were used to test for associations between categorical variables (e.g., yes or no question by ethnicity). For example, chi-square was used to test if there was an association between gender and if students think RSE should be taught in schools.

For all the above tests, we only report on those that were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Regressions

To test relationships and identify key drivers of outcomes for the different participant groups, we used a binary, logistic regression. The models comprising the dependent/outcome and predictor/independent variables are described below.

For all tests, results were treated as significant if the p-value was equal to or less than 0.05, unless otherwise specified. All regression results presented in the report are unweighted.

Regression 1, outcome variable: Teachers who find teaching RSE stressful

We ran regression models looking at reasons teachers find teaching RSE stressful.

Regression 1 is set out below.

Sample

A logistic regression was run using survey data of 625 teachers who had answered the question about whether they find teaching RSE stressful.

The outcome variable of interest was teachers who reported they find teaching RSE stressful or very stressful. 213 reported teaching RSE was stressful or very stressful, and 453 reported teaching RSE was not stressful or not stressful. The regression was run with 625 observations.

Variables:

Predictor variables included in the model were:

- → Demographics: ethnicity, experience, gender, age
- → Survey questions were:
  - What year level do you teach relationships and sexuality education to? *If multiple, please choose one option to base this survey on.*
  - How supported by your leaders are you in teaching relationships and sexuality education?
  - Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ curriculum?

The regression output can be found in Appendix 7.

Regression 2, outcome variable: Parents who are happy with RSE as it is taught now.

The logistic regression was run using data of 3480 parents and whānau who had answered the question about whether RSE should be taught at school.

The outcome variable of interest was parents and whānau who are happy with RSE as it is taught now. 1865 parents and whānau are happy with RSE as it is taught now, and 1685 who are not happy with RSE as it is now, or don't think RSE should be taught at school. The regression was run with 3480 observations.

Variables

Predictor variables included in the model were:

- → Parent demographics: ethnicity, age, gender, rurality, religion
- → Child demographics: year at school (age), gender, school authority (state/state-integrated), disability, part of rainbow communities,
- → School characteristics: Gender of students, Equity Index, primary/secondary, North Island/South Island/Auckland, school size
- → Survey questions were:

- How much do you know about what your child is learning about in relationships and sexuality education?
- How long has your child been at this school?

The output table can be found in Appendix 7.

Regression 3, outcome variable: Parents who are happy with all of what their child is learning in RSE.

The logistic regression was run using data of 2475 parents and whānau who had answered the question about whether they are happy with what their child is being taught in RSE.

The outcome variable of interest was parents and whānau who are happy with all of what their child is being taught in RSE. 1225 parents and whānau are happy with all of what their child is being taught, and 1310 who are happy with only some or none of what is being taught. The regression was run with 2475 observations.

Variables

Predictor variables included in the model were:

- → Parent demographics: ethnicity, age, gender, rurality, religion
- → Child demographics: year at school (age), gender, school authority (state/state-integrated), disability, part of rainbow communities,
- → School characteristics: Gender of students, Equity Index, primary/secondary, region, school size
- → Survey questions were:
    - How much do you know about what your child is learning about in relationships and sexuality education?
    - How long has your child been at this school?

The output table can be found in Appendix 7.

Thematic analyses

We used open-ended questions in our surveys with the aim of collecting more detailed data on some issues and to provide opportunities for participants to tell us things we might not know to ask about. The open-ended questions used in our surveys can be found in Appendices 1-6.

The open-ended responses were downloaded with key participant characteristics and thematically analysed. This involved grouping responses according to the types of responses provided, and looking for patterns across participant characteristics. The data and analysis from the open-ended questions was considered alongside the qualitative data collected through interviews, including interviews conducted on site visits.

b) Site visits, interviews, and focus group analysis

The interviews were guided using semi-structured questions that were developed following the scoping phase. While the questions and range of areas covered varied for each participant group, the main areas covered in the interview questions were:

- → The importance of RSE
- → What is taught/learnt for RSE in the school
- → How schools design and develop their RSE programmes
- → What resources schools use to design and deliver their RSE programmes
- → How schools deliver their RSE programmes (e.g. who delivers the programme, how often, any grouping of students)

- → Whether students have enjoyed RSE learning, whether they learnt the right amount, and whether they learned at the right time
- → Impacts on students (e.g. related to content covered, who delivers the programme, how often the learning occurs, any grouping of students)
- → Communication between schools and parents about RSE, including what works well and what the challenges are
- → Parental expectations for RSE, including any concerns they have
- → Parents withdrawing students from RSE lessons, including reasons why
- → Consultation processes, including what works well and what the challenges are, for both schools and parents
- → Teacher capability and comfort with teacher RSE
- → Impacts on teachers and leaders of teaching RSE
- → Possible improvements

Analysis

Data were analysed deductively and inductively:

- → interview notes were organised according to themes identified in the scoping phase. These themes were identified as being important for answering the key evaluation questions and sub-questions. They were identified through literature review and discussions with key stakeholders.
- → the interview notes were then analysed and coded with secondary and additional themes that emerged as important within the data. The analysis was conducted for each interview, and themes were refined across interviews.
- → the final set of themes was used to develop a series of charts, or tables (in MS Excel), in accordance with 'framework analysis' - each row corresponds to an interview participant and each column corresponds to a theme, with additional columns for participant characteristics (of individuals and/or schools). Separate charts were developed for different participant groups, e.g., students, parents and whānau, teachers, leaders, and school board members.
- → the cells within the charts were populated with summaries for each interview and theme. These charts were then analysed to identify similarities and differences across characteristics and themes, including for different age groups of students, to interpret the data and develop findings.

The research team held workshops to discuss the survey data and the interview results, looking for patterns across the different types of data, looking for outliers that can support causal explanations, and to identify any gaps in our understanding that required additional investigation. This team approach to analysis and interpretation of the data ensured consistency and transparency, and overall rigor.

We used information from interviews and focus groups to answer our evaluation questions. All quotes were gathered from verbatim records and open-ended survey responses.

Conclusion

This evaluation developed numerous data collection tools and methods of analysis to answer the key questions about how well RSE is currently taught and how well it meets the needs of students, expectations of parents, and capabilities of schools. In the next chapter, we describe how RSE works in Aotearoa New Zealand, and how that differs from other countries.

Chapter 3: What is relationships and sexuality education?

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is taught in most developed countries, to support children and young people to have healthy relationships, to feel good about who they are, and to develop the skills and knowledge they need to promote their own health and safety, and that of others. This important learning links to some key issues for our country.

RSE is woven into the Health and Physical Education learning area of Aotearoa New Zealand's curriculum. In this chapter, we look at what RSE teaching and learning is, why it matters, what our schools are expected to do, and how similar countries to ours handle this part of their schooling.

To understand how well RSE is working in our schools, it is important to know how RSE works here, as well as how it's different from other countries.

This section sets out:

- → what RSE is
- → why RSE matters
- → what schools are required to do
- → how RSE in Aotearoa New Zealand compares to what other countries do.

What we found: An overview

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) covers a wide range of topics.

Broadly, RSE teaching and learning includes things like friendships, personal safety, managing feelings, bodies, health, diverse identities, wellbeing, and how to act in positive and respectful ways with others.

RSE is part of the health and physical education learning area in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Schools develop their RSE programmes using the New Zealand Curriculum and, if they choose, the RSE guidelines. The curriculum is compulsory but the guidelines are not. However, in the curriculum there is no specific, compulsory RSE content.

RSE helps address key issues for young people.

RSE learning relates to key issues faced by young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as bullying, sexual violence, sexual health, and crime.

Schools are required to consult with their communities on how they will deliver RSE.

School boards are required to consult with their school community at least once every two years on how the school will implement the health education component of the curriculum, which includes RSE. Parents and whānau can withdraw their children from RSE lessons if they choose.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a similar requirement to teach RSE as other countries but a less prescriptive curriculum, stronger requirements for consultation, and less guidance and support for teachers.

Australia, England, and Canada all have a more prescriptive RSE curriculum, and Australia and England have more detailed guidance. Only England has a requirement to consult the community, and requirements are more flexible.

1. What is RSE?

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a collection of health and relationship-related learning. Most developed countries teach RSE in their schools. In RSE, students learn from their teachers or visiting experts about things like friendships, relationships, bodies, health, and safety, and develop knowledge and skills about acting in positive and respectful ways with others.

RSE is part of the 'Health and Physical Education' learning area within our New Zealand Curriculum.[b] Health and physical education learning is compulsory in Years 1-10 (approximate ages 5-14). This learning area includes RSE-related topics, but there isn't a specific, discrete RSE section of the curriculum that schools have to cover.

Within the health and physical education learning area, there are four 'strands of learning':

- → personal health and physical development
- → relationships with other people
- → healthy communities and environments
- → movement concepts and motor skills.

RSE in the New Zealand Curriculum

RSE is woven throughout the 'Health and Physical Education' learning area of the curriculum. Learning in Health and Physical Education is structured around *four underlying concepts*, and *four strands of content*, across *seven key areas of learning*. These are set out in the table below, with the most strongly RSE-related content in bold.

Underlying concepts	Strands	Key areas of learning
Hauora	**Personal health and physical development**	**Mental health**
Attitudes and values	Movement concepts and motor skills	**Sexuality education**
The socio-ecological perspective	**Relationships with other people**	Food and nutrition
Health promotion	**Healthy communities and environments**	**Body care and physical safety**
		Physical activity
		Sport studies
		Outdoor education

[b] RSE also occurs in Māori-medium education through Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, specifically within the Hauora wāhanga ako (wāhanga ako are similar to learning areas). This evaluation does not include Kaupapa Māori schools (though it does include schools with high-Māori rolls, and schools with rūmaki Māori bilingual units).

Under the key areas of learning, there are a large number of *achievement objectives* that describe what students should be able to do or know as they move through year levels, to do with health and physical education more broadly. These are set out in Appendix 1 of the evaluation report. Some of these achievement objectives include aspects of RSE. As is the case across the whole curriculum, achievement objectives become more complex as students move through year levels.

There is not a specific, discrete RSE topic or unit that schools have to cover. Individual schools decide on the specifics of what RSE content will be taught.

The full health and physical education learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum can be found here: The New Zealand Curriculum - Health and physical education

> "In health and physical education, the focus is on the well-being of the students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health-related and movement contexts." – Health and physical education learning area, New Zealand Curriculum (2007) [1]

The *Relationships and Sexuality Education: A guide for teachers, leaders and boards of trustees*[c] resources ('RSE guidelines') are produced by the Ministry of Education. These have more detail than the curriculum about what RSE content to cover at different year levels, and how to teach it. Using the RSE guidelines is optional for schools.

The guidelines 'focus strongly on consensual, healthy, and respectful relationships as being essential to student wellbeing.'[2] They set out *54 key learning statements*, organised into *three groups* (which link to the three strands of learning in the curriculum, outlined above).

→ Ko Au — All about me:
- Knowledge, understandings, and skills relating to physical and sexual health and development: emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental.

→ Ko Aku Hoa — Friendships and relationships with others:
- Understandings and skills to enhance relationships, for example, in relation to friendships, intimate relationships, love, families, and parenting.

→ Ko Tōku Ao — Me and the world:
- Critical inquiry, reflection, and social-action skills related to issues of equity, gender, body image, risk, and safety.

The key learning statements are set out in Appendix 2 of the evaluation report. The full guidelines documents can be found here: Relationships and sexuality education guide

There is some professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers available to support their RSE teaching. There is very limited training as part of initial teacher training, which varies depending on the initial training provider.

[c] Since 2001, there has been sexuality education guidance in place in Aotearoa New Zealand, supplementary to the curriculum. This guidance has been updated, in 2015 and 2020.

What do different 'year levels' mean?

Throughout this report we refer to school year levels, for example, 'Year 10'. The table below shows the approximate ages of students by the school year they are in. These have replaced the old 'standard' and 'form' structures (e.g. Year 6 is the old 'Standard four', and Year 13 is the old 'seventh form'.)

School year levels	Student ages
Year 0-4	Age 5-8
Year 5-6	Age 8-10
Year 7-8	Age 10-12
Year 9-10	Age 12-15
Year 11-13	Age 15-18

There is flexibility and variation between individual schools and the year levels they serve. For simplicity in this report, we talk about 'primary' schools and students for our findings related to approx. Years 0-8, and 'secondary' schools and students for findings related to Years 9-13. The most common school makeup types are below.

Type of school	School Year levels
Contributing primary school	Year 0-6
Full primary school	Year 0-8
Area school	Year 0-13
Intermediate school	Year 7-8
Middle / junior high school	Year 7-10
Secondary school	Year 9-13

2. Why does RSE matter?

Most developed countries teach some form of RSE to support children's and young people's development, health, and safety.

RSE focuses on a range key issues including preventing bullying, promoting healthy relationships and sexual health, and promoting inclusion and reducing discrimination- in the classroom and more widely in society. RSE also plays a key role in helping students to navigate a changing world - where online safety, misinformation, and harmful attitudes are increasingly prevalent.

RSE helps students learn about healthy relationships.

The types of relationships that young people learn about in RSE include families, friendships, and romantic relationships. The evidence shows that good quality RSE increases student knowledge, critical thinking, and positive attitudes around relationships, identity, and sexual health, and reproduction.[3] This includes understanding concepts like consent, boundaries, and respectful interactions from an early age. This helps them to recognise harmful relationships, and to form more positive, respectful, and healthy relationships.[4] RSE also includes a focus on managing feelings, including anger.

RSE helps students to navigate harmful online content.

At a time where young people are increasingly exposed to harmful online content[5] (including pornography, misinformation, and hate speech), RSE plays an important role in teaching students to critically identify, analyse, and reject misinformation and harmful attitudes (including misogyny and homophobia).[6]

Young people, particularly young males, are increasingly susceptible to harmful online content.[7] Interestingly, the state of Victoria, Australia, has refocused an RSE initiative in schools to counter the influence of misogynistic radicalisation.[8] Their updated programme is designed to help students identify and address hate speech and negative online content, with an added emphasis on teaching about consent, pornography, and gender-based bullying.[9]

Increased social division

Research shows that there are increasingly split views across countries globally, as well as in Aotearoa New Zealand, which include RSE-related issues like gender identities, racial and cultural (including religious) identities, and sexuality.[10]

This global context is relevant to this study, where we look at how Aotearoa New Zealand's young people, their parents and whānau, and their school communities view sensitive topics.

RSE learning relates to key health and safety issues for our country's young people.

In Aotearoa New Zealand we continue to have a range of worrying health and safety issues that directly relate to relationships and sexuality. This indicates that not all young people have the knowledge and skills they need to be healthy and safe, and to support others to be healthy and safe too. Concerning issues are set out below.

Family and sexual violence

- → Aotearoa New Zealand has very high rates of family and sexual violence, and this is increasing.[11] The number of family harm calls to police increased from 119,000 in 2016 to 174,000 in 2022.[12]
- → Offences of domestic abuse or violence are mostly by men against women, with 24 percent of New Zealand women have experienced these offences during their lifetime.[13]
- → One in three women (35 percent) in Aotearoa New Zealand have been victims of sexual violence over their lives[14] and women are three times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault during the last 12 months.[15]
- → People from rainbow communities are six times more likely to experience sexual assault than others.[16]
- → Almost one in five young people (18 percent) in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools report ever having had unwanted sexual experiences, sexual violence, or abuse. This is higher for girls (26 percent) and young people from rainbow communities (over 34 percent).[17]

Bullying

- → Aotearoa New Zealand has the second-highest rate of reported school bullying in the OECD.[18]
- → A disproportionately high proportion of students who report bullying are from rainbow communities.[19]

Racism

- → ERO's 2023 research around diversity in schools found deeply concerning levels of racism and racist bullying. More than half (54 percent) of students reported seeing someone being mean to others

because of their ethnic identity and/or culture in the last month. One in five (20 percent) have been bullied because of their ethnic identity and/or culture.[20]

Pornography

→ Two-thirds (67 percent) of our country's 14-17-year-olds have seen pornography. By age 17, three-quarters (75 percent) have seen pornography.[21] It is established that this can impact on students' perceptions of healthy sexual behaviours, such as communicating and respecting consent.[22]

Sexual health

→ Less than half of students who are currently sexually active report using condoms to prevent sexually transmitted infections, and only just over half report that they always use contraception to prevent pregnancy.[23]

What ERO has found in the past about RSE

ERO regularly reviews different aspects of the curriculum. The last time we looked at RSE was 2018, and before then in 2007.

In 2007 we found that **schools were not meeting the needs of all students**, particularly Māori or Pacific students, international students, students with strong cultural or religious beliefs, students with additional learning needs, and students who were from rainbow communities.

ERO's 2007 report can be found here: The Teaching of Sexuality Education in Years 7 to 13 (2007) | Education Review Office

In 2018 we found that **the provision and overall curriculum remained inconsistent**. Most schools were meeting minimum standards, but many had significant gaps in curriculum coverage. In the majority of schools, the most commonly covered topics of the more specific *sexuality* part of RSE were anatomy, physiology, and pubertal change. The two least often covered topics in secondary school were sexual violence and pornography, which were covered in less than half of the secondary schools ERO visited.

In 2018 we also identified that key challenges for teachers were a lack of access to professional learning and development on RSE teaching, as well as subject and pedagogical knowledge to teach RSE. In some cases, there was also a general discomfort about teaching the subject.

In response to ERO's 2018 report, the Ministry of Education released the updated 'Relationships and Sexuality Education: A guide for teachers, leaders and boards of trustees' in 2020. There is a guide for Years 1-8 and a guide for Years 9-13. These are the 'RSE Guidelines' that we refer to in this report.

ERO's 2018 report can be found here: Promoting wellbeing through sexuality education | Education Review Office

3. What are schools required to do?

Schools are required to consult with their communities on how they will deliver the health curriculum, including RSE.

Health education is the only part of the curriculum that schools are required to consult their community about. The Education and Training Act 2020 requires consultation at least once every two years, about how the school will implement the health education component of the curriculum (which includes RSE).

Schools are required to allow parents and whānau to withdraw their children from RSE lessons.

The Education and Training Act 2020 also states that parents may request, by writing to the principal or person responsible for teaching and learning, that their child is released from teaching and learning about specified aspects of [relationships and] sexuality education. The school must ensure that the student is supervised during this time.

Schools develop their own RSE teaching and learning programme, which they can do in a range of ways.

Each school in Aotearoa New Zealand currently develops their own 'localised curriculum' (the teaching and learning programmes to be delivered by the school), using the New Zealand Curriculum document. The Ministry of Education also provides guidelines for schools, which they can use in their development of their RSE programme if they choose, and inform their consultation process.

The New Zealand Curriculum allows for a highly flexible approach to teaching, including RSE, and is intended to allow schools to be responsive to school communities' views. This flexibility, combined with RSE guidelines that are not compulsory, can also create significant issues for schools in teaching this sensitive area of the curriculum. This is something we explore in more depth in Chapter 6 of this report.

4. How RSE in Aotearoa New Zealand compares to what other countries do

To help us understand how well RSE teaching and learning is going in Aotearoa New Zealand, we looked at RSE in Australia (New South Wales, Victoria), Canada (Ontario), and England. Some form of RSE is taught in most developed countries, though there are variations in how it is framed – for example as 'sexuality education' or 'puberty education'.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a similar requirement to teach RSE as other countries but a less prescriptive curriculum, stronger requirements for consultation, and less guidance and support for teachers.

- → RSE is compulsory in Australia (New South Wales, Victoria), Canada (Ontario), and England. Parents have the right to withdraw in all these countries, although England has more restrictions on this.
- → Only England has a requirement to consult the community, and requirements are more flexible.
- → Australia, England, and Canada all have a more prescriptive RSE curriculum, and Australia and England have more detailed guidance.

Australia (New South Wales and Victoria)

RSE is compulsory from foundation (new entrance) through to Year 10 in Australia, and to year 12 in the state of Victoria. The curriculum is highly prescriptive, based on the Australian national curriculum, which details achievement standards, content, and exemplars. Schools are not required to consult their communities but may seek feedback voluntarily. Parents can withdraw their children from RSE. Schools receive clear guidance on implementing the curriculum, including external PLD for teachers.[24]

Canada (Ontario)

Ontario mandates RSE from grades 1 to 8, with a prescriptive Human Development and Sexual Health curriculum.[25] School boards are not required to consult their community, but they must provide parents with information about what their child is being taught. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some aspects of RSE. Guidance is somewhat limited, with resources mainly based on the curriculum itself, while some districts like Toronto provide additional materials.[26]

England

Relationships and Health education is compulsory for all primary and secondary school students, with Sex Education recommended (not compulsory) at the primary level. Statutory guidance sets minimum standards. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their RSE policy but are not mandated to do so comprehensively. Parents may only withdraw their child from the sex education part of RSE, and only up until three terms before their child turns 16 [27]. Clear guidance is available for schools, covering curriculum planning and working with external agencies. A range of PLD resources are available for teachers.[28]

Conclusion

RSE is part of the health and physical education learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum. This learning is compulsory from Years 1-10, though parents and whānau can choose to withdraw their child from these lessons. Schools are required to consult their community at least once every two years about their health curriculum (which includes RSE). There are detailed guidelines about RSE available, but not compulsory, for schools.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a similar requirement to teach RSE as other countries but a less prescriptive curriculum, stronger requirements for consultation, and less guidance and support for teachers.

In the next chapter, we examine the extent to which parents and whānau and students support RSE. The chapter also looks at what increases the likelihood of people supporting RSE being taught, or wanting change.

Chapter 4: Is teaching RSE in schools supported?

RSE is important to children and young people's physical and mental health, and their safety. However, given the sensitive nature of the content, there are differing views on whether it should be taught, what should be taught, and how it should be taught.

In this chapter, we set out what we found out about how supportive parents and whānau and students are of RSE being taught in schools.

RSE covers a broad range of topics, including some more sensitive or divisive topics, like bodies and sexuality. There are differing views on what's appropriate to learn in the school context, including whether it should be taught at all. To understand the different perspectives of students and parents and whānau, we looked at:

- → our surveys of parents and whānau and students
- → our interviews with parents and whānau and students
- → our interviews with key experts
- → our visits to schools
- → local and international research.

This chapter sets out the views of students and parents and whānau on whether RSE should be taught. It covers:

1. students' views on RSE being taught in schools
2. parent and whānau views on RSE being taught in schools.

What we found: An overview

Students support RSE being taught, particularly girls.

Over nine in 10 (91 percent, n = 4,225) students support RSE being taught in schools. Girls are more likely than boys to support it being taught, with 95 percent (n = 2,953) of girls supporting it, and 88 percent (n = 1,207) of boys supporting it. Nearly all students (97 percent, n = 323) from rainbow communities (which includes girls, boys, and gender diverse students) support RSE.

Most parents support RSE being taught. Primary parents and whānau are less supportive.

Most parents and whānau (87 percent, n = 3,078) support RSE being taught in schools. Primary school parents and whānau are slightly less supportive (82 percent, n = 910) than intermediate (89 percent, n = 558) and secondary school (89 percent, n = 1,604) parents and whānau. Six percent of parents and whānau withdraw their children from RSE lessons.

Parents and whānau of all ethnicities support RSE, but Pacific parents are less supportive.

Nine out of 10 New Zealand European (89 percent, n = 2,251) and Asian parents (89 percent, n = 294) support RSE being taught, compared to 84 percent (n = 395) of Māori whānau and 82 percent (n = 61) of

Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) parents. Nearly three in 10 (29 percent, n = 66) Pacific parents do *not* support RSE being taught in schools.

Parents and whānau who practice a faith are over two times more likely to not support RSE being taught.

Over one in five parents who practice a faith (22 percent, n = 271) do not support RSE being taught, compared to 9 percent (n = 201) of parents who do not practice a faith.

Parents and whānau who know what is being taught are happier with RSE.

Parents and whānau who report they know nothing about what is being taught were 68 percent[d] less likely to be happy with what is being taught than parents and whānau who know most of what is being taught.

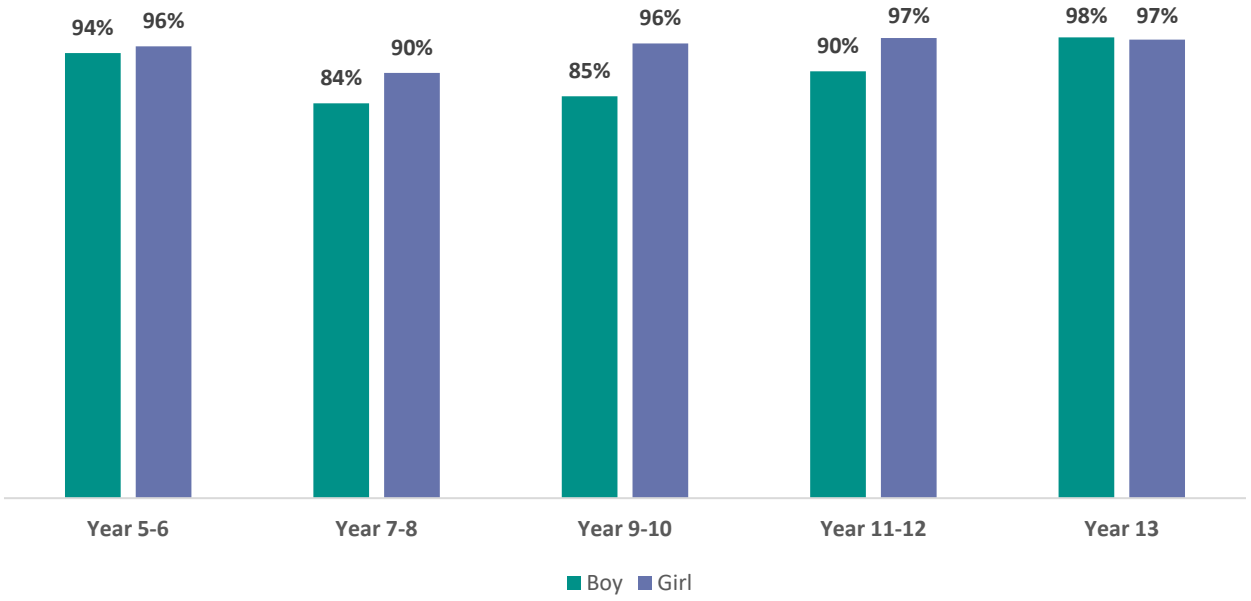
1. Do students support RSE being taught?

Students support RSE being taught, particularly girls.

We asked students whether they support RSE being taught in schools. There was a high level of support for teaching RSE, with over nine in 10 students (91 percent, n = 4,225) supporting RSE being taught in schools. Year 13 students were the most likely to support RSE being taught, with 97 percent (n = 295) of Year 13 students supporting RSE.

Girls and boys[e] support RSE being taught, but girls are more likely to support it (95 percent (n = 2,953) compared to 88 percent (n = 1,207) across all year levels). This is most apparent at Year 9-10, with 96 percent (n = 1,061) of girls thinking it should be taught, compared to 85 percent (n = 325) of boys.

Figure 1: *Student views on whether RSE should be taught in schools by gender and age*



ERO found that students place importance on RSE because they want to learn about their bodies and emotions, relationships, and other people who are different to them. Students place particular importance

[d] P<0.001 – from logistic regression modelling.
[e] While our proportion of gender diverse student responses is representative of the population, these numbers are too low to statistically compare to boys and girls.

on the topics around puberty and consent because some families don't talk about these topics at home, or young people are embarrassed talking with their parents and whānau about them. The international evidence supports the finding that children and young people want puberty education to be delivered in schools.[29]

> "Sometimes parents don't know as much as what the school would be teaching you. So if you do get it from your parents, they might not have had a proper education or can't answer all of the questions you have." – Year 10 student at a secondary girls' school

> "I feel we should learn RSE at school because it's a safe environment." - Year 8 Pacific student

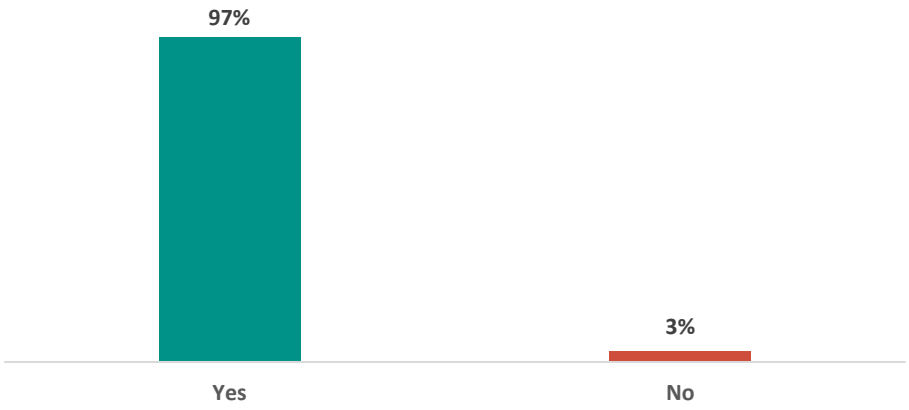
> "If you weren't as close with your parents, it might not be a conversation you have and you might learn it at school. I feel like lots of people would rely on the school to give them that information." – Year 10 student

> "You get the incidental comments [from parents] of, 'I'm glad you're teaching this, so we don't have to.'" – Health teacher at a secondary girls' school

ERO found that girls tend to be more supportive about RSE than boys. This matches what is found internationally.[30] Some topics, such as contraception and unplanned pregnancies, can have greater impacts on girls than boys, and girls can be generally more open to discussing their thoughts, feelings, and worries. Boys think some topics are less relevant for them and are more easily embarrassed. What boys and girls prefer is set out in more detail in Chapter 4.

Students from rainbow communities are very supportive of RSE. Ninety-seven percent (n = 323) of students from rainbow communities support RSE being taught in schools.

Figure 2: *Students from rainbow communities views on whether RSE should be taught in schools*



ERO found that students from rainbow communities are supportive of RSE at school as it helps them understand their experiences, teaches them to take better care of themselves, and can support inclusivity at school. We heard that in cases where students from rainbow communities don't have useful RSE, they can feel lost and confused, or ignored. They also tend to look for information online, meaning they face higher risk of misinformation and cyberbullying in the online space.

> "I think that this sort of education is immensely important to teach young people and teenagers about their bodies, their relationships, and more, especially consent… [and] queer identities… If this stuff isn't talked about, so many people could end up feeling alone, insecure, and get stuck in dangerous situations." – Student from rainbow communities

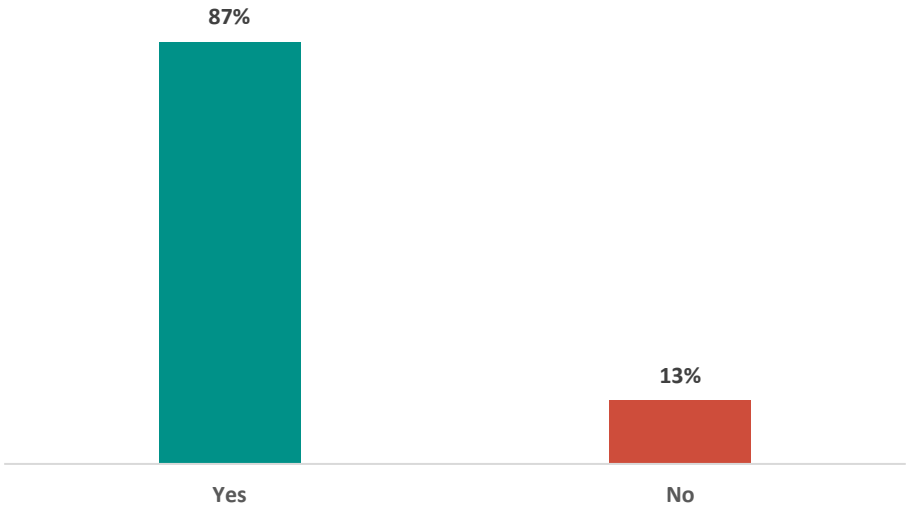
ERO found that just under one in 10 (9 percent) of the overall student population don't support RSE being taught at school. These students prefer to learn about topics from their parents and whānau. This is often due to their cultural and religious beliefs, which may involve specific views about how topics are taught and who should teach them. Views of different student groups are set out in more detail in Chapter 4.

2. Do parents and whānau support RSE being taught?

Most parents and whānau support RSE being taught.

We also asked parents and whānau whether they support RSE being taught at school. Most parents and whānau (87 percent, n = 3,078) support it being taught, but 13 percent (n = 472) don't.

Figure 3: *Parent and whānau views on whether RSE should be taught in schools*



ERO consistently found that parents and whānau value RSE, both for their child and wider society, and trust their schools to teach it. For example, parents and whānau told us that RSE can help reverse negative social trends, like the high levels of family and sexual violence that currently exist in Aotearoa New Zealand, by 'normalising' discussions about these issues. Not all families have the knowledge and capability to have these discussions at home. Also, parents and whānau think that students are more likely to be open in their discussions at school, and issues are less likely to become a source of shame.

> "There are still prude attitudes in NZ school sex education. This is counterproductive. Sexual topics should be openly discussed. Not normalising sexual education bears risks, particularly around STIs, manipulation, violence and family planning." – Parent/whānau of Year 13 student

Parents and whānau who want their school to increase RSE coverage see it as a way of helping their child understand the changes happening to their bodies and emotions. Parents and whānau also value RSE as a way of keeping their children safe. For example, they want consent to be covered more and earlier so their children know about normal and healthy interactions and relationships. We cover this further in Chapter 5.

Similarly to students, we found that parents and whānau who don't want RSE to be taught in schools want their child to learn about RSE-related topics at home. Parents and whānau who practise a faith additionally refer to the role of their church or faith-based community in teaching RSE to their child, especially some of the more sensitive topics. This finding is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Parents and whānau are more likely to be happy with RSE when they know what is being taught.

We asked parents and whānau how much they know about what is being taught, and how happy they are they are with what their child is being taught in RSE. We found that the more parents and whānau know about what their child is being taught in RSE, the more likely they are to be happy with what is being taught.

Parents and whānau who report they know nothing about what is being taught were 68 percent[f] less likely to be happy with what is being taught than parents and whānau who know most of what is being taught.

Parents and whānau who only know some of what is being taught are 57 percent[g] less likely to be happy than if they know most of what is taught.

This finding also emerged from our interviews with parents and whānau, who were generally more likely to be happy with what is covered in RSE when the school has provided lots of information, and the school has been responsive to what parents and whānau told them they want.

> "The school has very open communication. They sent home a notice advising what topics were being covered… His form teacher also texted all parents advising that she was available for phone calls if parents wanted to discuss further - which is great!" – Parent/whānau of Year 8 student

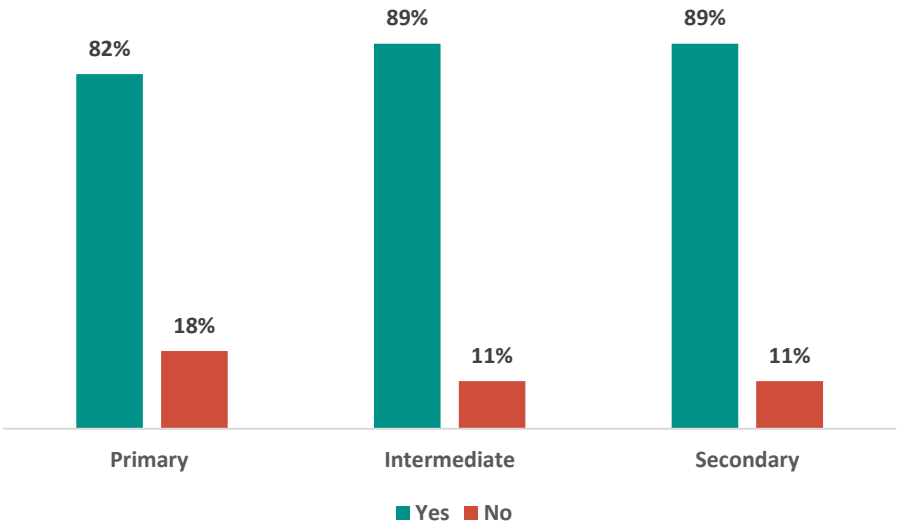
Primary school parents and whānau are less supportive.

We analysed whether there is support from parents and whānau for RSE being taught by different school types. Primary school parents and whānau are slightly less supportive (82 percent, n = 910) than intermediate (89 percent, n = 558) and secondary school parents and whānau (89 percent, n = 1,604).

Just under one in five parents and whānau of primary aged students (18 percent, n = 204) do not think RSE should be taught, compared with just over one in 10 intermediate (11 percent, n = 68 and secondary (11 percent, n = 199) parents.

We also considered whether other factors, such as whether a school is state or state-integrated make a difference, however there was no significant difference.

Figure 4: *Parent and whānau views on whether RSE should be taught in schools*



[f] P<0.001 – from logistic regression modelling.
[g] P<0.001 – from logistic regression modelling.

We found that primary school parents and whānau are more likely than secondary school parents and whānau to be concerned about RSE content not being age appropriate. 'How' RSE is delivered also matters to primary school parents and whānau across topics.

For example, primary school parents and whānau are generally supportive about consent being covered in RSE as long as the content is age appropriate. This can mean a focus on appropriate and inappropriate touching, rather than consent within intimate relationships. Primary school parents and whānau are less supportive of topics on genders and sexualities being taught in primary school. They talked about children maturing at different rates and being concerned that topics like these could be confusing for younger children.

In addition to concerns about *content* of RSE lessons, primary school parents and whānau are interested in *how* RSE is delivered. We consistently heard they want RSE delivered to students in smaller groups (rather than a whole class), and they want there to be opportunities for students to talk openly in the sessions, and to have a named person they can talk to about the topics covered. We heard that separating boys and girls for RSE was important to some parents and whānau.

It is also a strong theme in our research that primary school parents and whānau want to play a role in teaching their children RSE topics, which is why they want more information and resources to be sent home. They especially want a more prominent role in teaching their children about sex. However, many of the parents and whānau that we spoke to had limited knowledge of what was being taught for RSE due to lack of information.

Some parents and whānau are aware that RSE can be delivered by external providers, such as the Life Education Trust. Their programme covers key topics such as online safety, identity, friendship and relationship, respect and resilience, puberty, etc. Parents and whānau told us they prefer external providers to deliver some content if this means it will be taught by experts.

Parents and whānau of all ethnicities support RSE, but Pacific parents are less supportive.

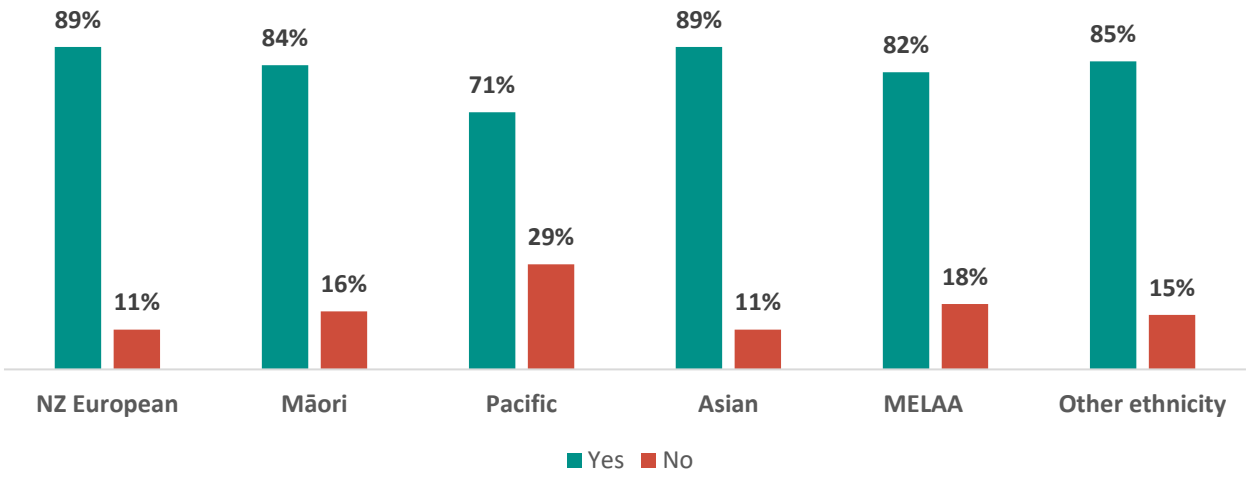
There is variation by ethnicity in the level of support from parents and whānau for RSE being taught in schools.

New Zealand European (89 percent, n = 2,251) and Asian (89 percent, n = 294) parents are the most supportive of RSE being taught. Eighty-four percent (n = 395) of Māori whānau support RSE being taught, and 82 percent (n = 61) of Middle Eastern/ Latin American/ African (MELAA) parents support it.

Pacific parents are 29 percent less likely to support RSE being taught in schools as it is now than parents and whānau of other ethnicities,[h] with 71 percent (n = 158) supporting RSE being taught.

[h] P<0.06 from logistic regression modelling.

Figure 5: *Parents and whānau views on whether RSE should be taught in schools by ethnicity*



Some of the concern from Pacific parents about RSE content can be explained by their faith. Data from the New Zealand Census indicates that Pacific peoples are often religious.[31] Just over two-thirds (68 percent, n = 162) of Pacific parents in our survey indicated that they have a faith. Concerns raised about RSE by parents and whānau of faith are set out later in this chapter.

Other concerns raised by Pacific parents relate to their cultures. A strong theme emerging from our interviews is that bodies and sexual topics are often 'not discussed' in Pacific cultures. This is why even a small amount of RSE content being taught at school can be considered 'too much.'

> "We [in Pacific communities] may want RSE to be taught by parents at home – but then, it's not actually taught. We don't talk about our private parts." – Pacific school counsellor

For Pacific parents who do support some RSE being taught at school, they highlight the importance of teaching it in a culturally appropriate way.

We heard from Pacific parents that consideration of 'va' (relatedness/ relationship) is important for RSE. Sexuality and reproduction are 'tapu' (special or sacred) topics and discussing these topics between classmates of opposite sexes is breaking the vā. Some Pacific parents indicated that they would prefer RSE be taught to boys and girls separately.[i] Some Pacific parents additionally want RSE to be taught by people of the same culture because there is a need to develop trust when teaching tapu topics.

> "RSE needs to be considered within the cultural context. In our Tongan culture, we don't like to have a lot of those conversations around sexuality. If you were to bring it up within this school, I think we need female to be with female and male with male and have that separated. The teacher needs to be someone of Pacific background as well." - Pacific parent/whānau

> "There needs to be the right people behind those messages, to get the message across [to Pacific families]." – Pacific school counsellor

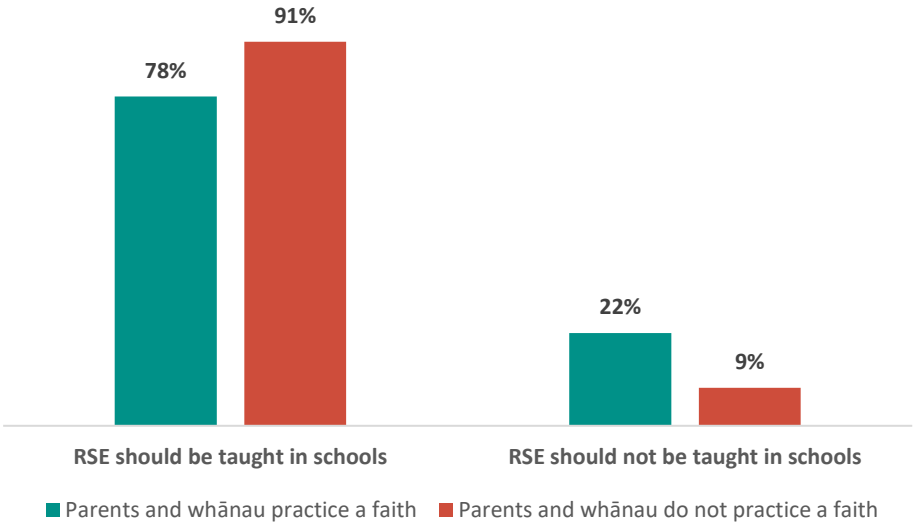
[i] Pacific communities and cultures include a range of diverse genders, as well as boys and girls, such as faka'afine or fa'afatama (Samoa), fakaleiti (Tonga), or Akava'ine (the Cook Islands). Views and experiences relating to these other genders were not specifically mentioned by the Pacific parents that ERO spoke to who shared that children of different genders should be separated for RSE.

Parents and whānau who do not practice a faith are two times more likely to not support RSE being taught in schools.

We asked parents and whānau about their faith, and whether that impacts their support for RSE being taught. Parents and whānau who practice a faith are less likely to support RSE being taught.[j]

While most parents and whānau who practice a faith do support RSE being taught (78 percent, n = 987), over one in five parents and whānau who practice a faith (22 percent, n = 271) do not support RSE being taught, compared to 9 percent (n = 201) of parents and whānau who do not practice a faith.

Figure 6: *Parent and whānau views on whether RSE should be taught in schools- by whether the parents and whānau practice a faith*



Of parents and whānau with faith who want no teaching on certain RSE topics, such as sex, sexuality, or gender identity at school, we found a key reason is that they are concerned that the learning won't align with their religious beliefs, especially in relation to gender identities which don't align with some religions' views on two genders (boys and girls only). We heard that teaching gender diversity and gender identity can be particularly challenging for schools to land for some parents and whānau of faith – while others value teaching about diverse gender identities in ways that align with faith-based RSE resources.[k] For topics related to sex and sexuality, we heard parents and whānau with faith tend to prefer to teach the content at home. The views of different parent and whānau groups are set out in more detail in Chapter 5.

Some parents and whānau withdraw their children from RSE.

Another way of understanding the support for RSE is looking at how many parents and whānau withdraw their children from RSE. Overall, 6 percent (n = 152) of parents and whānau withdraw their children from RSE. This is slightly higher in primary school, with 8 percent (n = 39) of parents and whānau of Year 0-4 children, and 7 percent (n = 30) of parents and whānau of Year 5-6 children withdrawing students. At intermediate and secondary age, 5 percent (n = 22) of parents and whānau withdraw their students from RSE.

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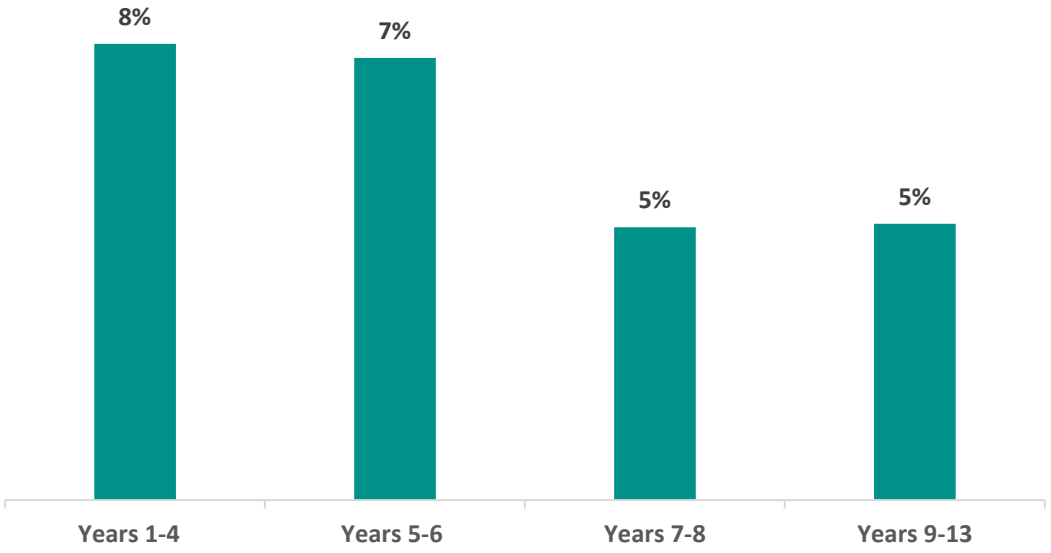
[j] $p<0.01$ from logistic regression modelling.

[k] For example, *Wonderfully made in God's image: A revised framing document for human sexuality education in Aotearoa Catholic schools* (2021).

The most common reasons that parents and whānau give for withdrawing their students are not wanting their child learning about this *at school* (31 percent, n = 50), learning this *at their age* (31 percent, n = 50), or they do not want their child to learn about it *at all* (11 percent, n = 18).

Figure 7: *Parents and whānau report that they withdraw their children from RSE, by school year*



We consistently heard that withdrawing children from RSE is an easy process for parents and whānau, involving just emailing the schools about their wish to withdraw. However, some parents and whānau aren't aware there is a process for withdrawing their child from RSE. Schools told us that withdrawals are uncommon and often they are only partial, which means children are only withdrawn from certain RSE topics.

We heard that key reasons for parents and whānau withdrawing their child from RSE include religious and cultural beliefs, and concerns about topics being offered 'too early'" We heard from schools that Muslim parents are more likely to withdraw their children, believing that RSE is a topic to be taught at home rather than at school. Primary school parents and whānau are more likely to withdraw their children from RSE, because they think it is 'too early' for their children to learn about topics like genders or sexualities, which they believe may confuse them.

We also heard that parents and whānau are more likely to withdraw their children from RSE when they feel they don't have enough information about RSE content, so are choosing not to 'risk it' and instead withdrawing their child.

> "Without proper information being disseminated to parents, how are we able to make an informed choice? Based on this lack of information we are inclined to withdraw our child from these classes." – Parent/whanau of Year 3 student

We found that responding to the particular concerns of parents and whānau can avoid withdrawals. For example, we heard that parents who were initially concerned about RSE and emailed the school with questions sometimes changed their minds about withdrawing their children following the school's response.

Alternatively, we heard from parents and whānau who do trust the school to teach age-appropriate content and that have had positive experiences of the school RSE programme.

Conclusion

Overall, there is wide support from students and parents for RSE being taught in school. Students are supportive of RSE being taught, especially girls.

Pacific parents, parents of primary aged students, and parents of faith are less supportive. Some parents withdraw their children from RSE because of concerns about what is, or might be, covered in RSE lessons.

In the next chapters we look more at what is being taught in schools, and how well it meets the needs of students and teachers.

Chapter 5: What is being taught in RSE?

The current settings for RSE teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand offer a lot of flexibility in what is taught for RSE, and how. ERO identified 13 topic areas that are typically included in RSE programmes, and asked schools about whether and when they taught these topics. We found there is a lot of variation in the RSE teaching and learning that is happening at different schools.

In this chapter, we set out what we found out about what is being covered in RSE lessons, and where we found differences between year groups and school types.

RSE learning is a key part of our national health curriculum for all students. However, in Aotearoa New Zealand the content and delivery of RSE is comparatively flexible. We wanted to find out about what is actually being taught and learnt in schools. To understand this, we looked at:

- → the New Zealand Curriculum
- → the RSE guidelines
- → our surveys of teachers
- → our interviews with teachers, leaders, students, parents and whānau, and boards.

This section sets out:

1. what is covered in RSE
2. what is taught at different ages.

What we found: An overview

Schools can make their own choices about what they cover in RSE.

There is a lot of flexibility for schools around exactly which RSE content is taught, and how it is taught. Schools can develop their own programmes, rely on external providers, or both. No specific health and physical education content is compulsory to be covered – meaning no specific RSE content is compulsory.

ERO identified 13 topic areas that are typically included in RSE programmes.

RSE teaching includes coverage of a wide range of topics, which relate broadly to personal safety, managing feelings, bodies, health, diverse identities, wellbeing, and relationships with other people. There are 13 particular areas that are included in typical RSE programmes.

What students are taught changes as they grow up.

In Years 0-4 (ages 5-8), almost all students learn about feelings and emotions (n = 168), friendships and bullying (n = 167), and personal safety (n = 164). As they progress through Years 5-8 (ages 8-12), they begin to learn about getting help with their health and changes to their body.

At Years 9-10 (ages 12-14), around eight in 10 students learn about consent (n = 177), romantic relationships (n = 163), sexual identities (n = 162), human reproduction (n =157), and gender identity (n = 147).

Students do not have to learn RSE in Years 11-13 (ages 14-18), but over seven in 10 continue to learn about personal safety including online safety (n = 27), friendships and bullying (n = 26), identity (n = 24), managing feelings and emotions (n = 23), and celebrating differences (n = 23).

Sensitive topics are taught later - different sexual identities, gender identity, and human reproduction are mostly taught in secondary school.

Less than one in five teachers of ages 8-10 report teaching these topics, compared to three-quarters of teachers of age 12-14 students.

Recent school leavers are less likely than senior secondary students to report having learned about gender identity, gender stereotypes, and celebrating difference.

What is taught in RSE is changing over time, as society changes. Only around one third of recent school leavers report they learnt about gender identity (n = 815), gender stereotypes (n = 821, and celebrating differences (n = 880), compared to over two-thirds of current Year 11-13 students who report they learn about these topics.

What students learn about can depend on where they go to school. Students in girls' schools are more likely to learn about consent, different sexual identities, and gender identity than students at co-ed schools.

Eight in 10 students at girls' schools learn about consent (81 percent, n = 1037), compared to less than six in 10 students at co-ed schools (58 percent, n = 2,613).

In the following sections we look at each of these findings in more detail.

1. What does the curriculum cover?

Schools can make their own choices about what they cover in RSE.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are two Ministry of Education documents that guide RSE teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand schools.

- The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) includes achievement objectives that describe what students should be able to do or know as they move through year levels, to do with health and physical education more broadly. These include RSE-related topics but there isn't a specific RSE section of the curriculum. Teachers and leaders use the New Zealand Curriculum to develop their school's health and physical education programme – including what RSE content they'll cover.
- The RSE guidelines (2020) have more detail and specificity about what to cover when teaching RSE, across different topics and different age groups. The guidelines are an optional resource available for schools to help them develop their programme.

There is a lot of flexibility for schools around exactly which RSE content is taught, and how it is taught. Schools can develop their own programmes, rely on external providers, or both.

Legally, schools must develop their school curriculum so that it:[32]

- is consistent with the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum
- models, encourages, and explores the values in the New Zealand Curriculum
- supports students to develop the key competencies in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Schools can select the achievement objectives from each learning area that meet the identified interests and learning needs of their students. They must provide programmes of learning that cover the learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum, including health and physical education, to students in Years 1-10. No specific health and physical education content is compulsory to be covered – meaning no specific RSE content is compulsory.

RSE teaching typically includes coverage of personal safety, managing feelings, bodies, health, diverse identities, wellbeing, and relationships with other people.

Schools have flexibility around the sorts of content taught in RSE. There is no 'correct' or mandated set of topics to cover or outcomes that must be achieved (so long as schools meet the three legal requirements above). To find out what topics are being taught in RSE and how it's going, ERO drew on the New Zealand Curriculum's achievement objectives and the RSE guidelines' key learning statements to develop a list of 13 RSE topic areas that schools could be teaching in RSE. These are set out in the table below.

RSE topic area	Content
Changes to their body	This topic could include talking about body parts for young primary students, up to pubertal changes for older primary students, including how pubertal change relates to social norms around gender and sexual identity. Senior secondary students could cover changes to the body over their lifespan and how these relate to health and wellbeing.
Human reproduction	This topic could include basic concepts about broader reproduction, for example the life cycles of animals and insects, for young primary students, through to varying approaches to conception for older students, including how approaches to conception relate to social norms, choice, and wellbeing.
Health and contraception	This topic could include teaching about getting help when you're sick for young primary school students, up to information about contraception and sexual health for older secondary school students.
Friendships and bullying	This topic could include how to be a good friend and expressing your feelings in the junior years of primary school, up to how to deal with relationship challenges in later years of primary. This could also cover aspects of relationships online.
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	Guidance for this topic starts at Year 7 and could include teaching about consent, assertive communication, and dealing with pressure. At secondary school this could cover how values affect ideas and behaviours around intimacy, considering risks, and safe sexual practices.
Managing feelings and emotions	This topic could include expressing your own feelings and needs for young primary students, up to using strategies to address relationship challenges for older primary students.
Consent	This topic could include teaching about how to give and receive consent in a range of contexts (e.g., at the doctor, in the playground, or online) for primary students, making informed choices for older primary

	students, up to skills for dealing with pressure and coercion for secondary students.
Personal safety including online safety	This topic could include teaching about who to ask for help and skills for staying safe in a range of contexts, including online, for primary students. For older primary students, this could cover strategies and resources to support health and wellbeing, and using information to make safe choices.
Your identity	This topic could include describing different aspects that make up personal identity (e.g., ethnicity, gender, language, religion, whakapapa) for younger primary students, and how these can relate to their wellbeing. As students get older, they could learn in more depth about how aspects of their identity, and how they are represented in society, affect their wellbeing.
Celebrating differences	This topic could include celebrating that different people have different backgrounds in the junior years of primary, identifying instances of discrimination for older primary students, up to promoting inclusive practices and policies in a range of contexts in secondary school.
Gender stereotypes	This topic could include teaching about gender stereotypes for younger primary students, and critiquing media representations of gender and their effects on wellbeing for older primary students. For secondary students, this might include critical reflection on how gender stereotypes and attitudes affect wellbeing, including in school activities.
Different sexual identities	This topic could include talking about how people don't all have the same ways of thinking about gender, families, or romantic relationships, from about Year 3. For older primary students and younger secondary students, teaching could be about how puberty relates to social norms around sexuality. Secondary students might learn about how sexual identity relates to cultural, generational, and personal values, and how it can shift over time and in different contexts.
Gender identity	This topic could include talking about our own genders in primary school, and about social norms related to genders for older primary students. For older primary students and younger secondary students, teaching could be about how puberty relates to social norms around gender. Secondary students might be taught about cultural, generational, and personal values related to gender identity, and how identity can shift over time and in different contexts.

The findings in the following sections are based on what students, teachers, leaders, and parents and whānau told us about these 13 possible RSE topics. To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age appropriate, not all year levels of students were asked about all topics, and the wording of some topics was changed for younger children (see our technical report for our survey and interview questions) [link].

2. What is taught at different ages?

While the content taught in RSE varies, there are typical stages during school when certain RSE topics are typically taught.

Students age	Content taught
In Years 0 – 4 students are taught *most* about:	Managing feelings and emotions, friendships and bullying, and personal safety including online safety – almost all students learn about these subjects.
In Years 5 – 6 students are taught *most* about:	Getting help with their health (n = 95), and changes to their body (n = 92) – seven in 10 students learn about these subjects – as well as building on learning from earlier years.
In Years 7 – 8 students are taught *most* about:	Changes to their body (n = 123) – eight in 10 students learn about these subjects – as well as building on learning from earlier years.
In Years 9 – 10 students are taught *most* about:	Consent (n = 177), health and contraception (n = 169), romantic relationships including intimate relationships (n = 163), different sexual identities (n = 162), human reproduction (n = 156), and gender identity (n = 147) – around eight in 10 students are taught these subjects – as well as building on learning from earlier years.

Students don't all continue RSE-related learning into Years 11-13 (ages 15-18), but many do. Over seven in 10 Year 11-13 students continue to learn about personal safety, including online safety (n = 27), friendships and bullying (n = 26), your identity (n = 24), managing feelings and emotions (n = 23), and celebrating differences (n = 23).

Table 2: *Teachers report which RSE topics they are teaching, by year level*

Topic	Year 0-4	Year 5-6	Year 7-8	Year 9-10	Year 11-13
Changes to their body	28%	70%	81%	80%	33%
Human reproduction	NA	18%	39%	82%	48%
Health and contraception	54%	73%	28%	89%	58%
Friendships and bullying	98%	98%	96%	96%	82%
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	NA	NA	39%	86%	61%
Managing feelings and emotions	99%	98%	93%	94%	73%
Consent	60%	46%	57%	93%	73%
Personal safety including online safety	96%	95%	97%	92%	85%
Your identity	86%	79%	86%	93%	76%
Celebrating differences	82%	86%	74%	80%	73%
Gender stereotypes	21%	42%	63%	82%	67%
Different sexual identities	8%	15%	38%	85%	67%
Gender identity	6%	15%	38%	77%	64%

We also compared teachers' and students' views on what was being taught, how much, and when. Mostly, we found that teachers report more being taught than students remember learning. This makes sense, as students are less likely to remember every aspect of their learning comparative to teachers, who have to plan and deliver the content. Teachers have more of a role in knowing what is covered. On sensitive (and potentially more interesting and memorable) topics such as gender identity and different sexual identities, however, students report learning more.

Schools told us they develop their RSE content using the New Zealand Curriculum to help them. Schools also use the RSE guidelines. The RSE guidelines include learning statements and guidance that are designed to support schools to cover some of the more sensitive topics, such as human reproduction, gender identities, and different sexual identities, as students get older. In several schools, we heard the content such as health and contraception are covered only briefly in the earlier years of secondary school and are revisited in later years as they become more relevant.

We also heard from schools that deciding which content to teach depends on the local context and needs of their community. For example, a rural school explained that their RSE curriculum is more focused on puberty for students in Years 7 and 8 than an urban school would be because the teachers think their students are relatively naïve about this topic.

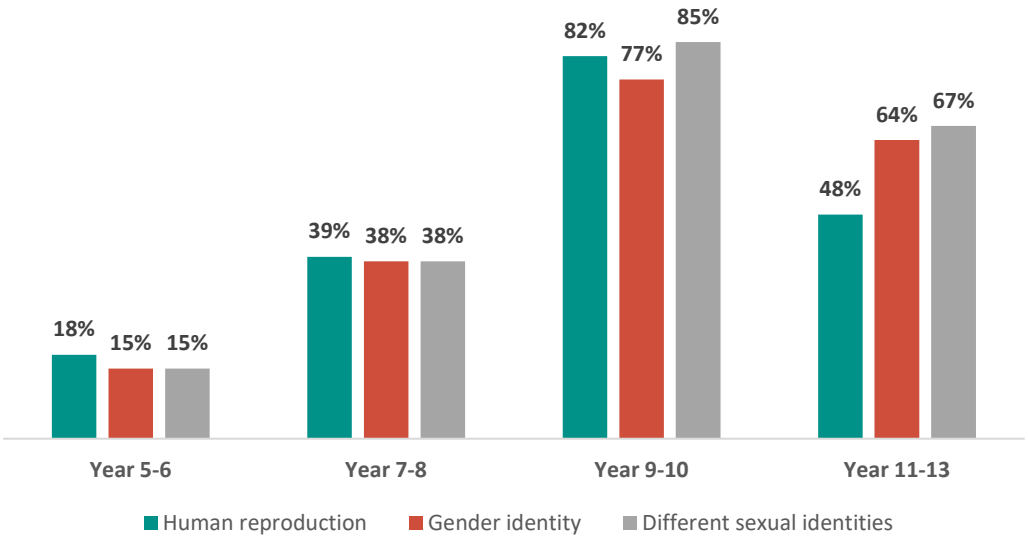
At another school, there is greater coverage of consent and pornography for their students, because the school knows their students are exposed to explicit content through social media.

> "When we first introduced Navigating the Journey [RSE programme from Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa], we didn't talk about pornography at all. It was completely off the table. But we had to bring it back in after we had had repeated incidents. There is a college next door to us and college kids were showing our intermediate kids pornography on the bus on the way home. We have to respond. We have to give our students the skills. And so, teaching about pornography was brought back into the program with really clear messaging around it." – Intermediate school teacher

Sensitive topics are taught later. In Years 5 - 6, human reproduction, gender identity, and different sexual identities are rarely taught, but by secondary school at least three-quarters of teachers report teaching these topics.

Teachers report that in Years 5-6, less than one in five students are learning about human reproduction (18 percent, n = 23), gender identity (15 percent, n = 20), and different sexual identities (15 percent, n = 20). In Years 7-8, this rises to two in five learning human reproduction (39 percent, n = 60), gender identity (38 percent, n = 58), and different sexual identities (38 percent, n = 58), and in Years 9-10 at least three quarters are learning about human reproduction (82 percent, n = 156), gender identity (77 percent, n = 147), and different sexual identities (85 percent, n = 162).

Figure 8: *Teachers report human reproduction, gender identity, and different sexual identities are taught at each level*



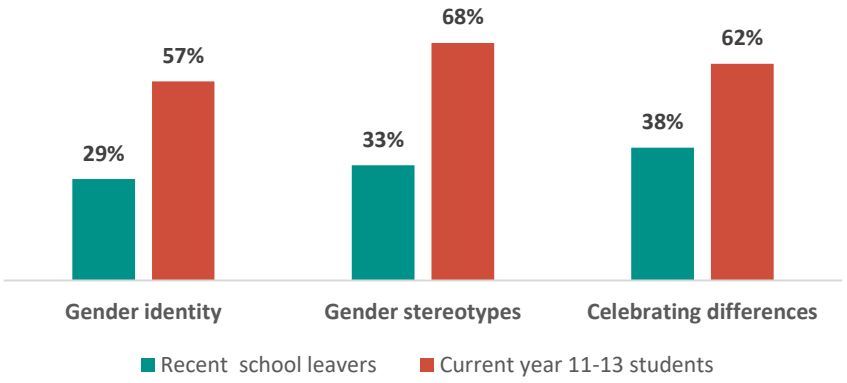
While the RSE guidelines indicate that some sensitive topics, such as sex, sexuality, and gender, could be covered in age appropriate ways at a reasonably young age, schools sometimes choose to leave them until later based on the outcome of their consultation with parents and whānau. Chapter 5 provides more detail on why primary school parents and whānau want sensitive topics to be taught later, and Chapter 6 looks at schools' experiences with consultation.

> "I think everybody including the parents are pretty comfortable with us teaching about pubertal changes, hygiene, that side of things. An intermediate teacher or a high school teacher will go through human reproduction properly, but I don't know if we do that. I've never taught it at Year 8." – Teacher at a Year 1-8 rural school

Recent school leavers are less likely than senior secondary students to report having learned about gender identity, gender stereotypes, and celebrating difference.

What is taught in RSE is changing over time, as society changes. Only a third of recent school leavers report they learnt about gender identity (29 percent), gender stereotypes (33 percent), and celebrating differences (38 percent), compared to over half of current Year 11-13 students who report they learn about these topics (57 percent (n = 809) of current Year 11-13 students report they learn about gender identity, 58 percent (n = 826) learn about gender stereotypes, and 62 percent (n = 881) learn about celebrating differences). There were no areas which recent school leavers were more likely to have learnt about than current Year 11-13 students.

Figure 9: *Recent school leavers and current Year 11-13 students report learning on key topics.*



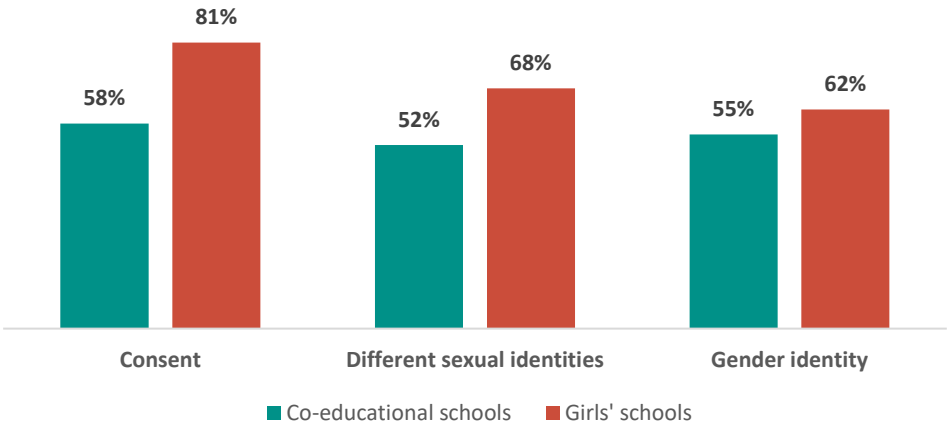
3. What is taught at different schools?

We found that what students learn about depends on where they go to school.

Girls' schools teach more about consent, different sexual identities, and gender identity than co-ed schools.

- Eight in 10 students in girls' schools learn about consent (81 percent, n = 1,037) compared to less than six in 10 in co-ed schools (58 percent, n = 2,613).
- Seven in 10 students in girls' schools learn about different sexual identities (68 percent, n = 879) compared to less than half in co-ed schools (52 percent, n = 2,335).
- Six in 10 students in girls' schools learn about gender identity (62 percent, n = 798) compared to half in co-ed schools (55 percent, n = 2,494).

Figure 10: *Students reporting what they are taught in RSE, for co-ed and girls' schools*



ERO found that a key driver of girl schools teaching topics more is a response to what their students want. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, girls are more likely than boys to want to learn about topics that impact them, which includes consent and staying safe online. Evidence shows that girls are more at risk than boys of sexual assault. For example, one in four girls (26 percent) and one in nine boys (11 percent) report experiencing sexual abuse before age 15.[33] Also more than one in five girls and one in 11 boys at secondary school report they have been touched in a sexual way or been made to do unwanted sexual things.[34]

Girls in girls' schools, in particular, tell us they rely on the school to teach them RSE because they aren't comfortable discussing RSE topics with their parents, especially the sensitive topics. Perhaps in response to this, girls' schools often prioritise RSE and they talked about being strategic about when to offer the content to allow time for a trusting relationship to develop first. Most often it is Health teachers that deliver RSE in girls' schools.

> "Sometimes my parents don't know as much as what the school would be teaching you. So if you do get it from your parents they might not have had a proper education for that. So then they can't answer all of the questions you have." – Student at a secondary girls' school

We found that boys' schools often don't prioritise RSE as much. We heard that it gets crowded out by academic subjects. Even within health and physical education, RSE gets de-prioritised, with boys' schools tending to prioritise sports. The international literature supports this finding. There is strong evidence that boys' needs are neglected due to an overemphasis on biology rather than relationships and this, coupled with peer and teacher expectations of masculine behaviour, doesn't help boys to understand themselves, others, or cope with relationships.[35]

> "Sometimes boys go, 'Why are we doing Health?' That's the first hurdle that we have to get over – [telling them] that you need to do Health because it's important to you." – Health and physical education teacher at a boys' secondary school

Differences in teaching by school characteristics.

Across this chapter, we have drawn on teachers' survey responses to inform our understandings of what is being taught in schools.

Interestingly, we found that a significant proportion of teachers who responded to our survey opted not to provide the name of the school where they teach. We heard that this is likely to be related to the strong views some community members, and groups, hold about RSE. This limited information means that, while ERO would usually use school information to compare different school characteristics (e.g., by socio-economic community, rurality, high-Māori rolls, or other ethnic makeups of the school roll), our numbers of school-specifying responses were too low to compare differences for what is taught in these different characteristic types of schools.

We were able to draw robust findings about primary and secondary sectors based on the year levels that teachers indicated they teach. However, it should be noted that area schools sit across both primary and secondary year levels, and there are a range of minor year-level differences at different primary, intermediate, and secondary schools. In the case of girls' and co-ed schools, we found striking differences in the reports we received from our student surveys, where we were able to make comparisons based on school information provided. These findings are reported earlier in this chapter.

Conclusion

Schools have a legal requirement to develop their school curriculum in a way that aligns to the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum, however, there is flexibility around the content that is taught in RSE, leading to no consistent approach.

At primary school, students tend to learn more about health, safety, and friendships. As they progress through school, they begin to learn more about sensitive topics. At secondary school, the majority of teaching occurs at Years 9-10 in which students learn about consent, human reproduction, different sexual

identities, gender identity, and more. The amount of RSE being taught varies by school type, with girls' schools tending to provide more comprehensive RSE teaching than co-ed schools.

In the next chapter, we share students' views on RSE and what they are being taught.

Chapter 6: Does RSE meet students' needs?

RSE teaching that works for students involves making sure that their learning is relevant, timely, and at the right level. We wanted to know what students think about how well RSE meets their needs.

We found that the amount of RSE learning is about right for most students, but they don't agree on all things. Most students want to learn about safety (including online safety), and friendships and bullying earlier. There are also topics like gender identity where students are more split between wanting more and wanting less. Students' faith, gender, and sexuality impact on how they view their RSE learning. Girls are more likely to want more RSE learning, earlier.

In this chapter, we set out how well RSE meets students' needs.

To be effective, RSE learning needs to be relevant, timely, and at the right level. To understand how well RSE is meeting students' needs, we looked at:

- → our surveys of students, teachers, school leaders, and recent school leavers
- → interviews and focus groups with students, teachers, school leaders, and parents and whānau.

This chapter sets out:

1. whether the right amount is being taught at the right time
2. whether RSE is meeting all students' needs
3. the impact of RSE on school attendance.

What we found: An overview

Most students agree that they are taught the right amount of most RSE topics and at the right age.

Across most topics, seven in 10 students say they are being taught the right amount and around half (41-55 percent) agree that they are learning it at the right time.

Most students want to learn about personal safety and friendships and bullying earlier.

Seven in 10 students want to learn personal safety (69 percent, n = 3,914) and friendships and bullying (76 percent, n = 4, 310) earlier.

Primary students want to learn about human reproduction later.

Six in 10 (60 percent, n = 459) of Years 5-6 and half (51 percent, n = 767) of Years 7-8 students want to learn about human reproduction later.

Girls often want to learn more and earlier on key topics.

Over a quarter of girls want to learn **more** about managing feelings and emotions (25 percent, n = 835) and gender stereotypes (31 percent, n = 840). Over three-quarters of girls want to learn about friendship and bullying (82 percent, n = 3,070) and personal safety including online safety (75 percent, n = 2,810) **earlier**.

Boys are more likely to want to learn all topics later than girls, reflecting that boys may go through puberty later.

Boys are more likely to want to learn **all topics later** than girls. The most common topics they want to learn about later are human reproduction (35 percent, n = 579), different sexual identities (22 percent, n = 327), and romantic relationships including intimate relationships (22 percent, n = 285).

Students' views are split about when and how much they learn about human reproduction, different sexual identities, gender identity, and romantic relationships.

Three in 10 students want to learn about human reproduction earlier (28 percent, n = 1,491), and three in 10 want to learn it later (28 percent, n = 1,496). A third of students want to learn about different sexual identities (33 percent, n = 1657), gender identity (36 percent, n = 1814), and romantic relationships (31 percent, n = 1,421) earlier, and nearly one in five want to learn about these subjects later (16-18 percent).

Students' faith and sexuality impacts how well RSE meets their needs.

Students of faith are more likely to want to learn **less** about gender identity (24 percent, n = 202), and different sexual identities (23 percent, n = 202), than students who do not practice a faith. Secondary school students from rainbow communities want to learn about all RSE topics **earlier** than other students.

Recent school leavers report that there were significant gaps in their RSE learning.

We found that many school leavers who *didn't* learn about key RSE topics at school would have valued learning about them. Over three-quarters of the students didn't learn and would have liked to learn about consent (82 percent, n = 93), managing feelings and emotions (78 percent, n = 206), personal safety including online safety (78 percent, n = 84), and changes to their body (75 percent, n = 118).

Some students decide to miss school to avoid RSE, but others go to school because they want to learn RSE.

Seven percent (n = 371) of intermediate and secondary students report missing school due to RSE lessons, while 9 percent (n = 447) of students in intermediate and secondary schools report attending school specifically for RSE.

In the following sections we look at each of these findings in more detail.

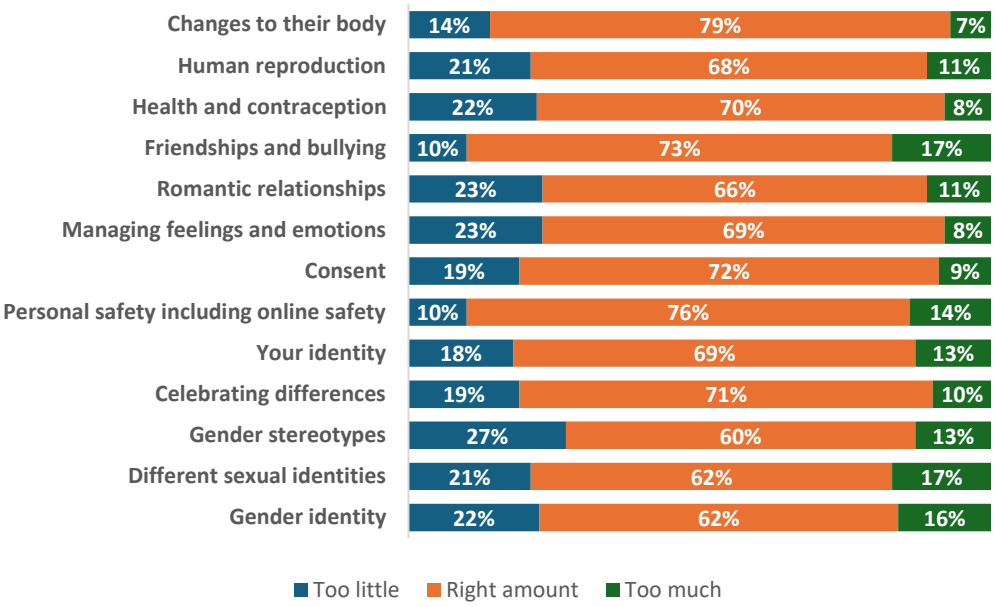
1. Is the right amount taught at the right time?

Students report they learn the right amount on most topics.

ERO asked students about the 13 topics of RSE set out in Chapter 3, and if they learnt the right amount of each topic to meet their needs.

Across most RSE topics, around seven in 10 students report that they are learning the right amount.

Figure 11: *Students who report learning the right amount about topics*



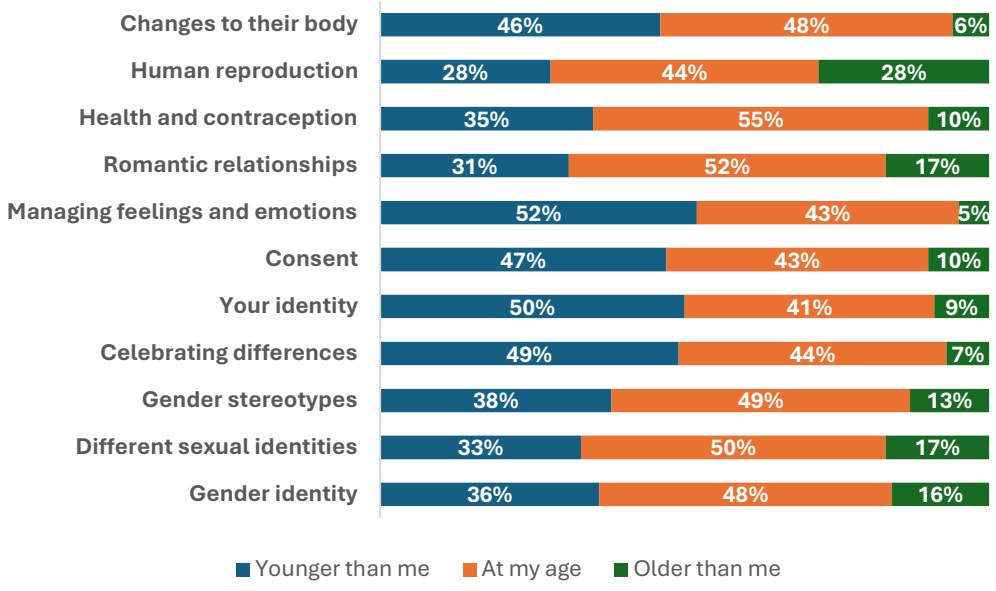
"[The teachers] cover a lot of areas pretty extensively. Each year they kind of cover the same thing, but in a little bit more depth... So you're kind of like reiterating [and] adding a little bit more." – Secondary school student

Students report they learn most topics at the right time.

We also asked students if they learnt topics at the right time or want to learn them earlier or later.

Around half (41 to 55 percent) of students report that they learn RSE topics at the right time.

Figure 12: *Students reporting when they would like to learn about RSE topics*



> "I think the timing was pretty much spot on in terms of when you would start to talk about that sort of thing amongst your friends or notice it amongst your peers. That was when we were getting the learning about it at the same time at school." – Secondary school student

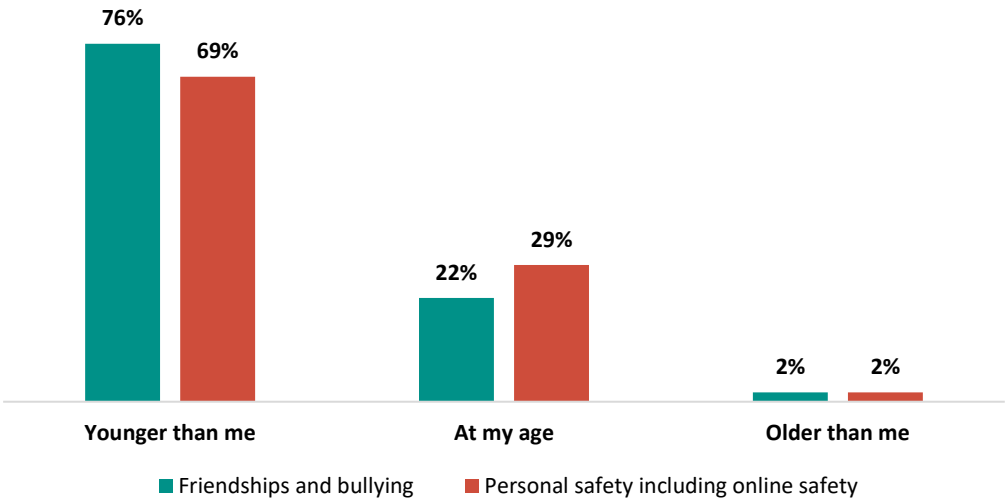
Appendix 4 of the evaluation report sets out student views on what they learnt, by year group.

Most students want to learn about friendships and bullying, and personal safety, including online safety, earlier.

There are two key topics that students consistently want to learn earlier.

Most students want to learn about friendships and bullying (76 percent, n = 4310), and personal safety including online safety (69 percent, n = 3914) earlier.

Figure 13: *Students reporting when they would like to learn about friendships and bullying, and personal safety, including online safety*



ERO found students want these topics earlier because they are important for all students. Bullying is high in Aotearoa New Zealand – a third of Year 5 students are bullied on a monthly basis and two-thirds of 15-year-olds report have been bullied at some point.[36] Given the impact of bullying victimisation on general health and mental health,[37] it is unsurprising that students are interested in learning about it earlier. Students told us they want teaching not just on recognising bullying, but also how to intervene and respond to it.

Friendships are important for all young people because they are positively associated with life satisfaction and self-esteem,[38] especially for girls.[39] Students want to be taught practical ways of navigating friendships – depending on the age of students, they want to learn about how to make friends, how to maintain trust in friendships, and how to deal with friendship break-ups.

> "I think that a big thing which is often just taken for granted is female friendships. They are the foundation of our happiness and when friendship breakups happen, it's important to know how to handle and deal with it." – Year 9-10 girl

We also found that online safety is an important topic due to the risks of harm online, including unwanted digital communications, which are relatively common. Previous research has found that seven in 10 teenagers in Aotearoa New Zealand have experienced at least one type of unwanted digital communication

in the past year.[40] The main types are being contacted by a stranger and accidentally seeing inappropriate content. [41]

> "For teenagers [it's] a scary world of technology where everything is super easy to access, but there's also a lot of information that collides with one another. I think the class was super beneficial, giving you not just healthy information, but also broader information." – Year 13 student

Another form of harm online is cyberbullying, which raises the risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviour by 2.3 times.[42] An Aotearoa New Zealand study found that 46 percent of 18–19-year-olds have experienced cyber-bullying, and 31 percent victims did not seek help.[43] By age 11, two-thirds of Aotearoa New Zealand students own their own mobile phone[44] and young people are more likely to experience online harm through mobile phones that other internet-based tools.[45]

Girls are most at risk of online harm than boys.[46] Girls are more likely to encounter unwanted digital communication through social media compared to boys, who are more likely to encounter unwanted digital communication through online gaming. [47] There is also a rising trend in the online harms and hate speech against rainbow communities reported in various countries.[48]

Both girls (75 percent, n = 2,810) and boys (63 percent, n = 1,086) want to learn about online safety earlier.

Student views are split about when and how much they learn about sensitive topics, like human reproduction, different sexual identities, and gender identity.

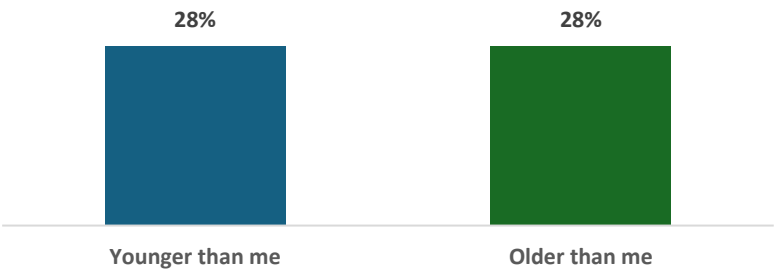
Human reproduction, different sexual identities, and gender identity are sensitive topics which can be interesting and relevant for students, but may also be uncomfortable to talk about. These are the topics where ERO found the most markedly split student views – meaning that there are significant groups at both ends, wanting to learn more/less, and earlier/later.

Human reproduction

Most students (68 percent, n = 2,900) report they learn the right amount about human reproduction, but 28 percent (n = 1,491) of students want to learn about human reproduction earlier, and 28 (n = 1,496) percent want to learn about human reproduction later.

One in five students report they learn too little about human reproduction (21 percent, n = 882), compared to one in 10 students who report they learn too much (11 percent, n = 478).

Figure 14*: Students report when they want to learn about human reproduction*

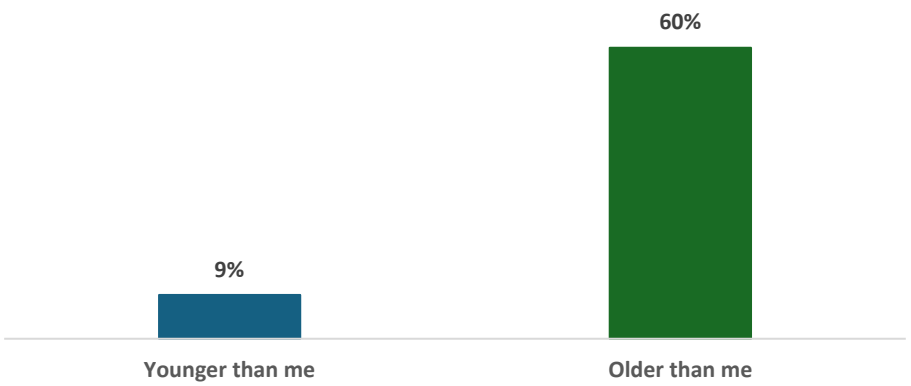


For the topic of human reproduction, which includes basic concepts about broader reproduction (e.g. example the life cycles of animals and insects) for young primary students, and safe sexual practices from early secondary school, we found that students who want it to be taught less or when they are older often don't see the relevance of it. For example, it may not seem relevant if they haven't gone through puberty yet, aren't sexually active, or simply don't want to have children. School staff also told us about students having these sorts of views.

"[Students] do tune out of 'irrelevant' teaching if it isn't something that affects you." – Intermediate school principal

More than half (60 percent, n = 459) of primary school students want to learn about human reproduction later.

Figure 15: *Primary school students report when they want to learn about human reproduction*



"Reproduction should be for older kids like Year 11 and up" – Girl at intermediate school

Faith also plays a role in the divided views about if and when sex should be taught as part of RSE. Students of faith tend to align themselves with the views of their religious community in relation to when it is appropriate to have discussions about sex. This is a reason they prefer to be taught about sex at home or by their church. We say more on this later in this chapter.

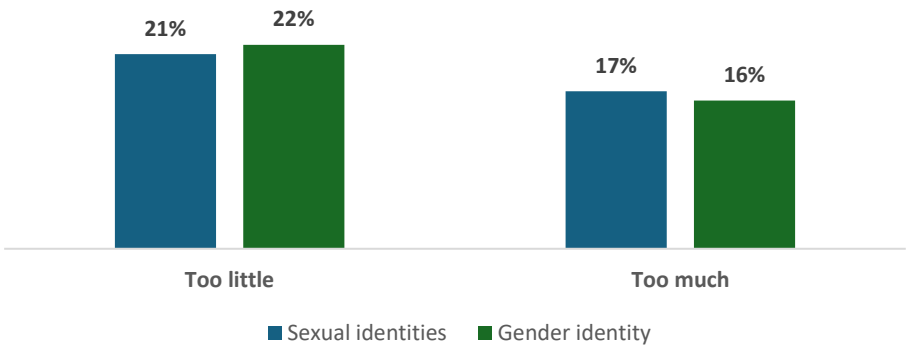
Sexual identities and gender identity

Students are most split about when and how much they learn about sexual and gender identities.

One in five students report they learn too little about different sexual identities (21 percent, n = 906) and gender identity (22 percent, n = 947). One in six students report they learn too much about different sexual identities (17 percent, n = 731) and gender identity (16 percent, n = 725).

One-third of students want to learn about different sexual identities (33 percent, n = 1,657) and gender identity (36 percent, n = 1,814) earlier, but one in six students want to learn about different sexual identities (17 percent, n = 863) and gender identity (16 percent, n = 788) later.

Figure 16: *Students report how much they learn about sexual identities and gender identity*



The split views of students on these topics reflects the increasingly strong split views in society.

ERO found that when students think they are learning too much or too early about genders and sexualities it is usually because they aren't interested in these topics, especially if they don't personally relate to them– for example not needing to know about different sexual identities if they are straight themselves. Less commonly, we heard that students don't want to be encouraged to think about their own identity when they don't feel ready – the content simply doesn't feel relevant to them.

> "I think that the non-binary stuff is not really relevant to teach to those who do not [identify as such]." – Year 9-10 student

We also heard that students not wanting to cover these sensitive topics may reflect their parents' views. As discussed further in Chapter 5, some parents and whānau are worried that teaching these topics, especially to younger children, could confuse them or 'put ideas in their heads'. Some students, as with some parents and whānau, don't want these topics to be taught at all due to cultural or religious beliefs - which we talk about later in this chapter.

> "I think you shouldn't be teaching this to younger audience and let the parents teach the kids when it is the right time, otherwise they get inflicted onto this." Year 9-10 student

Other students believe the opposite, that gender and sexual identities need to be taught in *more* depth and earlier. These students think being informed earlier can help them make sense of sensitive issues before they are exposed to misinformation. Students told us that they are concerned about exposure to misinformation at an increasingly younger age on the internet – so want to be able to be armed with accurate and clear messages through RSE.

> "If we teach children from an early age how to be a better person not only with respecting those who are in the rainbow communities but in every attribute of life, this makes tough topics for my generation to talk about much easier." – Year 11-12 student

This aligns with the more general finding from our research that students value RSE because it can help them understand and accept other people (as discussed in Chapter 2). Students who want to learn about different identities acknowledge the link between lack of understanding and bullying.

> "Maybe if other people learn about what being gay is and how it works, then they will stop bullying other people. Maybe they'll get an understanding and won't use it so much as a negative term. When you learn more about it and your teachers and your classmates talk openly about it, it will get rid of the feeling that being gay is bad, it's not a joke, it's pretty offensive to those who are" – Intermediate school student

These split views of students on when and how much gender and sexual identities should be taught reflects polarisation on these topics in wider society. While some groups have become liberal and open to talking about these topics, other groups are deeply worried about changing attitudes.[49]

2. Does RSE meet all students' needs?

ERO looked at how RSE meets the needs of different groups of students. We were interested to find out how factors, such as gender, school setting, sexual identity, and practising a faith, impact on how students feel about their RSE learning. Some groups, including gender diverse students and MELAA students, had response rates that (while proportional to the wider population) are too low to statistically compare to other groups.

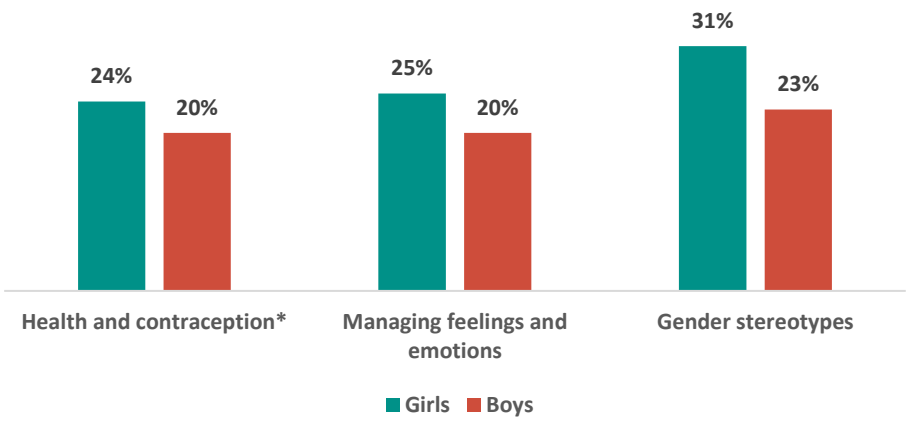
Girls want to learn more and earlier on key topics compared to boys.

Nearly one-third of girls want to learn more about gender stereotypes (31 percent, n = 840), a quarter want to learn more about managing feelings and emotions (25 percent, n = 835), and a quarter want to learn more about health and contraception (24 percent, n = 740).

Eight in 10 girls want to learn about friendship and bullying earlier (82 percent, n = 3,070), compared with seven in 10 boys (69 percent, n = 1,209).

Three quarters of girls want to learn about personal safety, including online safety, earlier (75 percent, n = 2,810), compared to just under two thirds of boys (63 percent, n = 1,086).

Figure 17: *RSE topics girls want to learn more about compared to boys*



We know from the international literature that girls are more supportive of RSE being taught than boys,[50] and especially about topics that impact them, such gender stereotypes that can disadvantage them in society, as well as contraception and unplanned pregnancies.

The international literature also tells us that girls have a stronger interest than boys in the topic of managing feelings and emotions because they are generally more eager to discuss their thoughts, feelings, and worries.[51] Being able to manage their feelings and emotions helps with developing and maintaining friendships, which we know girls are more interested in than boys (discussed above).

Our research aligns with the wider evidence. We found that girls want to learn more about contraceptive options, and they want to learn about consent earlier, which is important for navigating healthy relationships.

> "We definitely should learn more about consenting and relationships. We're going to be seniors next year, so that might be more relevant [now]." – Year 10 student at a girls' school

We found that girls want to learn about other topics earlier. Girls are concerned about the possibility that by the time some topics are covered, particularly to do with bodies, consent, and romantic relationships, it is often 'too late'. We heard that girls in primary schools want to learn about body changes as early as Year 4, *before* puberty happens to them. Girls in secondary school echoed this, saying that it would be better for younger girls to learn about their upcoming body changes in advance of needing to know.

> "When my first period came, I was very unprepared, and stumbled through putting on my first pad, as it wasn't taught. I wish I got more reassurance. I wish I knew that it was fine." – Year 9-10 girl

Some girls would like to learn RSE separately from boys, even if the content is the same. This is related to feeling embarrassed to discuss RSE topics with boys, and in response to differences in maturity between boys and girls.

> "[I would prefer to learn in separate groups] because at this age girls are way more mature, but boys joke around about everything." – Year 7-8 girl at an Intermediate school

Girls have views about what boys should be taught.

We found that girls have strong views about what boys should cover in RSE. In particular, they wanted boys to cover topics that teach them how to interact with girls and women.

Older girls think boys should learn more about intimate relationships and consent, so they have realistic and healthy expectations of relationships. Girls told us that for boys to know what healthy relationships look like, they need to learn about social attitudes towards women, about sexual violence, and about the impacts of pornography. Secondary school girls told us that boys often don't know that pornography isn't real, which is concerning - we know that pornography rarely depicts meaningful consent, and often includes coercion and/or violence, particularly towards girls and women, as a 'normal' part of sexual encounters.[52]

> "There needs to be open conversations in school and at home to ask those vulnerable questions, and for parents and teachers to be teaching young males about pornography." – Year 13 girl

We heard that girls are sharing these concerns with their teachers too.

> "I don't think everyone is getting that message [about consent and healthy relationships]... I remember having a conversation with my Year 12s about how they were being treated by their

boyfriends. You know, it was just like, 'Hey, that's not on.'" – Teacher at a secondary girls' school

"[In our health classes we have to discuss] how do we deal with situations when we know that our partner is watching a lot of pornography and expecting these things of me that I don't feel comfortable doing." – Teacher at a secondary girls' school

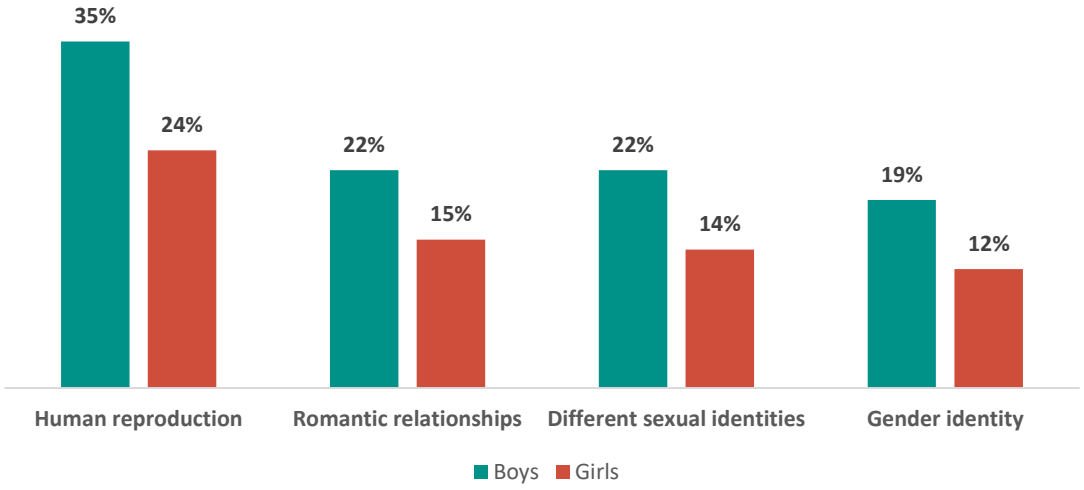
We heard that some younger girls want boys to understand the impact of puberty on girls, so they don't ask hurtful or embarrassing questions. Others told us they prefer separate content for different genders.

"I feel like some things that can be talked about with everyone, but there's some stuff that only girls need to know and there's some stuff only guys need to know." – Year 7-8 girl

Boys are more likely to want to learn all topics later.

Across all topics, boys are more likely than girls to want to learn about topics later. The topics that boys are most likely to want to learn about later are human reproduction (35 percent, n = 579), romantic relationships (22 percent, n =285), sexual identity (22 percent, n = 327), and gender identity (19 percent, n = 300).

Figure 18: *Key RSE topics boys report they want to learn about later*



We know that boys reach maturity later than girls,[53] which could explain why boys want to learn topics later. We heard that while boys in senior secondary school tend to have more buy-in to RSE learning, junior students show some resistance or 'silly behaviours' in RSE lessons. In the case of one boys' secondary school, this led to a decision to delay teaching some RSE topics.

"I'd prefer separating the boys and girls. The boys make it very awkward and make me feel very uncomfortable. They always laugh and make jokes" – Year 7-8 girl at co-ed intermediate school

We also know from the evidence base that peer pressure can impact on how teenage boys respond to RSE topics.[54] Research also shows that boys are more concerned with not appearing foolish about sex and their bodies, causing worry and embarrassment.[55] This may also explain why boys want to keep putting off RSE

until later. Boys also think some RSE topics are simply not that relevant to them, especially if they are about girls' sexual health.[56]

Appendix 4 of the evaluation report sets out in more detail boys' and girls' views on what they learn.

However, some boys at boys' schools report they learn too little.

We heard that there could be a tendency for boys' schools to prioritise 'more academic' learning and sports over 'softer' subjects like RSE, as set out in Chapter 3. Boys in boys' schools are left with gaps in their knowledge or have to teach themselves.

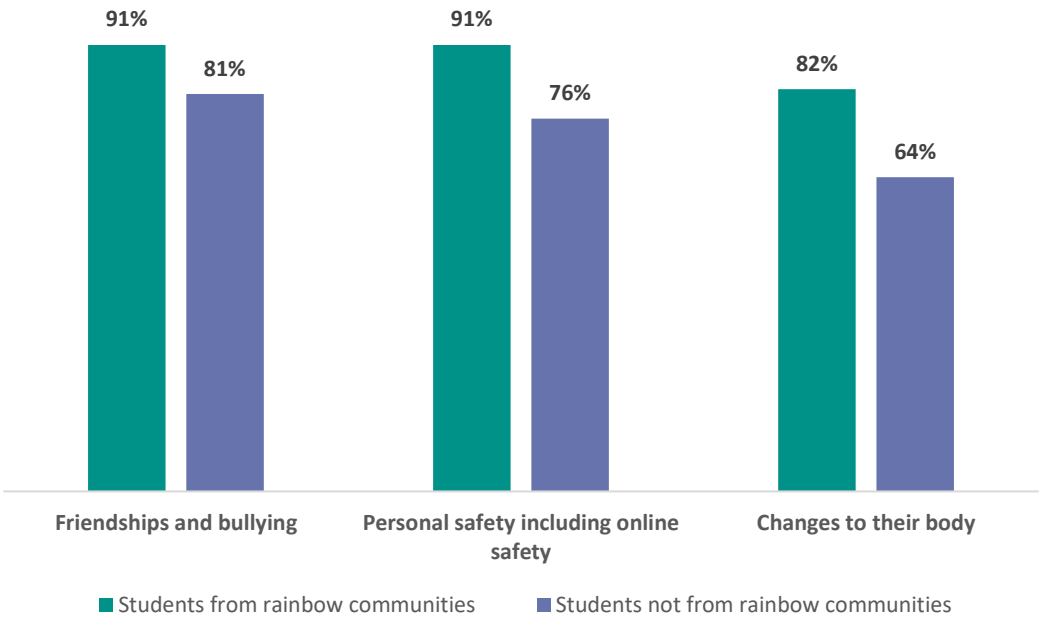
> "[I'd like more about] releasing emotions, how to speak about them, how to tell people how you feel about something if you don't like it. We didn't really go into really full depth of that when we learned that back in Year 9 and 10. So basically, I had to teach myself." – Year 11 student at a boys' school

Boys in boys' schools also told us that they want to learn more about puberty, including what happens to girls during puberty. This finding supports what we heard from girls, that they want boys to understand them better (see above).

Students from rainbow communities want more on every topic and earlier. The top topics they want to learn more about are friendships and bullying, personal safety, and changes to their body.

The three topics that secondary students from rainbow communities[l] most want to learn *earlier* are friendship and bullying (91 percent, n = 314), personal safety including online safety (91 percent, n = 310), and changes to their body (82 percent, n = 281).

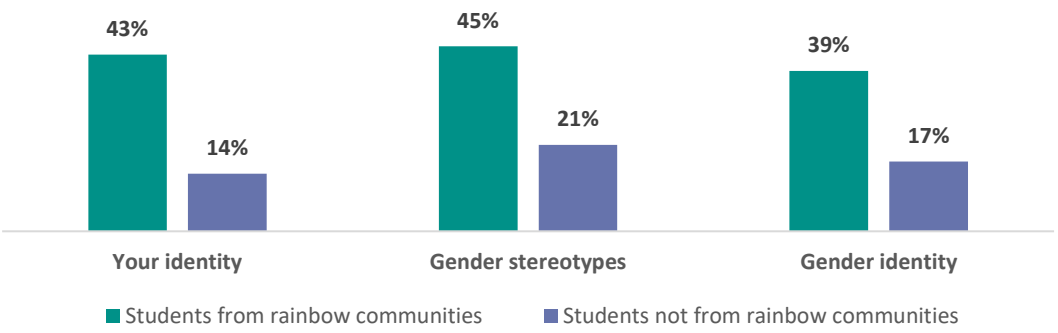
Figure 19*: Topics that students want to learn earlier, by rainbow community identification*



[l] On expert advice, ERO notes that a limitation of this finding is that some students from rainbow communities may not always feel ready, comfortable, or safe to identify this way. This means that some students from rainbow communities' views will not have been captured through the self-identification option in our surveys.

Students from rainbow communities want to learn *more* about their identity, gender stereotypes, and gender identity compared to other students. More than twice as many students from rainbow communities report that they want to learn more about these topics, compared to other students.

Figure 20: *Topics that students want to learn more about, by rainbow community identification*



Students from rainbow communities face higher rates of isolation and bullying,[57] and many want their non-rainbow peers to have greater understanding of gender identities and stereotypes to help with acceptance of difference.[58]

ERO found that students from rainbow communities find identity and stereotyping conversations especially relevant, compared to their peers who may have fewer questions or challenges in this area. Within these RSE topics, students from rainbow communities also want deeper coverage on aspects such body image (relationship with body) and how to take care of their bodies, as well as social issues, such as cultural perspectives on genders and mental health issues within rainbow communities.

> "Not teaching students about healthy relationships will lead to students getting into unhealthy relationships. It'll create even more this intense sense of loneliness and isolation. It could make a teen suicide rate even worse." – Senior secondary student, rainbow focus group

However, we heard some students from rainbow communities can be uncomfortable with some RSE topics. For example, gender diverse students can be uncomfortable learning about body changes when what they are taught does not reflect their own experience. We also heard that the RSE learning experiences may not always be positive for students from rainbow communities. It can be awkward when teachers only cover issues like gender identity at a surface level (due to concerns about students' attitudes), and when peers don't get involved in the class discussions.

Gender diverse students value RSE that teaches them and their peers about diverse experiences.

A strong theme from ERO's focus groups with students from rainbow communities, including gender-diverse students, was the importance of RSE that reflects gender diverse experiences, alongside the experiences of other students.

We heard that this makes RSE more relevant to gender diverse students and supports their engagement in RSE learning, and they believe it helps their peers to understand diverse experiences.

"To see queer identities talked about and for others to learn about them." – Year 13 student from rainbow communities

"By not teaching queer students that their identity is valid or even exists, it makes people feel like there is something wrong with them, or they are the only person having that experience." – Student from rainbow focus group

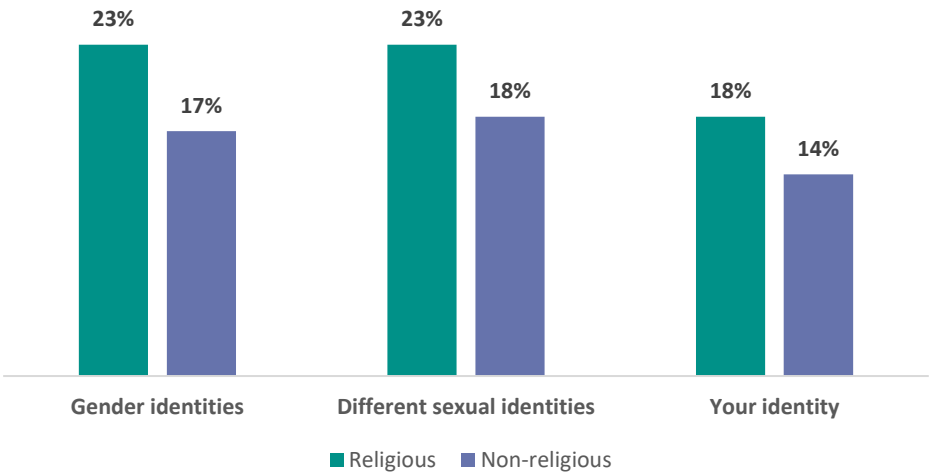
In the schools ERO visited for its 2018 report,[59] leaders often spoke about the importance of RSE that was inclusive for their sex-, gender-, and sexuality- diverse students.

The effectiveness of RSE for gender diverse students (and their peers, regarding learning about gender diversity) also matters for health and safety reasons - this group of students are at much greater risk of poor outcomes including depression, self-harm, unsafe environments, and higher levels of social and school isolation.[60]

Students who practice a faith want less taught about gender identity and sexual identity.

Nearly one in four secondary students who practice a faith want to learn less about gender identity (23 percent, n = 202), different sexual identities (23 percent, n = 202), and nearly one in five want to learn less about their identity (18 percent, n = 166).

Figure 21: *Areas students want to learn less about, by religious belief*



International evidence shows that gender identities and sexual identities are contentious topics and are the most challenging parts of RSE,[61] for some faith-based groups, across a range of religions including some denominations of Muslims and Christians.[62]

This wider evidence helps explain why students of faith prefer to learn less about gender identities and sexual identities. Some faiths have specific views and/or guidance about genders and sexualities, which may not always align with what is taught at school. For example, some students practising a faith told us they believe in two genders and aren't comfortable learning about gender diversity in RSE.

"Education about reproduction and puberty should be compulsory but everything else should not be compulsory. Some students who do not want to learn this or have other reasons to not want to learn this should be able to [withdraw]." – Year 11-12 student who practices a faith

"Educate parents [provide a booklet], so they can teach their own children about sexuality according to their beliefs" - Year 11-12 student who practices a faith

Other students of faith told us they *do* want to cover topics like gender diversity and sexual identities, but through the lens of their own religion. For example, teaching these topics can be aligned with the faith-based teaching regarding loving all people equally regardless of differences.

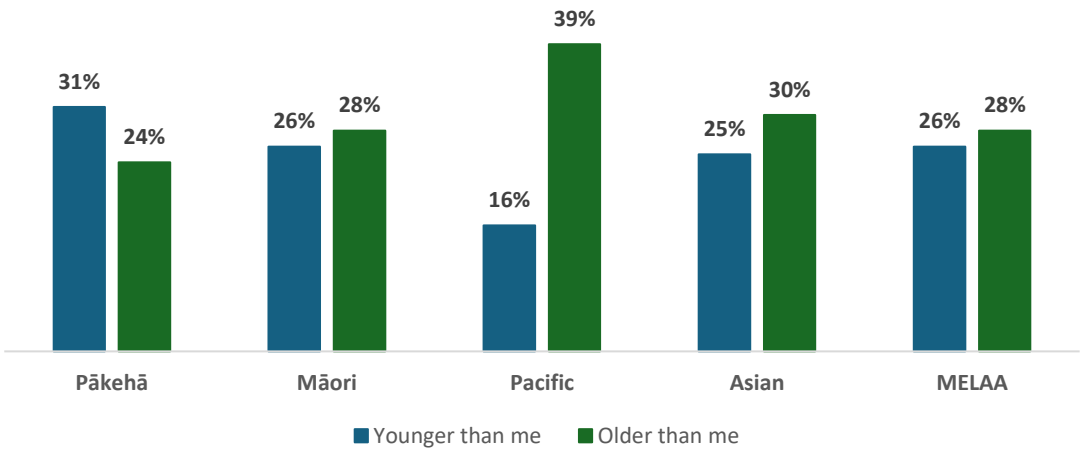
"At our school there's definitely a broad range of students that [identify] as different sexualities. That's taught all the students to have this mutual respect naturally. And it ties back down to the school's values, in terms of Catholic teachings, like human dignity to respect everyone." – Year 12-13 student at a Catholic school

Pacific students want to learn about RSE later than other students.

Across most RSE topics, Pacific students report they want to learn things later compared to students of other ethnicities.

In particular, Pacific students want to learn about human reproduction later (39 percent, n = 164) than students of other ethnicities.

Figure 22: *Students want to learn about human reproduction earlier and later by ethnicity*



Pacific students wanting to learn content later may reflect their parents' views. As set out in Chapter 2, Pacific parents are generally less supportive of RSE, particularly topics related to bodies and sex, than parents and whānau of other ethnicities.

However, this isn't always the case for their children. Research has found that intergenerational differences between migrant and Aotearoa New Zealand born Pacific peoples can result in diverse worldviews,[63] which means that Pacific young people growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand can feel 'caught between cultures.'[64]

"At home it's not a topic we usually talk about. Our parents need to know about it. It's a topic we need to focus on and can't just let it slide." - Year 8 Pacific student

This wider evidence can help explain why we heard a range of views from Pacific students. Some Pacific students support the teaching of RSE. Others are less supportive or simply want content later when they will be more prepared for it. Even students who are supportive recognise that some RSE content doesn't align well with the cultural and faith-based views of their communities.

"We're Samoans and we don't really talk about sexuality and relationships because it's a sacred gap [vā] in our cultures. But I think that it shouldn't stay like the old ways. They should try to elevate it and bring some change to it. We want our culture to be different and should still keep the gap there, but we don't want them to always stay like this." – Pacific student in Catholic school

"[Pacific students' views about RSE are] a combination of cultural and religious… and there are varying views across generations." – Pacific school counsellor

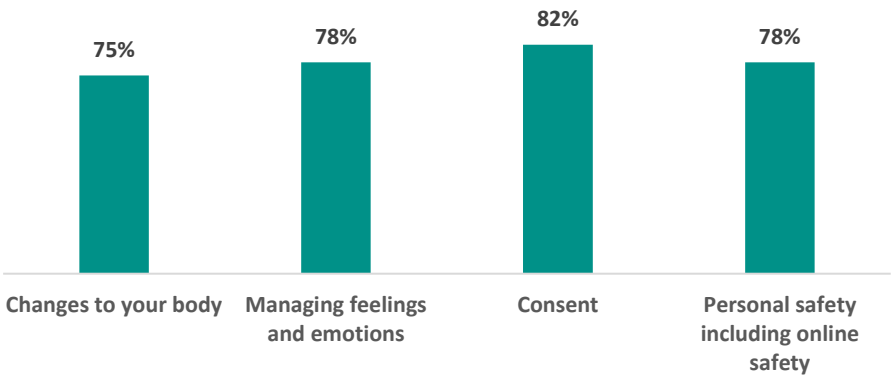
Recent school leavers report that there were significant gaps in their RSE learning.

To understand how well RSE meets student needs across the years, ERO surveyed students who left school in the last four years (i.e., their last years were between 2020 and 2024) to find out how well their RSE learning in school met their needs. We found that there were key gaps in their learning.

We found that many school leavers who *didn't* learn about key RSE topics at school would have valued learning about them.

Over four in five of the students who didn't learn about consent would have liked to (82 percent, n = 93), and at least three quarters of those that didn't learn about managing feelings and emotions (78 percent, n = 206), personal safety, including online safety (78 percent, n = 84), and changes to their body (75 percent, n = 118) would have liked to learn about these topics.

Figure 23: *Topics that recent school leavers report they didn't learn about but would have liked to*



School leavers were able to reflect on how RSE could have prepared them better for life after school. A strong theme was that their teachers hadn't been direct enough, due to being awkward around the topics.

We heard that the teaching about contraception had been partial or not practical enough (e.g., only focusing on condoms; and not on other methods of contraception, female contraception, side effects of contraception pills, consequences of pregnancies, etc.). As context to this, we heard that some topics can be optional, including contraception. This means students may have missed out on coverage altogether, leaving them trying to find information from other sources, which may not be inaccurate or misleading.

"I learnt so much more from the Internet. [I want to learn more about] misconceptions and how inaccurate porn is, how the birth control pill works, Plan B for birth control, all that." – School leaver

> "Around sex education at school, all I really remember was putting a condom on a banana. We definitely need more teaching on consent and what it is and how you can tell someone's not into it. And more about identity, who you are, who you're into, who you're not into, etc." – School leaver

School leavers also reported they wish they had learned more about romantic relationships because these topics are harder to research independently, and students have missed out on open discussions in a safe space. Romantic relationships may have been less relevant in school, but quickly become important as young people enter adulthood.

3. Does RSE impact attendance?

While RSE can be interesting for students, it can also broach uncomfortable topics.

We asked students if they have ever gone to school specifically because they have RSE lessons, or if they have ever missed school because they have RSE lessons.

Some students miss school to avoid RSE but others go to school because they want to learn RSE.

Seven percent of intermediate and secondary students report missing school due to RSE lessons, while 9 percent of students in intermediate and secondary schools report attending school specifically for RSE.

As discussed above, students, as well as their parents and whānau, can be uncomfortable with some RSE topics due to cultural or religious reasons. Depending on the level of discomfort, this can lead students to withdraw from RSE fully or partially, or they may simply not attend school when these topics are scheduled to be taught. We heard this was a reason for non-attendance for some Pacific students and some new migrant students.

> "Many students feel uncomfortable and they don't like attending those classes. It can also cause anxiety in students as it is in general uncomfortable and just overall pointless." Year 9-10 girl

Alternatively, we heard students are generally interested in RSE. Many want to learn more about certain topics, such as consent, different types of relationships (including intimate relationships), practical advice on dealing with unsafe situations - and covering these topics can make it more likely that they want to go to school. The relevance of RSE topics is, therefore, an important factor.

> "I think I've learnt more from health than in all my other subjects combined – it is such an important thing to learn about and these topics will apply in everyday situations. the consequences of not learning it are really quite big." – Year 12-13 student

Conclusion

The challenges faced by children and young people are changing, with increased risks, for example around online content.

ERO found widespread support from students for having RSE in schools. Many students tell us they are taught the right amount of most topics, and at the right age. They also share common views on the essential topics they wish to see addressed at an earlier stage, such as friendships, bullying, safety (including online safety), managing emotions, and understanding consent. Most students want to learn about personal safety and friendships and bullying earlier than they currently do.

However, there are still areas where RSE could be improved to better meet students' needs. Students aren't always getting the content that they need, at the right time for when they need it. We found that boys in particular want to learn about RSE later – when topics become more relevant to them. We also saw that students' faith and sexuality impacts their views, particularly on key topics related to gender and reproduction. Recent school leavers report that they did not receive all of the RSE knowledge that they needed for their life beyond school.

In the next chapter, we look at the views of parents and whānau on RSE content.

Chapter 7: How well does RSE meet the expectations of parents and whānau?

RSE is unique in the way it involves parents and whānau. Schools are required to consult with them about their RSE teaching, and parents and whānau can choose to withdraw their children from some or all RSE lessons. This is not the case with other school subjects.

Parents and whānau are largely supportive of RSE being taught, however many would like to change what and when RSE is taught, and a small proportion don't think it should be taught at all. Parent and whānau views are split on sensitive topics, particularly gender identity, gender stereotypes, and sexual identities.

In this chapter, we set out what we found out about parent and whānau views on RSE.

Teaching and learning at school benefits from the support and involvement of students' parents and whānau.[65] Parents and whānau have the option to withdraw their children from RSE learning, so meeting parent and whānau expectations is particularly important for RSE.

To understand parent and whānau views, we looked at:

- → interviews and focus groups with parents and whānau
- → interviews and focus groups with experts and sector groups
- → our surveys of parents and whānau[m]
- → local and international research.

This chapter sets out how well RSE is currently meeting parent and whānau expectations. It covers:

1. parent and whānau expectations on the amount taught and when it is taught
2. parent and whānau expectations, by different groups.

What we found: An overview

A third of parents and whānau want to change what or how RSE is taught, and over one in ten do not want it taught in schools.

Thirty-four percent (n = 1,213) of parents and whānau think that RSE should be taught, but that it should be taught differently. The proportion is higher for primary school parents and whānau (38 percent, n = 424) than secondary school parents and whānau (32 percent, n = 577).

For most RSE topics, parents and whānau agree their child is learning the right amount.

More than six in 10 parents and whānau think that the right amount of each individual RSE topic is being taught.

[m] We surveyed parents and whānau through selected schools, and an additional survey through a panel provider to ensure we have a representative sample. For more about this, see our companion technical report.

Many parents and whānau want their children to learn more about consent, relationships, and health, and learn earlier about friendships, safety and managing emotions.

The most common topics that parents and whānau want their children to learn more about are consent (31 percent, n = 717), romantic relationships (28 percent, n = 441), and health and contraception (27 percent, n = 630). The most common topics that parents want their children to learn earlier are friendships and bullying (61 percent, n = 1,673), personal safety including online safety (58 percent, n = 1,587), and managing feelings and emotions (47 percent, n = 1,262).

Parents and whānau of girls want their children to learn about changes to their body and consent earlier, compared to parents and whānau of boys.

Parent and whānau views are split on topics of gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes.

Twenty-five percent (n = 639) want gender identity taught earlier, but 37 percent (n = 915) it taught later. Twenty-two percent (n = 484) of parents want more taught, but 26 percent (n = 555) want less.

Thirty-one percent (n = 791) of parents and whānau want different sexual identities taught earlier, 24 percent (n = 613) want it taught later. Twenty-two percent want more to be taught (n = 499), and 20 percent (n = 460) want less.

Thirty percent (n = 757) of parents and whānau want gender stereotypes taught earlier, and 30 percent (n = 752) want it taught later. Twenty-six percent (n = 558) of parents and whānau want more to be taught, and 19 percent (n = 405) want less.

More than half of primary school parents and whānau want more sensitive topics taught later.

More than half of primary school parents and whānau want human reproduction (63 percent, n = 578), gender identity (54 percent, n = 468), and gender stereotypes (51 percent, n = 442) covered later.

Parents and whānau who practice a faith want less RSE.

Parents and whānau who practice a faith want less RSE, in particular around gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes.

Parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities are more likely to want their children to learn about all RSE topics earlier, especially gender identity and changes to the body.

Parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities are much more likely to want their children to learn earlier about gender identity (61 percent, (n = 65) compared to 23 percent (n = 513)) of parents and whānau of students who aren't from rainbow communities) and changes to the body (72 percent (n = 79)) compared to 35 percent (n = 859).

Many mothers want more RSE, whilst many fathers want less.

Mothers are more likely to report their children are learning too little, in particular around consent (33 percent, n = 598), managing feelings and emotions (30 percent, n = 573), gender stereotypes (28 percent, n = 467), and friendships and bullying (26 percent, n = 528). Fathers are more likely to report that their child is learning too much, particularly around gender identity (32 percent, n = 137), different sexual identities (26 percent, n = 121), and gender stereotypes (25 percent, n = 107).

In the following sections we look at each of these findings in more detail.

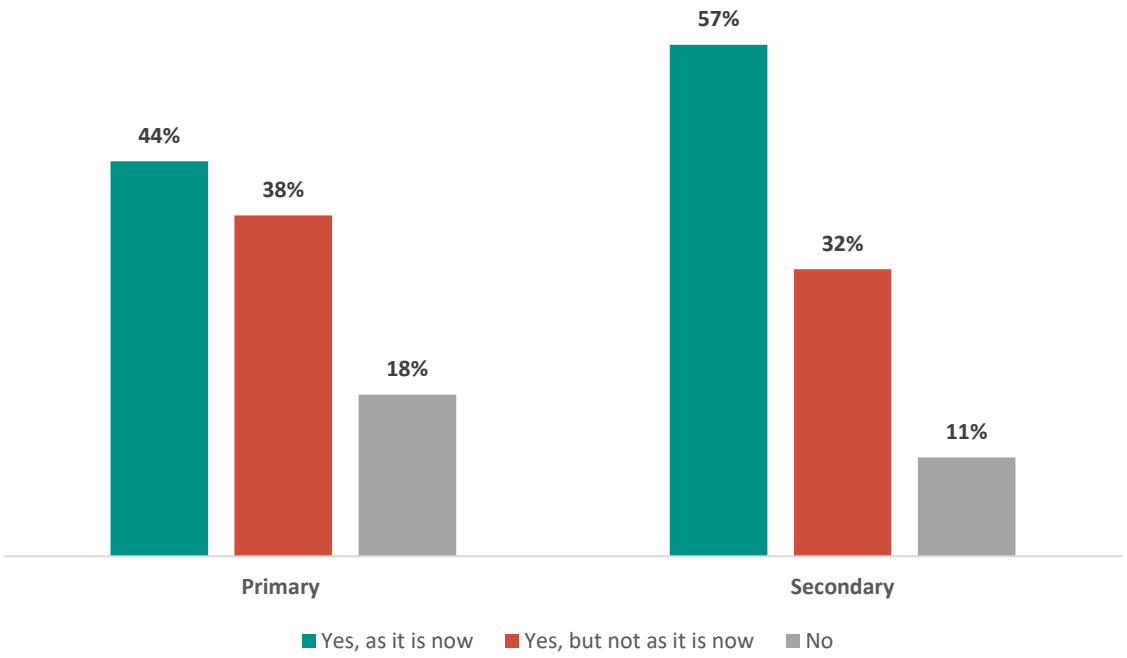
1. Parent and whānau expectations on the amount taught and when it is taught

For most RSE topics, parents and whānau agree their child is learning the right amount, but a third of parents and whānau want to change what or how it is taught. Over one in 10 do not want it taught in schools.

A third (34 percent, n = 1,213) of parents and whānau have told us that they want to change what or how RSE is taught. Over half (53 percent, n = 1,865) support it being taught as it is now. Thirteen percent (n = 472) think it shouldn't be taught at all.

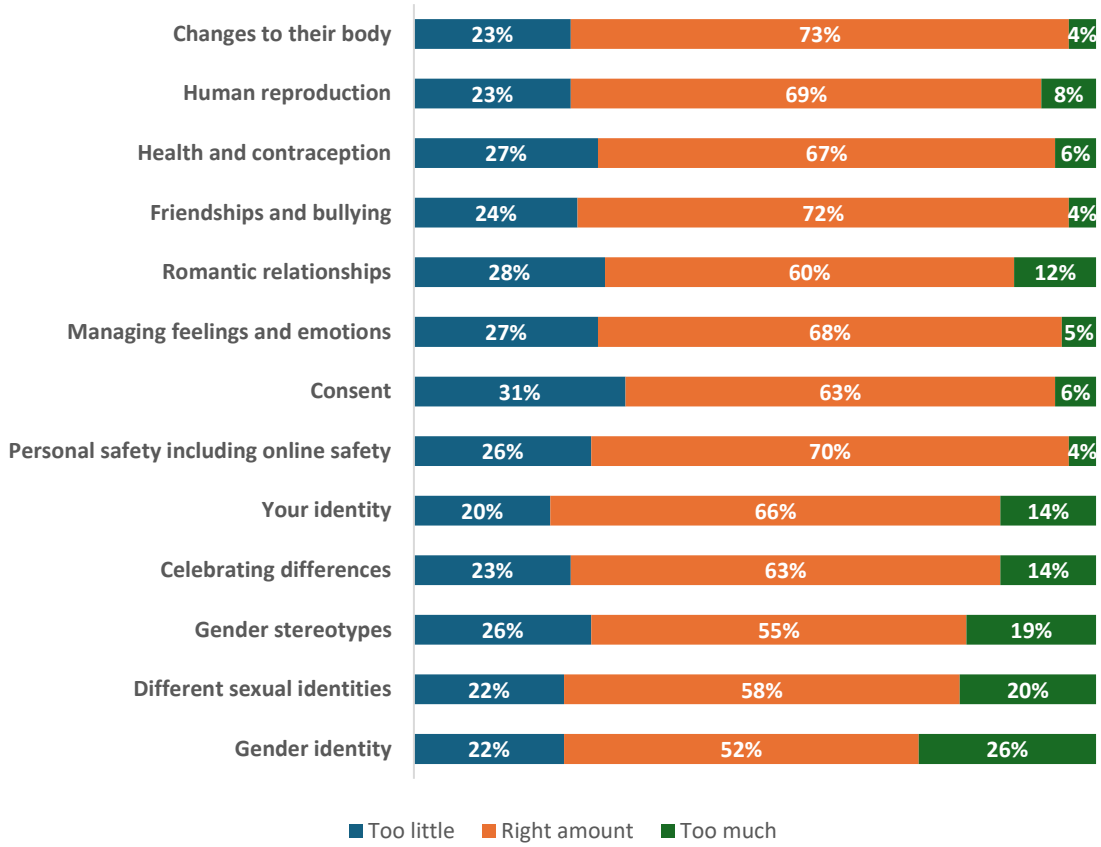
Primary school parents are slightly more likely to want RSE to be taught differently. Almost two-fifths of primary parents and whānau (38 percent, n = 424) think that it should be taught differently, compared to 32 percent (n = 577) of secondary parents and whānau. As noted in Chapter 2, primary parents and whānau are more likely to think it shouldn't be taught (18 percent, n = 204), compared to secondary parents and whānau (11 percent, n = 199).

Figure 24: *Parent and whānau views on whether RSE should be taught, by primary and secondary school*



Across most topics, more than six in 10 parents think their child is taught the right amount, and 40 – 56 percent of parents think their child is taught at the right age. For most topics, they are more likely to report that their children learn too little than too much – however there are some key, more sensitive topics, where parents and whānau views are split.

Figure 25: *Parent and whānau views on whether their children learnt the right amount*



"They teach the necessary amount of information, which is good. But I think they could just maybe talk less about sex since I'm not sure many people will want to know that stuff." – Parent/whānau

Many parents and whānau want their children to learn more about consent, relationships and health, and learn earlier about friendships, safety and managing emotions.

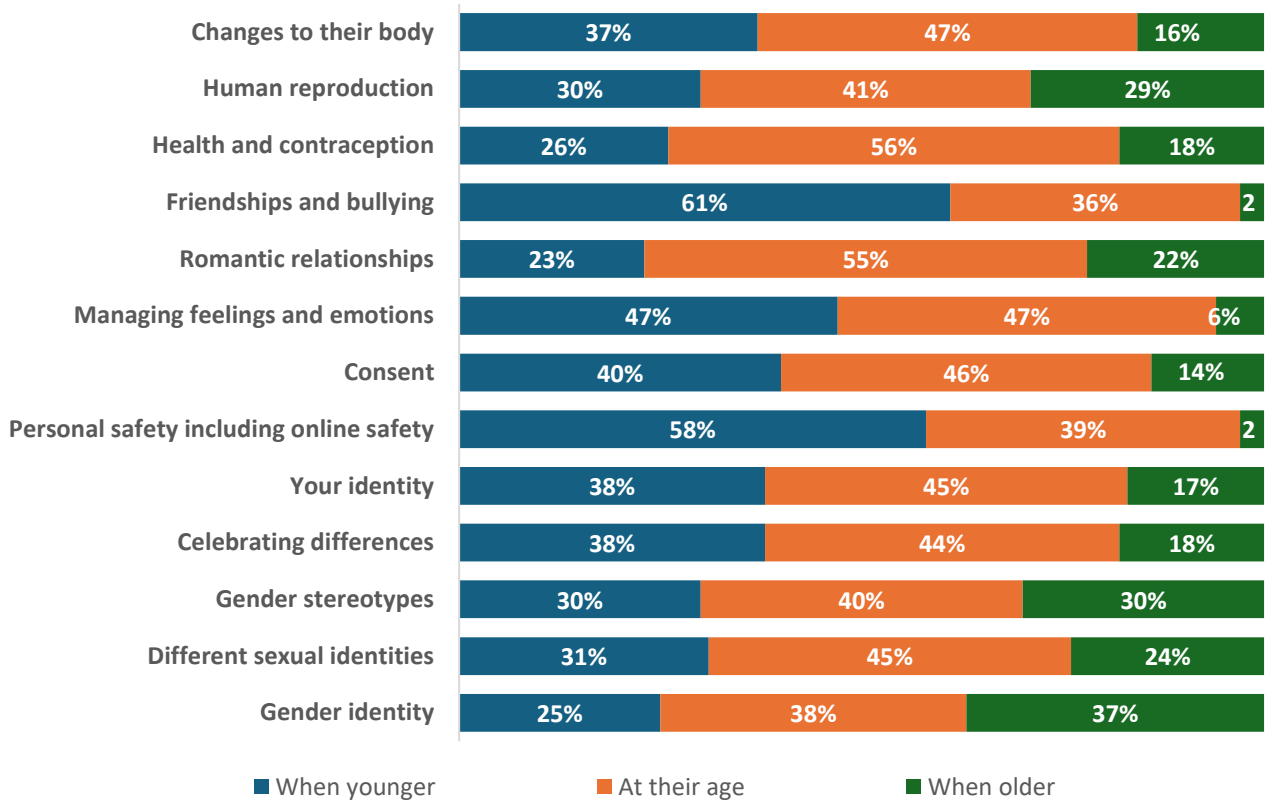
As highlighted in Figure 26 above, parents and whānau across all years want their children to learn *more* about:

- consent (31 percent want more (n = 717), 6 percent want less (n = 133)
- romantic relationships (28 percent want more (n = 441), 12 percent want less (n = 178))
- and health[n] (27 percent want more (n = 630), 6 percent want less (n = 152).

The topics parents and whānau are most likely to want covered *earlier* are friendships and bullying (61 percent, n = 1,673), personal safety including online safety (58 percent, n = 1,587), and managing feelings and emotions (47 percent, n = 1,262).

[n] This includes contraception for Year 9 and above

Figure 26: *Parent and whānau views on when their children should learn about RSE topics*



We found that parents and whānau are most likely to want their children to learn about friendships and bullying, personal safety, and managing feelings and emotions when they are younger because these topics can be relevant for children as young as 5 and 6 years, compared to other topics which are more relevant for older children. Wanting their children to start learning about bullying and personal safety earlier also aligns with wanting to keep their children safe. As discussed in Chapter 4, bullying (including cyberbullying) is a growing concern.

> "It feels like children are all getting stuff earlier. Everyone is online. My kids catch the bus and they hear horrendous stuff. Sadly, teaching these topics has to come a bit earlier. And I think that's hard for parents because we didn't grow up in that world. But our world has changed significantly. And it takes the school system so long to catch up sometimes too." – Primary parent/whānau

Also, in the interests of keeping their children safe, parents and whānau want consent to be covered in more depth and earlier. Parents and whānau raise some concerns about *how* consent would be taught to younger children, but they recognised if would be valuable across all ages if learning is age appropriate. This is because consent applies across the full range of relationships. It isn't solely about consent within intimate relationships, it is also about appropriate and inappropriate touch within other types of relationships, including friendships, within a classroom setting, with family, and in romantic relationships.

Consent was thought to be especially important for older students – parents and whānau told us they want consent to be covered in more depth at secondary school, especially for boys. This is understandable in the context of high rates of sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand and the long-lasting impact on people's lives.[66] The 2021 New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) revealed that over a third (35 percent) of women, and 12 percent of men experienced sexual assaults in their lifetime. About one in nine adults (11

percent) from rainbow communities are sexually assaulted within a 12-month period, which is five times higher than the Aotearoa New Zealand average (2 percent). Sexual assault is especially high for young people, with 18 percent of 15-19-year-olds already victimised in their lifetime.[67]

> "Consent is a core concept in early childhood education that can be built onto in age appropriate ways. A focus on boys and violence/coercion needs to be included." – Primary parent/whānau

Parent and whānau views are split on gender identity, sexual identity, and gender stereotypes.

Parents and whānau views are split on more contentious RSE topics, which reflects what ERO and others have found previously in Aotearoa New Zealand,[68] and the experiences of other countries.[69] A 'split' view means that there are significant groups at both ends, wanting to learn more/less, and earlier/later.

Three in 10 parents and whānau want gender stereotypes taught earlier (30 percent, n = 757) and three in 10 want gender stereotypes taught later (30 percent, n = 752). A quarter of parents and whānau want more to be taught on gender stereotypes (26 percent, n = 558), and a fifth want less (19 percent, n = 405).

Parents and whānau are also divided on sexual identity. Three in 10 parents and whānau want different sexual identities taught earlier (31 percent, n = 791) and a quarter want it taught later (24 percent, n = 613). One in five parents want more to be taught on different sexual identities (22 percent, n = 499), and a fifth want less (20 percent, n = 460).

One quarter of parents (25 percent, n = 639) want gender identity taught earlier but over a third (37 percent, n = 915) want it taught later. One-fifth of parents want more taught to their child about gender identity (22 percent, n = 484), but a quarter want less (26 percent, n = 555). Interestingly, our study found that much less than a quarter (6-15 percent) of primary schools are teaching about gender identity (see Chapter 2), suggesting that parents and whānau may be overestimating their school's coverage of this topic.

Figure 27: *Parent and whānau views on when gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes should be taught*

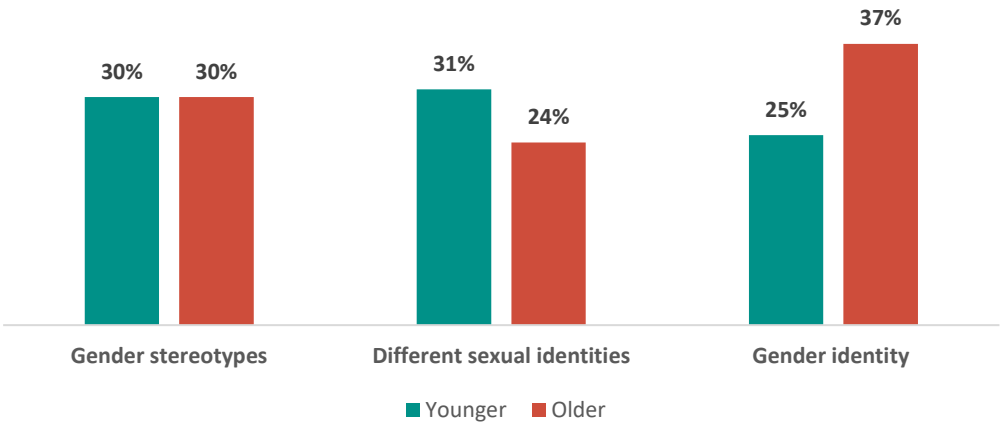
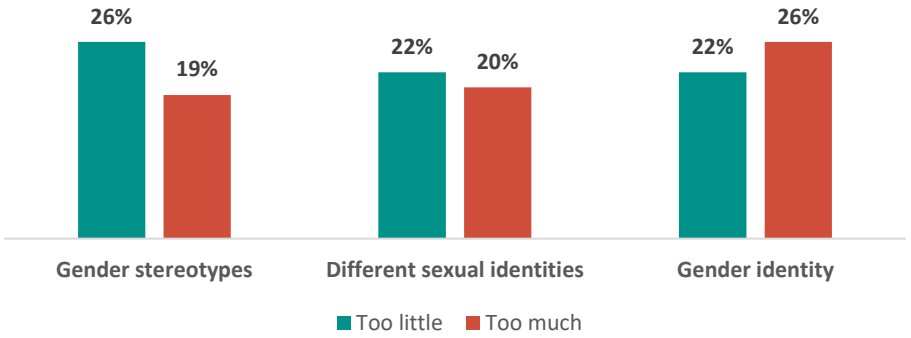


Figure 28: *Parent and whānau views on how much gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes should be taught*



As discussed in Chapter 4, there is polarisation in wider society on the topics of gender and sexual identities,[70] which is likely being reflected in the split views of parents and whānau on if and how much these topics should be taught to their children in RSE.

ERO found that parents and whānau who want gender stereotypes and identities and sexual identities to be covered believe these topics help their children to understand and accept people who are different from them.

> "Even though it is a minority of students that find themselves gender fluid, I think it is very important that gender identity is covered around the time of puberty, so those students can find resources to help them navigate what must be a challenging time, and to also educate other students to be tolerant and accepting of students that may feel different than themselves regarding their gender. It is important for the school to touch on this issue, for the very reason that a student's parents, religion and/or culture may not be accepting their child." – Primary parent/whānau

Parents and whānau who report that too much about these topics are covered in RSE are worried that their children will be encouraged to 'label' themselves before they have matured, which could be confusing and limiting for them. Parents and whānau who have these concerns don't necessarily want the topics to be *excluded* from RSE. Often, they want the coverage to be *limited*. They also place importance on 'how' the topics are covered, especially for younger students.

Other parents and whānau have very strong views related to genders and sexualities. They don't believe it's the schools' role to teach these things and are worried about misinformation or an 'ideology' being taught. We heard particular concerns that their children would be taught about how to change their sex. Neither the New Zealand Curriculum nor the RSE guidelines include guidance to instruct students on how to change sex.

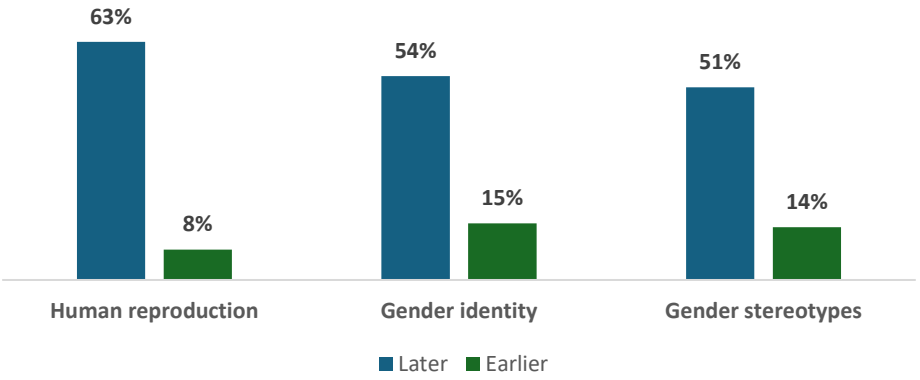
> "Pre-pubescent children do not need to be 'taught ' about gender identity. This is an ideology, not facts of life. It causes confusion amongst children who are already challenged emotionally by changes they are going through. Teaching general values like mutual respect and considerations and compassion is much more appropriate" – Primary parent/whānau

2. Does RSE meet all parent and whānau needs?

More than half of primary school parents and whānau want some sensitive topics taught later.

More than half of primary school parents and whānau want sensitive topics including human reproduction (63 percent, n = 578), gender identity (54 percent, n = 468), and gender stereotypes (51 percent, n = 422) covered later.

Figure 29: *The top three topics parents and whānau of primary students would like covered later*



Based on our interviews, we found that parents and whānau wanted these sensitive topics to be taught later are concerned that they are 'too sensitive', especially for primary school children. Parents and whānau are concerned that exposure to these topics 'too early', especially if taught 'too explicitly', may confuse their children.

In relation to human reproduction, parents and whānau frequently told us that they want school to stay focused on the 'scientific' side of these topics in subjects such as biology, health, and anatomy. Other aspects can be covered at home when the child is ready, which is important because children mature at different rates.

Some parents are concerned that leaning about sex too early can give children an unnatural interest in it, even if research indicates that this is unlikely. International studies show that comprehensive RSE is more likely to delay students' sexual activity, to encourage students to use of contraception when they become sexually active, and to have healthier relationships[71].

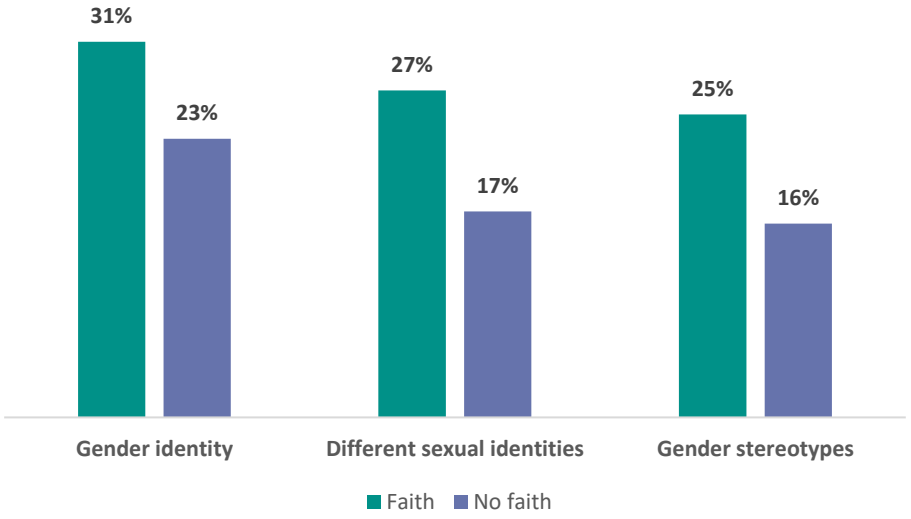
> "There's a worry for parents with primary school-aged children, that their kids are growing up too fast. Whether it's seeing stuff on social media, getting into TV shows that are before their time or not age appropriate, using words that aren't appropriate or 'adult words'. It can feel like their baby is growing up too fast." – Primary school teacher

The minority of parents and whānau who think these sensitive topics should be taught earlier were of the view that 'the sooner the better' can help to normalise conversations, which is protective against misinformation and any feelings of shame that may arise for students.

Parents and whānau who practice a faith want less RSE.

Parents and whānau who practice a faith are more likely (compared to parents and whānau without a faith) to report their children are learning too much about topics such as gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes.

Figure 30: *Parent and whānau views on whether students are learning too much on specific topics- by whether they practice a faith*



We found that parents and whānau practising a faith are concerned about these topics because they think what is being covered conflicts with their own views and/or because they think these topics should be taught at home and not by school. They want to be able to educate their children at home in a way that does align with their values and beliefs. The potential for their child to be taught things they don't agree with is why some parents and whānau feel, very strongly, that the school should provide clear information on what is being taught, or the school should consult them so they can help decide what is covered.

> "RSE themes will be different for families of different cultures, religions, and beliefs. Again, this is not able to be adequately dealt with by one curriculum or one teacher and should be left to the families to educate their children in this area." – Parent/whānau with faith

Short story: Responding to faith-based concerns about RSE

The Head of Department (HOD) for health at a large, urban secondary school shared how their school addressed concerns about RSE raised by Muslim families in their community.

A group of families had withdrawn their eight children from the school's RSE programme due to concerns relating to topics around gender and different sexual identities, and worries that content related to sex could encourage sex outside of marriage.[o] Not having premarital sex is a core religious value of many in the Islamic faith.

[o] On expert advice, we note that premarital sex is a key issue for many Muslims and some orthodox faith communities, and that it is useful for leaders and teachers to be aware that different faiths and cultures have different views about the acceptability of premarital sex.

To resolve this, the HOD partnered with a local Muslim community leader who acted as a representative to communicate the school's objectives and approach, and to help unpack the families' concerns. Together, they worked to ensure that the families were better informed about RSE content and delivery, and to better align it with the families' values.

To address concerns about topics around gender and different sexual identities, the content was framed around empathy - that there are a range of people in the world and knowledge about them fits Muslim beliefs around being respectful and empathetic to people.

To address concerns that sex-related teaching could promote sex outside of marriage, this topic was framed around making informed decisions (noting that education is a factor in the decision to have sex later in life), facts about sex, and discussions about consent and how to deal with peer pressure.

Through open communication and partnering with a member of the community, the HOD was able to address the families' concerns and build trust. As a result of this collaboration, children from these families are now participating in RSE alongside their peers.

Ethnicity does not significantly impact parent and whānau views about RSE topics.

Parents and whānau with different ethnicities do not have significantly different views on the amount of, and age RSE is taught. Māori, Pacific, and Asian parents were relatively similar when looking across topics, with only small or non-statistically significant differences found. There is an indication that MELAA parents are more likely to report their child is learning too much - although this difference is not statistically significant, due to the small number of MELAA parents who responded.

Parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities want their children to learn about all RSE topics earlier, especially topics on diverse identities and bodies.

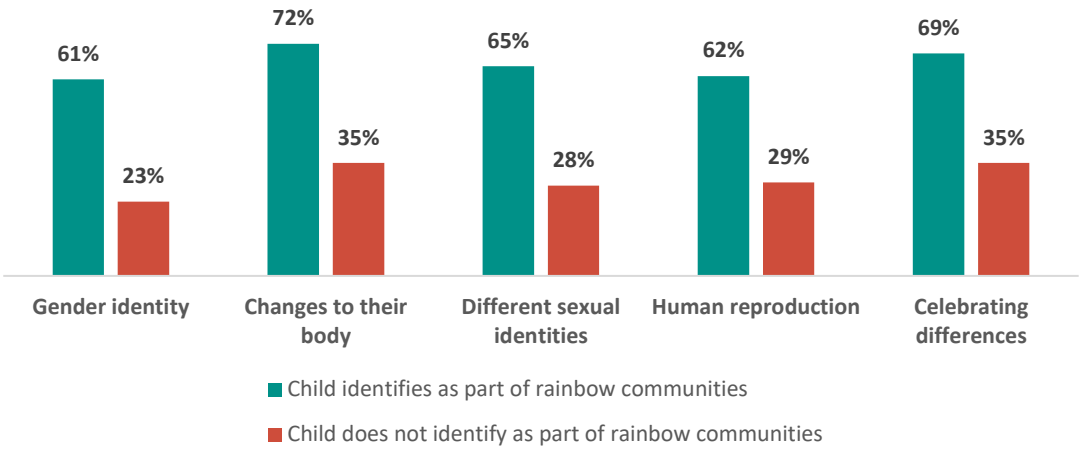
Most parents and whānau who report that their children identify as a members of rainbow communities have secondary school-age children.

Across all topics, parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities are much more likely to report that they want their children to learn about all topics earlier compared to parents and whānau of non-rainbow students. This is particularly notable for topics on diverse identities and bodies.

Over six in 10 parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities want their children to learn to about gender identity earlier (61 percent, n = 65), different sexual identities (65 percent, n = 70), and human reproduction (62 percent, n = 67) earlier. Seven in 10 parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities want their children to learn about changes to your body (72 percent, n = 79) and celebrating differences (69 percent, n = 72) earlier.

Parents and whānau of non-rainbow students are less likely to want their children to learn about these topics earlier.

Figure 31: *Parents and whānau who report they want their children to learn about RSE topics earlier, by whether or not their child identifies as part of rainbow communities*



Parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities told us that they want coverage of these topics so that their children can be confident with their body and body image, feel empowered, and feel a sense of belonging by seeing themselves in their learning. Some of these parents and whānau note that teachers need to have good training and knowledge about sexuality and gender diversity to do this well - to support children navigating their identities and to ensure an inclusive classroom environment.

> "The curriculum appears to be supportive of all genders and sexualities and informed consent, which works really well on the whole to us. It needs to ensure that there is tolerance towards people of different genders and sexualities in earlier years, such as in primary and intermediate school, because the lack of this at those levels leads to bullying and gender/sexuality phobias and persecution." - Parent/whānau of student from rainbow communities

Parents and whānau of all students expressed concerns about bullying and safety for their children. Those with children from rainbow communities also shared their concerns about unsafe situations, such as bullying and cyberbullying, and also worry about homophobic and transphobic attitudes, and unwanted advances that their children might face. They want RSE teaching that equips their children with critical thinking and practical strategies to get out of harmful situations and seek help.

> "I'd like them to learn more about consent, and what a loving relationship and sexual relationship should look like. I'd like them to learn more about addressing unwanted advances and what to do when they are uncomfortable with their peers, and outside peer groups." – Parent/whānau of student from rainbow communities

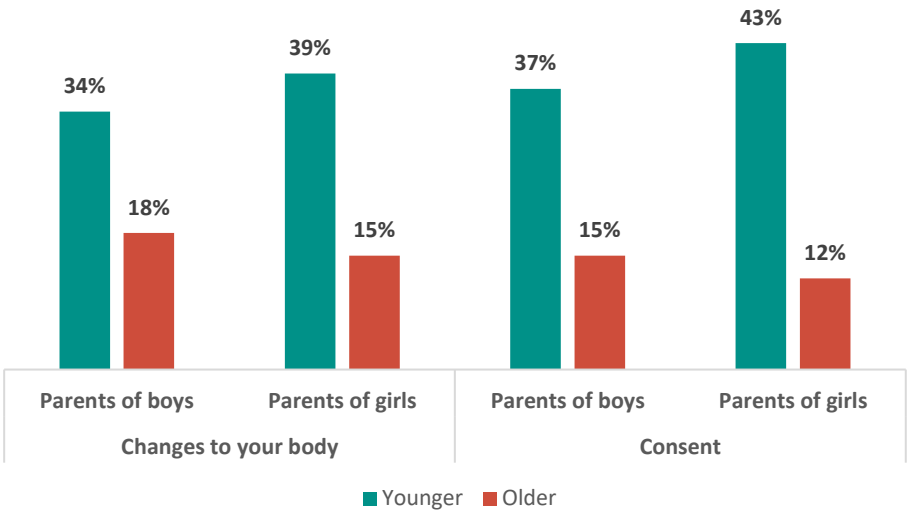
Parents and whānau of girls want their children to learn about changes to their body and consent earlier, than parents and whānau of boys.

There are some notable differences in how parents and whānau view certain RSE topics, depending on whether they have sons or daughters. The top areas of difference are consent and body changes.

Forty-three percent (n = 608) of parents and whānau of girls report they want their children to learn about consent earlier, compared to 37 percent (n = 458) of parents and whānau of boys.

Thirty-nine percent (n = 560) of parents and whānau of girls report they want their children to learn about changes to their body earlier, compared to 34 percent (n = 431) of parents and whānau of boys.

Figure 32: *Parents and whānau on when they want their children to learn about changes to their body and consent*



Parents and whānau of girls are supportive of these topics as they are of particular relevance to girls. Parents and whānau want teaching that helps their daughters understand their bodies and body parts, and how to take care of their bodies, for example through good personal hygiene. They also want RSE teaching to highlight puberty and its effect on both body and mood changes for girls. Parents also want a stronger focus on consent, to equip girls with knowledge and strategies to help keep themselves safe.

> "More information about period products and hygiene options. Need more information about body changes due to puberty (hair and voice [are] not covered, changes to feelings [are] not discussed)" – Parent/whānau of a girl

We know from our interviews that parents and whānau of boys are concerned about what their children are exposed to online, including pornography and violent video games. Parents want teaching on ways to regulate and managing big emotions, dealing with external pressures, and respect for others.

> "For me to have ourselves or the school engage with our kids before they learn from the Internet is important. It's sad that it feels younger and younger but knowing what gentle, safe relationships are, before [they see] porn examples [of intimate relationships] is important to me. Maybe introducing a 'response to porn and internet scam' curriculum for primary kids?" – Parent/whānau of a boy

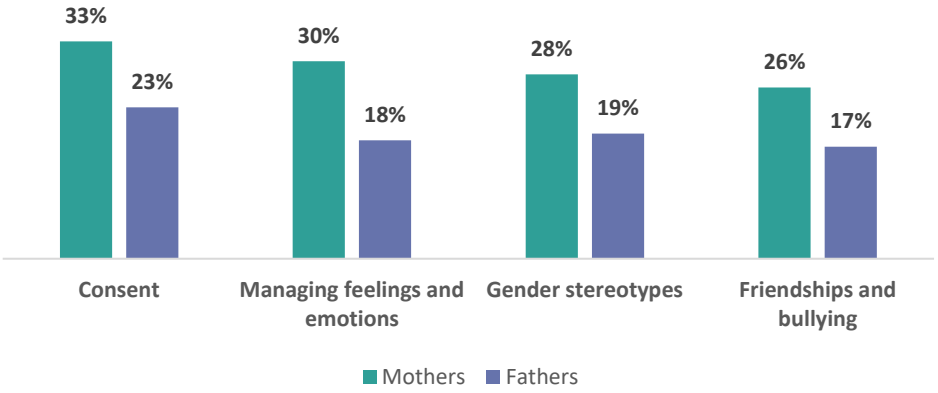
Many mothers want more RSE, while many fathers want less.

We surveyed parents and whānau individually and found that there is a difference between what mothers and fathers[p] report. Mothers are more likely than fathers to report their child has learnt too little about all

[p] We have referred to 'mothers and fathers' in this section for simplicity, however readers should note that 'mothers' also refers to other female and female-identifying caregivers and family and whānau members, and 'fathers' will also refer to other male and male-identifying caregivers and family and whānau members.

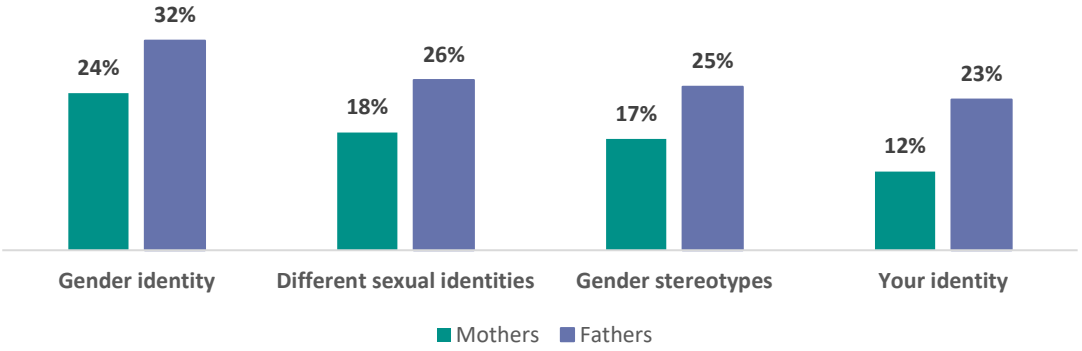
topic areas. The largest differences are for managing feelings and emotions, consent, gender stereotypes, and friendships and bullying.

Figure 33: *Mother and father views on topics that their children are learning too little about*



Fathers are more likely to believe their child is learning too much, particularly about gender identity, different sexual identities, personal identities, and gender stereotypes.

Figure 34: *Mother and father views on topics that their children are learning too much about*



We found that mothers usually want RSE to include more teaching on sexual health, especially on contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including how and where their child can seek help. Mothers also want more RSE content focusing on consent and sexual abuse (including coercion). These are all topics that support their child's health and safety. This finding aligns with other studies that have found mothers are more likely to describe themselves as protective than fathers and to worry about a range of issues.[72]

Mothers are also more likely to be aware of the risks and consequences for their children by a lack of understanding about consent – a third of women in Aotearoa New Zealand have experienced physical, sexual, or coercive violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes; and the rate is even higher for Māori women (wāhine Māori), Pacific women, disabled women, and rainbow communities.[73]

> "More about different forms of consent and different ways consent is withdrawn. That kind of stuff. This stuff was never taught to us in school and so many of my age group are victims of sexual abuse and worse." - Mother

Through our interviews and surveys we found that fathers are more likely to think their child is learning too much about RSE because they can place greater importance on parents as 'first teachers,' place greater value on the teaching of facts than talking about emotions and feelings, and prefer teaching that aligns with traditional family values. This fits with the traditional role of fathers in some communities as head of the family.[74]

The difference between mothers and fathers' views on RSE may also be explained by a political gender divide. US Gallup data shows that, historically, the sexes have been spread roughly equally across liberal and conservative world views, but a divide has developed and women aged 18 to 30 are now 30 percentage points more liberal than their male contemporaries.[75]

> "I object to the gender ideology that has been incorporated into this curriculum. I would like to see a more traditional approach taken." – Father

Conclusion

There is overall parent and whānau support for RSE, although parents and whānau have different views about the amount that should be taught, and the age that different topics should be taught. The main areas of difference are around what is covered at primary school, particularly on more sensitive topics including human reproduction, gender identity and gender stereotypes. There is also a consistent interest by parents and whānau for more to be taught on friendships and bullying, emotions and personal safety, and for these topics to be taught earlier.

In the next chapter, we share the experiences of schools in teaching RSE, including the challenges they face in managing consultation and relationships with parents and whānau on topics where there may be disagreement.

Chapter 8: Is teaching RSE manageable for schools?

There are unique requirements relating to RSE for schools around consultation and curriculum development, as well as sensitive content that can cause challenges for schools. There are also challenges around teacher confidence and risks to school's relationships with their school community.

In this chapter, we cover the challenges around consultation, how comfortable and capable teachers are, and whether schools find the curriculum, guidelines and other resources helpful.

RSE has unique requirements for schools on consultation and curriculum development, and the topic can be challenging for some teachers depending on their background, the school context, and experience in teaching the topic.

In this chapter, we looked at:

- → interviews and focus groups with board chairs, school leaders and teachers, and relevant stakeholders
- → on-site visits at 20 schools
- → our surveys of board chairs and presiding members, school leaders, and teachers
- → international and local evidence about school experiences in teaching RSE.

This chapter sets out what we found about:

1. schools' awareness and support for consultation on RSE
2. experiences in consulting the school community (as required in legislation)
3. experiences in delivering RSE for leaders
4. the ways in which schools are delivering RSE
5. experiences of teachers
6. how useful schools find the curriculum and RSE guidelines.

What we found: An overview

Most, but not all schools are meeting the consultation requirement.

Almost two-thirds of board chairs (63 percent, n = 198) know they are required to consult every two years, but just over a quarter (28 percent, n = 87) don't know they are required to consult every two years. Concerningly, almost one in 10 board chairs (9 percent, n = 28) are not at all aware of their requirement to consult their community on how RSE is delivered.

Worryingly, almost one in 10 board chairs (8 percent, n = 26) last consulted their community *more* than two years ago. One-fifth of board chairs (20 percent, n = 62) *don't know* when their school last consulted.

School leaders' views on consultation are split. Almost half of school leaders do not think schools should be required to consult on RSE.

Almost half of school leaders (47 percent, n = 239 do not think that schools should be required to consult with their communities on RSE delivery. This group is made up of two viewpoint groups: one third (35 percent, n = 178) say that it should be compulsory, but schools should not have to do it themselves, and 12 percent (n = 61) say that consultation should not be required at all.

Schools find consulting difficult and divisive.

Almost half of school leaders (45 percent, n = 237) find consultation challenging. The main aspects of consultation schools find challenging are balancing different views, managing influences outside the school community, and getting community engagement.

Rural schools and schools with a high Māori roll find consultation particularly challenging.

Rural schools find it particularly challenging to maintain relationships with parents and whānau during consultation. Over four in 10 rural schools (44 percent, n = 41) find maintaining relations challenging compared to one third of urban schools (34 percent, n = 80). Schools with a high Māori roll find it more challenging to consult with their community (52 percent, n = 57) compared to 39 percent (n = 87). New principals find it more challenging (60 percent (n = 34) find it challenging).

Schools most commonly deliver RSE as modules, but nearly a quarter deliver RSE on an ad-hoc basis.

Schools have flexibility in how and when they deliver RSE. They can deliver it at any time they want through the year through modules, by integrating it across the curriculum, or as they think it is needed. This means there is variation in the RSE education students receive.

A third of school leaders find it difficult to deliver RSE.

RSE can have content that is difficult for schools to navigate. One-third of school leaders (32 percent, n = 185) find delivering RSE hard. However, less than one in 10 (8 percent, n = 46) report it takes up too much of their time.

Most schools are using teachers from their school to deliver RSE, either exclusively or in combination with external providers.

Over half (58 percent, n = 320) of schools use teachers from their school to teach RSE. Just over a third (37 percent, n = 202) use a mix of teachers and external providers to teach RSE. Only a small proportion only use external providers (6 percent, n = 33).

Schools use a range of resources and agencies to guide their RSE programme. Most use the health curriculum, and nearly two thirds use the RSE guidelines.

The two most common resources schools use to guide their RSE programme are the health curriculum and the RSE guidelines. Four in five school leaders (82 percent, n = 451) report they use the health curriculum to guide the content of their RSE programme. Nearly two thirds (63 percent, n = 348) use the RSE guidelines, but 37 percent (n = 201) do not.

Leaders report most teachers have the capability they need to teach RSE, although many find it stressful, particularly in primary school.

Almost nine in 10 (n = 450) school leaders report the teachers at their school are capable to teach RSE but almost one-third (32 percent, n = 213) of teachers find teaching RSE stressful. Primary (37 percent, n = 110)

and intermediate (39 percent, n = 58) teachers are more likely to find it stressful than secondary school (20 percent, n = 45) teachers.

Most schools find the curriculum and RSE guidelines useful.

Over four in five school leaders find the curriculum (79 percent, n = 389) and RSE guidelines (85 percent, n = 391) useful for developing their school approach to RSE. Teachers who *don't* use the RSE guidelines are more stressed.

In the following sections we look at each of these findings in more detail.

1. Are schools aware of the requirement to consult on RSE?

We asked board chairs and presiding members[q] of school boards whether they are aware of the requirement to consult with their community on the health curriculum, including RSE.

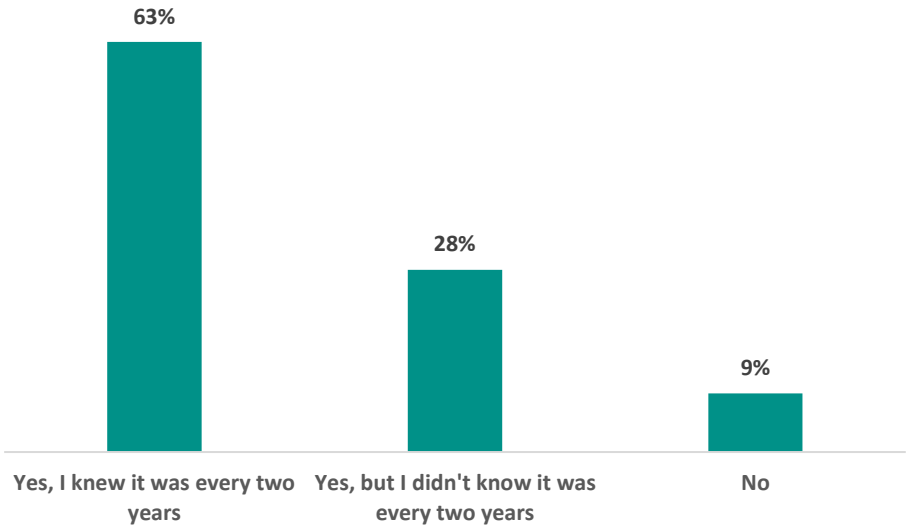
Most school boards are aware of their requirement to consult (91 percent, n = 285), but not all are aware it is required to happen at least once every two years.

Schools are required to consult on the needs of their community for their health programme (including RSE). Board chairs find out about this requirement by referring to the Ministry of Education guidelines regarding consultation or working with principals.

Concerningly, almost one in 10 board chairs (9 percent, n = 28) are not at all aware of their requirement to consult their community on how RSE is delivered.

Almost two-thirds of board chairs (63 percent, n = 198) know they are required to consult at least once every two years, but just over a quarter (28 percent, n = 87) are not aware of this timing requirement.

Figure 35: *School board chairs know they are required to consult with their community on RSE*



"The principal would signal ahead that consultation is coming up. And then of course we take action on how input is going to be sought." – Board chair at a secondary school

[q] For simplicity, both *board chairs* and *presiding members* are referred to as 'board chairs' in this section.

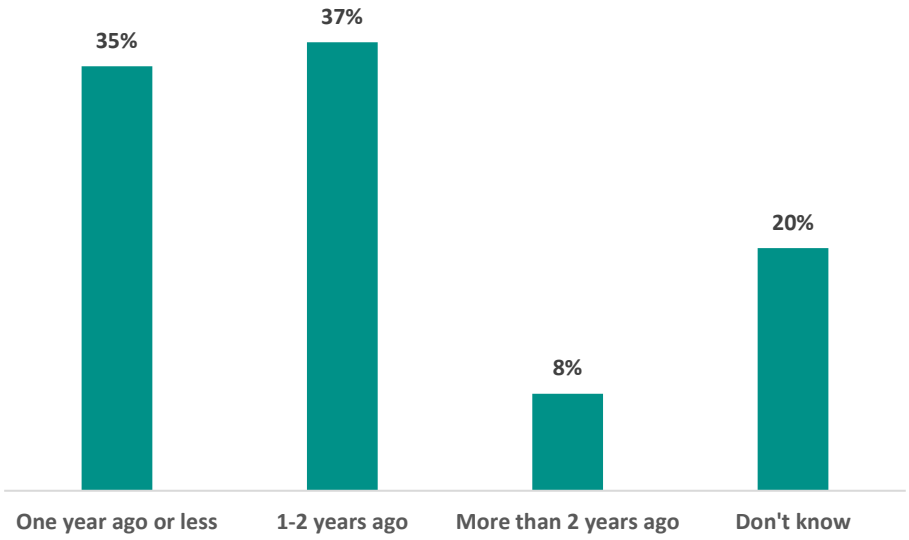
Most, but not all schools are consulting on RSE every two years.

We also asked board chairs *when* their school last consulted their community on the health curriculum, including RSE.

Almost three-quarters (72 percent, n = 225) of board chairs report their school last consulted their community on RSE within the last two years (35 percent (n = 108) report they consulted their community one year ago or less, and 37 percent (n = 117) report they consulted 1-2 years ago).

Worryingly almost one in 10 (8 percent, n = 26) last consulted their community more than two years ago. One-fifth of board chairs (20 percent, n = 62) don't know when their school last consulted.

Figure 36: *Board chairs report their school last consulted on the health curriculum, including RSE*



Some schools don't consult every two years when they don't know, or have lost track of, the timing of the last consultation. School boards are less likely to know when the last consultation took place if board chairs are new, or if both the board chair and the principal are new to the school.

> "We've had new people on board, and a lot of them haven't been on boards before. So they might not know about process and things." – Board chair at a secondary school

It is possible that some board members responding to our survey may not have been able to recall when their last consultation round simply because it wasn't memorable – for example if there was little or no feedback from their community, or if the process went very smoothly.

2. Is there support for consultation on RSE?

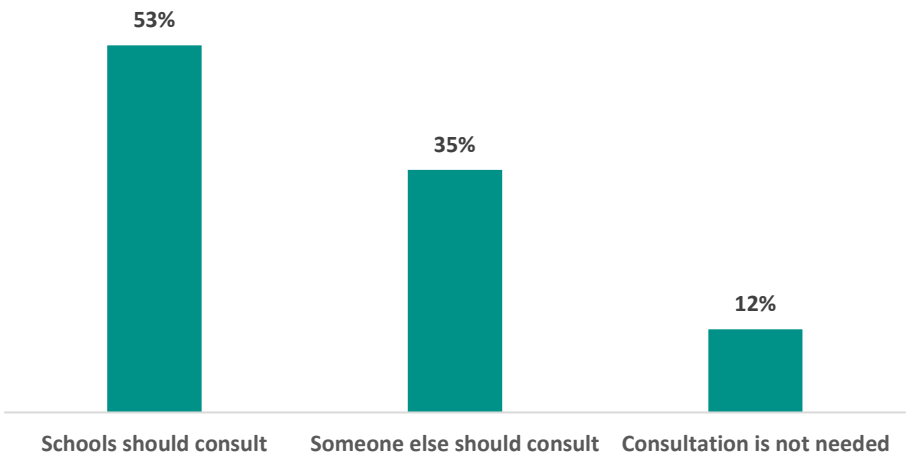
School leaders' views on consultation are split. Almost half of school leaders do not think schools should be required to consult on RSE.

Forty-seven percent (n = 239) of school leaders *do not* think that schools should be required to consult on the delivery of their health curriculum (which includes RSE). This group is made up of two different views:

- Thirty-five percent (n = 178) of leaders say that consulting should be compulsory but that schools should not have to do it themselves.
- Twelve percent (n = 61) of leaders say that consultation should not be required at all.

Fifty-three percent (n = 269) of school leaders think that schools *should* be required to consult, in the way that is currently required.

Figure 37: *School leaders support for consultation on RSE*



ERO consistently heard that schools see the importance of informing parents and whānau about what is or isn't included in their RSE teaching, especially where parents and whānau are receiving incorrect or incomplete information from sources outside the school. However, school leaders are split on whether this information needs to part of a consultation, or whether it can be shared in other ways.

Leaders who don't think schools should be required to consult with parents and whānau are of the view that RSE should be treated like other aspects of the curriculum. This involves schools using their professional judgement to design course content based on the learning that matters identified in the national curriculum.

School leaders are most often against consulting on RSE because the process can be divisive, between the school and the community, and between different groups within the community. Consultation can also result in content being removed from RSE that schools believe is important for students to understand.

> "Why do we consult? We don't ask what we should teach in maths. It makes it too hard when we have a curriculum that we are expected to teach, but also the opportunity to withdraw students, and what are we supposed to do with those withdrawn students? It also makes for a really divisive time." – School leader

> "[Gender identity content was removed] to appease, to calm, and to ensure that RSE continued in our school." - Primary school principal

If consultation is required, some school leaders want it to be a national consultation led by the Ministry of Education, or they want greater standardisation for school consultations. It was suggested that greater standardisation can be achieved by the Ministry providing a template that all schools can use. School leaders also want further guidance on how to run the consultation process as support for all the staff involved. Making sure RSE consultations run smoothly is critical for maintaining trusting relationships with parents and whānau.

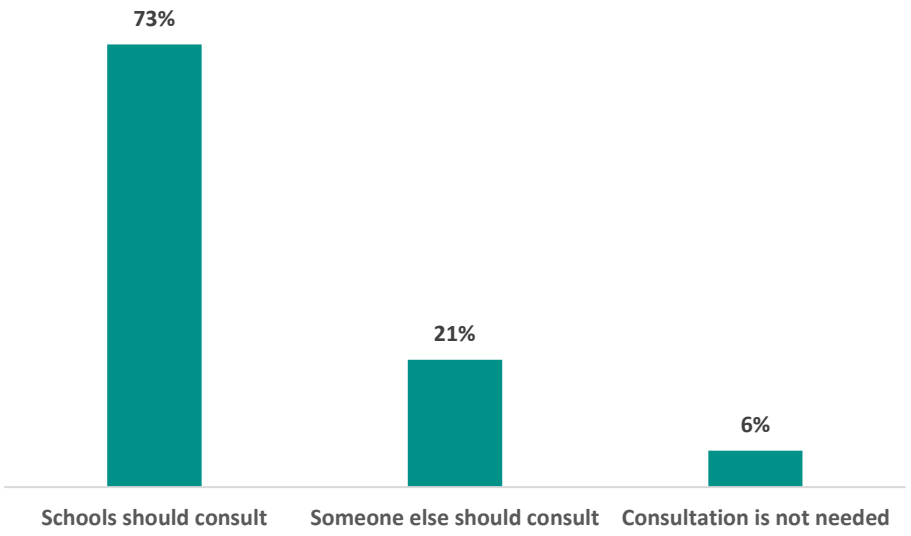
> "If you have a lot of trust, you have to live up to that trust" – School leader

Some school leaders think it is 'absolutely essential' to consult with the community because they want to know their community and be sure that the school is working for their community.

Board chairs are more supportive of consultation, though almost three in 10 board (n = 82) chairs do not think consultation should be compulsory.

Twenty-seven percent (n = 82) of board chairs do not think schools should be required to consult, and 73 percent (n = 222) of board chairs think that consultation should be compulsory.

Figure 38: *Board chairs support for consultation on RSE*



Boards are generally supportive of consultation, seeing it as a crucial process so that schools can engage with their community, especially to discuss *why* RSE should be taught. They think this type of engagement helps with maintaining transparent and trusting relationships between schools and communities.

> "Parents have to have a lot of trust and faith in the teacher that's handling the curriculum, presenting this material, and also a lot of faith and trust in the school and what the health and relationship curriculum is." - Board presiding member, secondary school

On this basis, we heard that some boards would want to consult with their communities even if consultation wasn't required.

3. Is consulting on RSE manageable for schools?

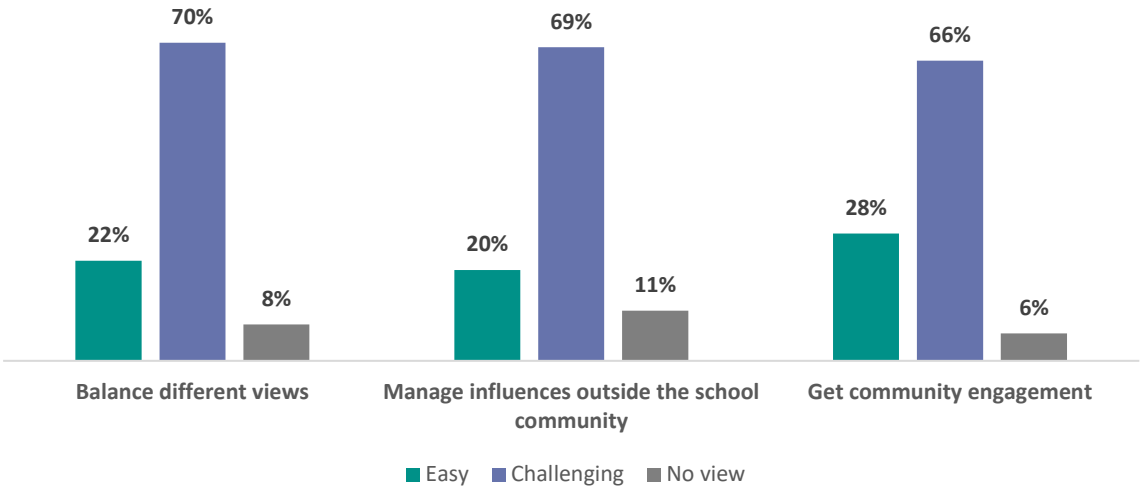
We asked school leaders how easy it is to consult the community on RSE. Consulting on the Health and Physical Education learning area of the curriculum (which includes RSE) is the only area they are required to consult on. Consultation is the responsibility of the school board, although it is often conducted by school leaders.

Schools find consulting difficult and divisive.

Almost half of school leaders (45 percent, n = 237) find consultation challenging or very challenging. Half (50 percent, n = 267) find consultation easy, and 5 percent (n = 27) have no view.

The main aspects of consultation schools find challenging are balancing different views (70 percent, n = 371), managing influences outside the school community (69 percent, n = 364), and getting community engagement (66 percent, n = 353).

Figure 39: *School leader views on how challenging they find aspects of consultation*



The main challenges, however, relate to vocal groups that disrupt the consultation process. These groups have been most vocal about issues about genders and sexualities and are 'triggered by even the mention' of these terms. Their contributions can introduce misinformation into the consultation process. We heard from schools that these vocal parents and whānau are sometimes influenced, or led, by groups outside the school community, groups that are well-known for their views on genders and sexualities. We also heard that objections to RSE content is increasing, reflecting what is being seen globally.

> "It's gotten worse. There has been much more pushback [from parents and whānau] in the most recent consult than the time before. It's the same resource, but WAY more pushback." - Intermediate school leader

Vocal groups at consultation events can drive the discussion to the extremes, and this makes it difficult to hear from parents and whānau 'in the middle.' We found that schools are finding it difficult to build trust with the community through consultation processes like these. In fact, trust is more likely to be broken.

> "[RSE consultation] puts us and our boards in a really uncomfortable position." - Principal

> "You can be as transparent as you like, so respectful and patient. Your school's programme is still ripped apart." – Deputy principal

Due to the challenges posed by consultation over RSE content, boards and school leaders are concerned about the safety of school staff, especially because staff haven't had the necessary training. Schools tell us they want clearer guidance on how to run a good consultation, or would prefer to use external facilitators.

> "When you're faced with the uncertainty of what some quite extreme views are going to bring to the table, or how people might conduct themselves in the meeting or how they might try to derail it or say things that are really inappropriate, I think it makes you create a few more checks and balances around how you're going to run that kind of consultation process." - Secondary school principal

ERO heard many examples from schools, of community consultation experiences that were worrying and harmful for teachers and leaders – and that did not result in positive impacts for students' RSE learning. Across these many and varied experiences, we heard that negative responses outweighed and overshadowed the views of the majority of parents and whānau. Often, people not directly connected to the school would be involved, through advocacy organisations or social media movements. In many cases, the consultation experience resulted in schools reducing content.

"I believe that the school, with respect to its RSE education, has gone backwards because of the process. Now we're in a situation where we've lost ground - fear from our staff that they're going to get slammed, and heightened fear in the community that the school is going to slip stuff in." – Board presiding member at a primary school

"[School leaders] are saying, even if it's only 3 percent of our parent population [that object to some RSE content], they'll cut it out – just so there's no pushback." – Deputy principal at an intermediate school

"Teacher confidence has been eroded by the spotlight on this area… We veer away from anything that might look like 'sex ed'." – Intermediate school leader

Short story: Consultation processes result in less RSE learning for students

We heard from leaders at three different schools we visited (two primary and one secondary), how they had removed content from their RSE curriculum due to backlash from elements of the school community, and wider community. These experiences were echoed by a range of stakeholders and experts that we interviewed, who shared that this is a common experience for schools they have worked with.

In one example from ERO's site visits, the board chair at a large primary school told us how sudden backlash from the community due to the spread of misinformation meant the school had to remove RSE content that previously had not caused any concern from their parent and whānau community.

"The school has lost [the] confidence, freedom to do what we were doing." – Board chair

We found that in-person consultations are challenging for larger schools, due to the logistical challenges of arranging and running them with large numbers of parents and whānau. Schools have tried a range of other methods for consultation, including online surveys, but these don't work well with communities that poor access to the internet and/or have low levels of digital literacy.

Short stories: Large-scale consultation at large schools results in police intervention

A large, urban secondary school experienced ongoing pressure about their RSE programme, including disruption and aggression toward staff which resulted in police intervention.

As part of their consultation process, the school organised an information evening for parents and whānau, which took a month of preparations. Although the majority of their parent and whānau community was supportive of RSE, leaders and the school board were concerned that a 'vocal minority' were spreading misinformation, which caused high levels of anxiety across leaders, teachers, and the school board. They had been experiencing ongoing and increasing pressure about their RSE programme, and became concerned about the safety of school staff.

Leaders involved the local police in their planning for the RSE information evening. The school offered parents and whānau an opportunity to talk to staff, but deliberately chose not to hold a group Q&A session to avoid escalating tension. Even so, a small group of attendees caused unrest and repeatedly dominated discussions, which meant that other parents and whānau present were not able to ask their own questions about what was being taught. The police had to remove aggressive attendees.

Reflecting on the consultation process, this school's principal expressed frustration, observing how a few disruptors repeatedly tried to redirect discussions and rally others against RSE. The school had also attempted to channel outside interest in their RSE programme in a manageable way by constructing an online survey where these people could share their views and concerns. However, this was not a successful strategy, with respondents continuing to contact the school and insist on further discussions.

We heard from a large primary school how large-scale misinformation and social media campaigns led to community backlash about their school's RSE programme. People from outside the school community who opposed RSE had been handing out fliers to parents and students during pick-up and drop-off times.

Board members told us how a board meeting was 'crashed' by dozens of people, many not directly related to the school and from an older generation. Misinformation had circulated that board would 'certify' their RSE programme. Even though the meeting was not intended as consultation, people were granted limited speaking rights. However, a board member described how the meeting then "descended into bigotry and hate speech… it was very unpleasant."

Soon police had to be called as board members and school leaders feared for their safety.

"A lot of it was literally unsafe – having to shut down a board meeting and walk out of our own school to de-escalate a situation that was going to turn into fisty-cuffs."

Our findings around consultation difficulties align with the evidence base, which shows that 'navigating community concerns' is a key challenge for Aotearoa New Zealand primary leaders and teachers. This challenge was found to be related to three issues: people's misunderstanding of RSE, parental opposition, and balancing different perspectives.[76]

Aotearoa New Zealand research on secondary teachers' experiences found that, for 38 percent of respondents, feedback from school community consultation was a *barrier* to effective RSE practice in their school.[77]

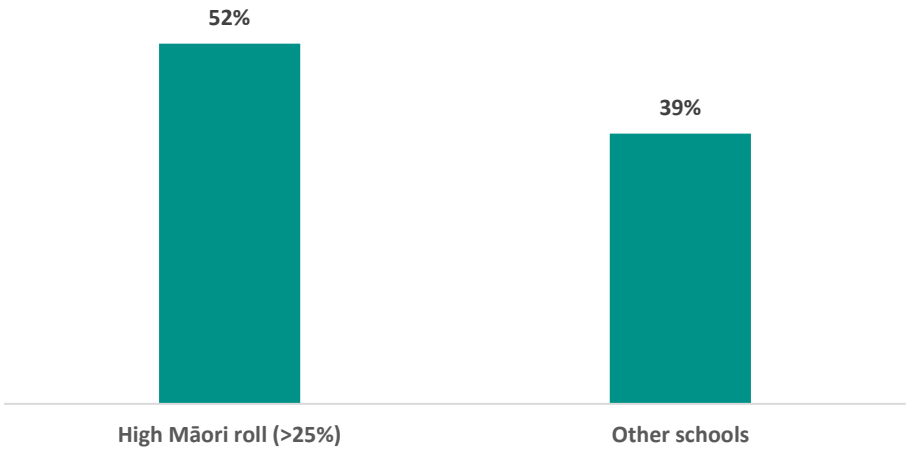
Rural schools and schools with a high Māori roll find consultation particularly challenging.

Rural schools find it challenging to maintain relationships with parents and whānau during consultation. Forty-four percent (n = 41) of rural schools find maintaining relations challenging compared to 34 percent (n = 80) of urban schools.

Figure 40: *School leader views on whether it is challenging to maintain relationships with parents and whānau, by rural or urban school*

Schools with a high Māori roll find it more challenging to consult with their community, with 52 percent (n = 57) finding it challenging or very challenging compared to 39 percent (n = 87) of other schools.

Figure 41: *School leader views on whether it is challenging to consult with their community, by Māori roll*



For **high Māori roll schools**, we heard that the challenge is around getting engagement, with schools finding it hard to get responses from whānau Māori in their consultation processes. We heard that where whānau Māori do not actively engage in consultation processes (not necessarily related to RSE), particularly when there is a larger proportion of Māori on the roll, this in an indicator that more attention is required by the school to find better methods of building trust.

> "[School leaders] have to be adaptable and creative – and often they're not like that, they're very 'template'. Whereas it has to be specific to your kura [school]. You need to figure it out, why you don't know your students, or your whānau..." - Te ao Māori secondary school teacher

Whānau Māori can also be reluctant to engage with RSE-related consultation in particular, because of fears of being misunderstood, 'sharing too much', or 'being seen in a certain way'. Again, this is related to issues of trust between whānau and the school. We heard that careful consideration of who runs consultation, and clarifying to whānau Māori who will be teaching RSE content to their children, can help with trust-building.

> "We can be shy when it comes to these topics… Having the right person to run the [RSE] programme is vital" - Te ao Māori secondary school teacher

We heard that where schools do this well, it is valuable to engage the community earlier and use direct methods. Schools told us that digital engagements, such as online surveys, haven't worked so well. Engagement with Māori whānau has worked best when it is in-person (kanohi ki te kanohi) - for example one school held a hui at the marae - or through one-to-one telephone conversations with whānau. These direct methods work better but they are more resource intensive for schools.

ERO's regression analysis shows that schools with a high Māori roll find it difficult to consult with the community regardless of their rurality and school size.

While higher-Māori school rolls experience challenges around getting *enough* community engagement, the opposite appears to be true for rural schools.

Through our interviews we found that **rural schools** experience unique challenges around community consultations, as they can involve the wider community, not only school parents and whānau. This is because rural communities often don't separate themselves in this way. They tend to be more tightly connected. For example in small rural towns where 'everyone knows everyone', people are interested in issues even if they, or their children, aren't directly impacted.

This collective approach can mean schools have to manage responses from the wider community when consulting on RSE, as they do for other consultations. When community responses are particularly negative for RSE, schools have struggled to manage this. For example, we heard about a vocal group in one rural community responding as soon as the consultation was publicised by picketing at the school, and handing out misinformation to teachers and students in the form of leaflets. Another rural school had to call the police to calm a situation at their consultation process.

Short stories: Worrying community consultation experiences at rural schools

Leaders and the board chair from a small, rural primary school told us about their recent experience consulting with their community about RSE delivery, for the first time. The principal affirmed that he considered it a 'must' for the school to bring in this important area of teaching and learning – and that doing so came with significant challenges for him and the school.

"[RSE] is an important part of the curriculum and the school had not taught this before - when it should have - and so being the first time, there was a lot of misinformation created by some in the school community as to what was being taught." – Principal

The principal and board chair shared that because the topic of the consultation was RSE, some of their parent and whānau community felt they didn't have to act professionally or respectfully when giving feedback. This included personal insults, persistent and abusive phone calls, and being approached without warning outside of school hours. We heard how much of the feedback from these parents and whānau related to anti-transgender advocacy groups and regularly referenced the board's 'secret agenda.' The experience made the board chair consider leaving the role, for their own safety and wellbeing.

"It was an actual minefield." – Deputy principal

Similarly to many other teachers and leaders that ERO talked to, the principal of this school told us that the school's RSE curriculum had 'gone backwards' as a result of the consultation. The 'open' rather than mandated curriculum had resulted in *more* stress, fear, and misinformed objections, with the result of *less* RSE teaching and learning in their classes. We heard that this did not serve their students, which disappointed the principal and board chair personally.

"If I'm honest, I can't see how any of it worked. I think not having some programme or something from the Ministry of Education did us a massive disservice within the school." – Board chair

The experience was incredibly challenging for the school community, with a wider impact beyond RSE, affecting the parent and whānau views and trust in the school, with people questioning other decisions of the board.

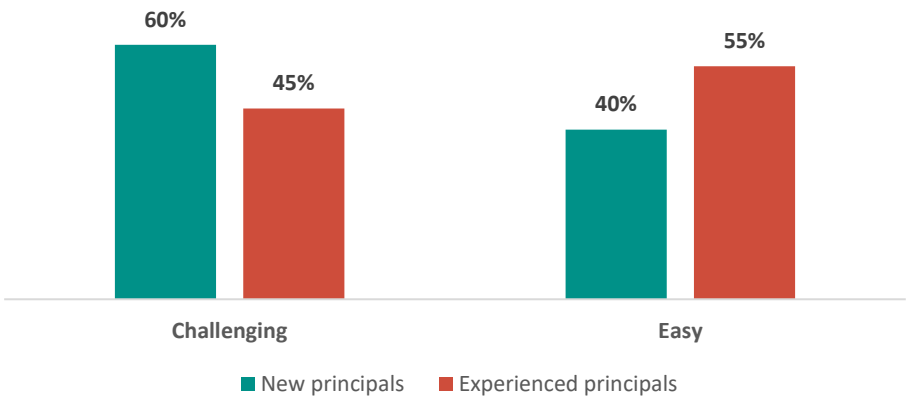
A principal at a large, rural primary school told us about being physically intimidated and verbally abused while walking with her family, following a backlash about her school's RSE curriculum related to content around gender. Many of the people who acted in extreme ways - some from outside the school community - were already associated with each other through anti-vaccine and anti-Government movements.

After this the principal felt nervous about going out in public and had to take time off from the role to recover. *"I couldn't go to the supermarket, I couldn't go to the beach, I couldn't go to the pub, because everywhere I went, I was either accosted very nicely about some things, or accosted in a mean way. The lack of support that we encountered… was horrendous."*

New principals are 1.3 times more likely to find consulting the community challenging than experienced principals.

Six in 10 new principals[r] (60 percent, n = 34) report they find consulting with the community on RSE challenging, compared to just over four in 10 (45 percent, n = 203) experienced principals.

Figure 42: *How easy or challenging principals find consulting with the community*



[r] New principals are principals with less than two years' experience.

Community consultation, if done well, requires the principal to liaise closely with the school board and Heads of Department, and to have an understanding of the community. We know from our previous research that new principals are not always well prepared for all aspects of their new role, including not being prepared for working with the diverse community of parents and whānau, working with board members, or ensuring the delivery of high-quality teaching practices.[78] These earlier findings underpin what we found about delivering RSE.

We found that new principals can find consultation and implementing RSE more challenging compared to principals who have been in the role for longer. In particular, new principals find running consultations difficult when they have to manage opposing views. They believe that the Ministry should be running these types of consultations or New Principals would like more guidance from the Ministry on how to run them within the school. They also find it challenging knowing how to support teachers who don't feel confident to deliver RSE, or aspects of it.

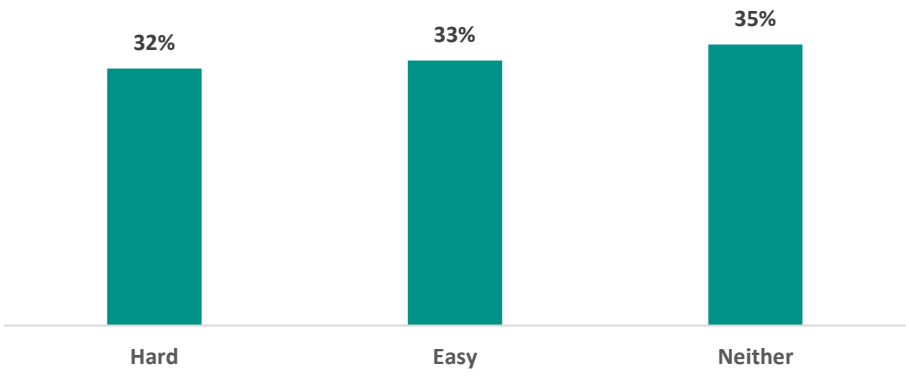
> "We need support and backing of the school from the Ministry so that the community understand it is national curriculum, carefully developed and carefully implemented." – New principal

4. Do school leaders find it difficult to deliver RSE?

A third of school leaders find it difficult to deliver RSE.

RSE can have content that is difficult for schools to navigate. One-third of school leaders (32 percent, n = 185) find delivering RSE hard, and one-third find it easy (33 percent, n = 188). Just over one-third (35 percent, n = 202) find it neither hard nor easy to deliver RSE.

Figure 43: *How difficult school leaders find delivering RSE*



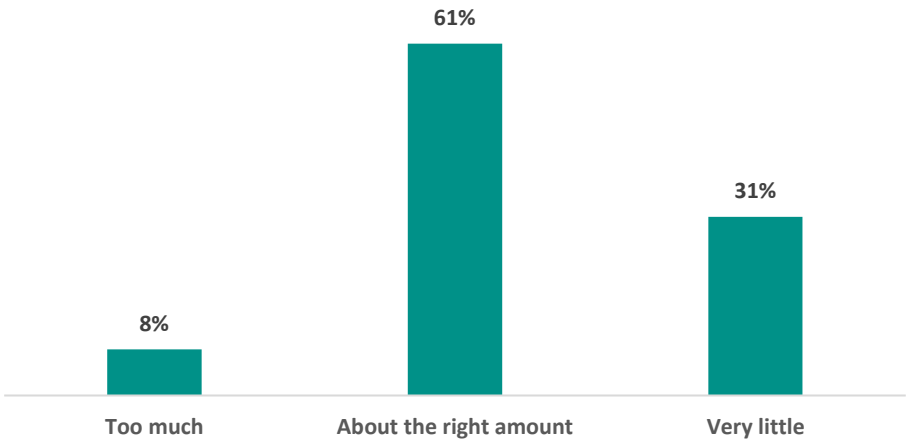
We found that school leaders find it difficult navigating what to teach and how based on the results of the community consultation, to ensure that the content is inclusive and comprehensive, as well as age appropriate. School leaders find the requirement to consult at least once every two years an additional challenge, as this can mean they have to re-design their RSE courses each time to align with the wishes of the new parents and whānau for each year group.

> "The RSE was just thrown at schools. Yes, there was the consultation side of things but it certainly has strained relationships with families at schools. This is extra stress that schools just don't need." – School leader

While it is often difficult, most school leaders do not find RSE takes up a lot of their time.

We asked school leaders how much of their time consulting on and delivering RSE takes up. Most leaders do not find it overly time consuming. Six in 10 (61 percent, n = 349) report RSE takes up about the right amount of their time, and three in 10 (31 percent, n = 180) report it takes up very little of their time. However, for some leaders it is more difficult, nearly one in 10 (8 percent, n = 46) report it takes up too much of their time.

Figure 44: *How much of school leader's time RSE takes up*



School leaders play a role in the consultation process, and this takes up their time but is manageable within their wider role. School leaders can be directly involved in the consultation with parents and whānau, and indirectly by designing and collating data and feedback, to be shared back to the community. While the consultation often requires changes to RSE course material, as detailed above, this is again manageable. However, school leaders who are new on the job can find that RSE takes up more time.

> "The current model for consultation at our school works well. However, it does put a lot of pressure on boards and school leadership to consult every two years, on a minor part of the wider curriculum." – School leader

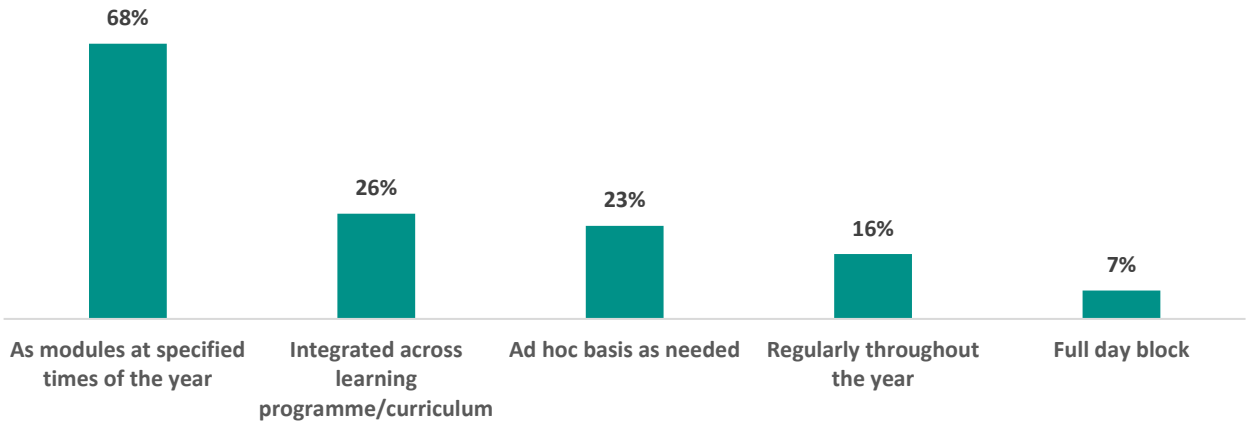
5. How do schools deliver RSE?

Schools most commonly deliver RSE as modules, but nearly a quarter deliver RSE on an ad-hoc basis.

Schools have flexibility in how and when they deliver RSE. They can deliver it at any time they want through the year through modules, by integrating it across the curriculum, or as they think it is needed. This means there is variation in the RSE education students receive.

- → Sixty-eight percent (n = 375) of schools deliver RSE as modules at specified times of the year.
- → Twenty-six percent (n = 140) of schools integrate RSE across their learning programme/curriculum.
- → Twenty-three percent (n = 126) deliver RSE on an ad-hoc basis, as needed.
- → Sixteen percent (n = 89) of schools deliver their RSE lessons regularly throughout the year.
- → Seven percent (n = 37) of schools deliver RSE in full day block(s).

Figure 45: *School leaders report when they deliver RSE lessons at their school*

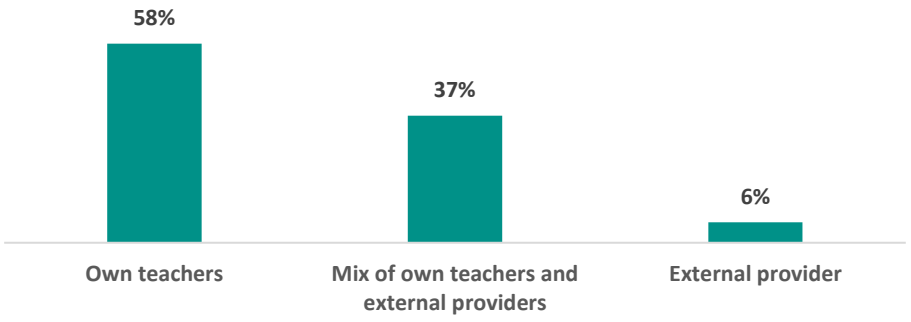


Most schools are using their own teachers to deliver RSE, either exclusively or in combination with external providers.

Schools can deliver RSE by using their own teachers, external providers, or a mix of these.

Over half (58 percent, n = 320) of schools use teachers from their school to teach RSE. Just over a third (37 percent, n = 202) use a mix of teachers and external providers to teach RSE. Only a small proportion only use external providers (6 percent, n = 33). This finding aligns with research that found two-thirds (67 percent) of primary teachers did not use external providers to provide support for RSE.[79]

Figure 46: *School leaders report how they deliver RSE*



We found that schools tend to use their own teachers because they think it is the best way to ensure RSE sessions are delivered routinely, and as part of the curriculum. Schools told us that they also want to ensure there is a trusting relationship with the students, which they think is important for providing a safe environment and enabling open discussions.

> "Trusting relationships between students and teachers is important. We need to know what students want to know." - Teacher

This finding aligns with what students told us, which is that they usually prefer their own teachers to cover RSE topics because they have a trusting relationship them. Students also told us that it helps when their teachers are confident in delivering sensitive content, are open to discussion, but set firm ground rules for this.

However, for some of the more sensitive RSE topics, or topics that require specialist knowledge, schools do sometimes use external providers. Schools noted some downsides to this, including that because presenters are not teachers, they sometimes deliver content in ways that aren't relatable to students. Students also told us that some external providers can be repetitive.

To mitigate the risks of using external providers, schools sometimes have their own teachers working alongside them. Teachers can add context so that students can understand the content better and they can follow-up on in classroom activities afterwords to reinforce learning.

> "If we use external facilitators we collaborate with them about what is going to be taught or delivered by them to our students e.g., Nest organisation with puberty, the police with Keeping Ourselves Safe, and Kia Kaha." – School leader

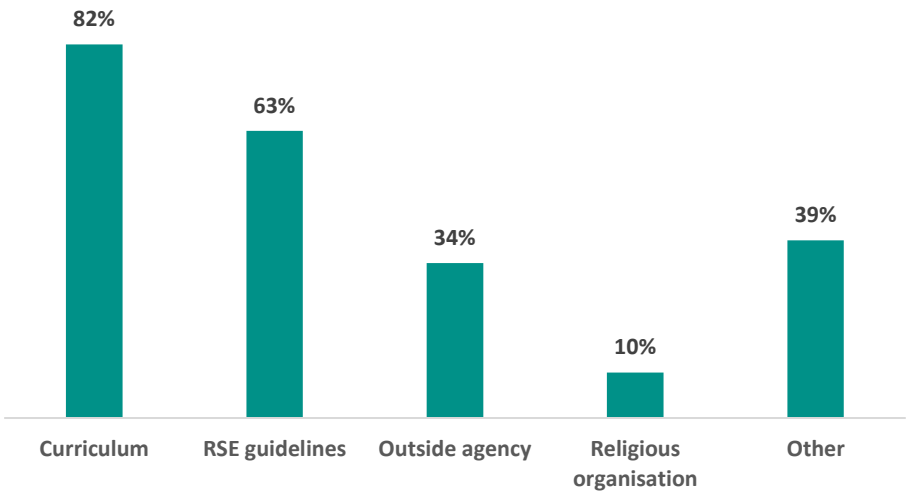
Schools use a range of resources and agencies to guide their RSE programme. Most use the health curriculum, and nearly two-thirds use the RSE guidelines.

The two most common resources schools use to guide their RSE programme are the health curriculum and the RSE guidelines. Four in five school leaders (82 percent, n = 451) report they use the health curriculum to guide the content of their RSE programme. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent, n = 348) use the RSE guidelines.

Some schools also use wider resources. One third (34 percent, n = 186) of school leaders report using an outside provider to develop their curriculum (for example, Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa). One in 10 (10 percent, n = 57) report using material from a religious organisation to guide the content of their programme.

Thirty-nine percent (n = 213) of schools report they use other resources to help develop their RSE curriculum. The most common resources mentioned were resources from Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa.

Figure 47: *What schools leaders use to guide the content of their RSE programme*



We heard most schools use the curriculum and guidelines to inform what is taught, especially given the changing nature of RSE as societal norms change. Teachers also value the guidelines as 'something to stand on' when being challenged by families. We say more about the usefulness of the curriculum and RSE guidelines later in this chapter.

In addition to the New Zealand Curriculum and the RSE guidelines, schools draw on other resources to inform and develop their RSE content. These can be wide ranging, including resources from Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa (formerly Family Planning) – its website has a section for educators in school-based settings delivering RSE to primary and secondary school students. Schools also tell us that they refer to written materials provided by the Catholic Church. Schools often adapt the materials they source from other sources to make sure they are fit for purpose and appropriate for the community that they serve, rather than just in its original form.

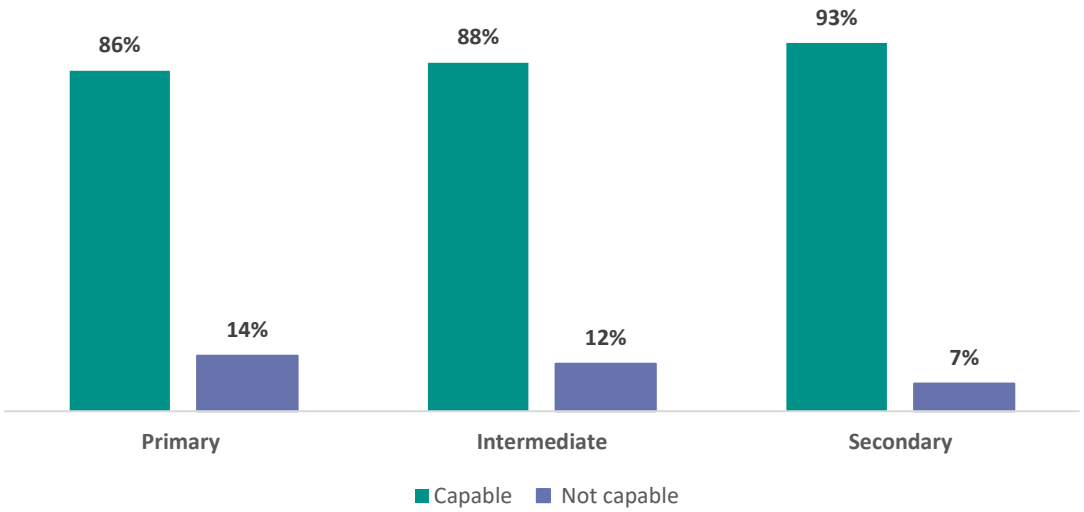
> "We have developed our own content to fit with the teachings of the Catholic Church but guided by the Sexuality and Relationships material" – School leader

6. Do teachers have the capability they need?

Leaders report most teachers have the capability they need to teach RSE.

Almost nine in 10 school leaders (88 percent, n = 450) report the teachers at their school are capable to teach RSE. Secondary school leaders (93 percent, n = 118) are more likely to agree teachers in their school are more capable to teach RSE than teachers in intermediate (88 percent, n = 230) and primary school (86 percent, n = 329).

Figure 48: *School leaders' reported capability of teachers to teach RSE*



As detailed above, schools tend to use their own teachers to deliver RSE for most topics. In secondary schools, RSE is mainly delivered by health and physical education teachers, which means they are specialists in this area of the curriculum and are more confident to deliver the content. Teachers across schools recognised that content knowledge on its own isn't enough for delivering RSE. They also needed to be able to deal with difficult conversations with and between students. Teachers told us that they could develop these skills on the job with additional training and through co-teaching. Team meetings were also a source of upskilling.

Short story: Teaching to students' interests and concerns

An experienced senior health teacher and Head of Faculty (HOF) at a large, co-ed, urban school told us how she co-constructs some of her school's RSE curriculum with her senior students. After listening to her students, she prioritises parts of the health curriculum that are most relevant for her students, along with other topics that they are concerned about, including the effects of pornography, and domestic violence.

"We create an environment where the kids can ask questions that may be poignant to them." Head of Faculty

The HOF told us she has had to constantly adapt her school's RSE curriculum because what children are being exposed to and experiencing is changing as often as "every month".

"It is so scary to hear what the kids want to talk about… the stuff that they're experiencing and trying to wade through and get their head around… is more and more complex." – Head of Faculty

Students told us that one of the things they like the most about RSE lessons is how their teacher responds to their input, and that they are "listened to." One student told us it feels like they've "built the space together."

Short story: Teachers collaborate to build confidence when teaching about sensitive topics

A male Provisionally Certificated Teacher (PCT) at a large, co-ed, urban secondary school shared how he felt uncomfortable teaching about menstruation to his female students. He told us that rather than avoid the topic, he decided to be proactive and talked with the Head of Faculty (HOF) for health. The HOF then organised for a female teacher come into the PCT's class to co-teach and show him how he can approach the topic of menstruation.

The teacher told us that this was a valuable learning moment for him -- and ensured that his students didn't miss out on an important topic just because their teacher lacked confidence. He also learnt from the more experienced female teacher how to approach the topic in a way that is simple and factual.

"It's really important how you set up the lesson… instead of going in 'I'm the expert' even though I have no uterus… acknowledging the facts and moving forward, instead of avoiding it completely." – Male teacher

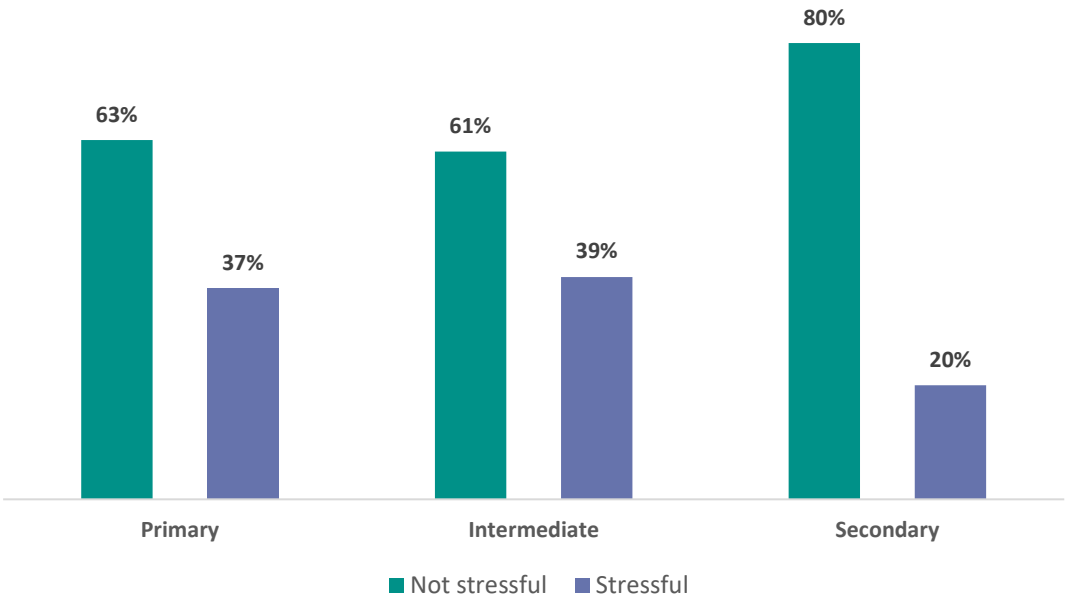
The female teacher was able to provide personal expertise and experience about a topic that was gender specific. The result was a positive learning experience for the students and the male PCT, who by observing his colleague, felt more confident to teach the topic in the future.

Many teachers find teaching RSE stressful, particularly in primary school.

Teachers' stress impacts on the quality of teaching, and reflect the support and training provided to teachers to teach RSE. It can also be related to their comfort in teaching topics that may not align with their beliefs or cultural values. We asked teachers about how stressful they find teaching RSE.

Almost one-third (32 percent, n = 213) of teachers find teaching RSE stressful. Primary school (37 percent, n = 110) and intermediate (39 percent, n = 58) teachers are more likely to find it stressful than secondary school (20 percent, n = 45) teachers. This aligns with research that found that primary school teachers indicated lower confidence for planning and teaching RSE than secondary teachers (who were specialist health education or health and physical education teachers). [80]

Figure 49: *Teachers report how stressful they find teaching RSE*



Regression analysis shows that not using the RSE guide is linked to stress. Teachers who don't use the guide are 1.6 times more likely to find teaching RSE stressful. Other factors that contribute to stress are teaching at primary (1.6 times) or intermediate (1.8 times), and not being supported by school leadership (1.9 times).[s]

Teachers across schools and year levels are worried about unintentionally causing offence to students or parents and whānau. Because of this, teachers are less confident teaching content on sensitive topics, which are most likely to cause offence.

> "It is a lot to expect from a primary trained teacher, especially at intermediate level, to feel confident and comfortable teaching students, especially tweens, about sexuality education. It's one thing for us to be teaching puberty (which is also very difficult) but it's an entirely new matter to start teaching intermediate students about reproduction" – Primary teacher

> "Even if you're in a great school like I am, I don't feel comfortable teaching about sexuality or gender … there's an optics factor, that I consider because I identify as part of the rainbow communities myself." – Primary teacher

Primary school teachers are the most stressed because they are aware that many parents and whānau are worried about content being taught 'too early' and before their children are able to make sense of it. This can be due to misinformation and misunderstandings. For example, we heard from teachers that parents and whānau at their school don't understand that their classes' RSE content is focused on health, friendship, and hygiene; with one teacher telling us that instead, "People think we're trying to teach children about sex." We heard that teachers in some primary schools have been verbally abused by parents and whānau because of RSE.

> "RSE covers a multitude of topics. Concepts such as 'keeping ourselves safe' and consent are so important for students to learn - even just understanding that you need consent to use

[s] Primary and not being supported by school leadership are significant at $p < 0.1$.

someone else's stationery is so important in the early years of school, it isn't all about romantic or sexual relationships." – Primary teacher

"Parents become abusive to teachers, and even start very difficult conversations outside of school - in the street or supermarket. They are very picky about every word that is used. As teachers, if we mis-speak once, just a wrong word or even looking the wrong way then we can be under fire from the parent community" – Primary teacher

The Pacific community can find body and sex-related topics challenging or inappropriate to talk about outside of home, and for this reason some Pacific teachers, especially in primary schools, sometimes don't want to teach RSE.

In our interviews and focus groups, we heard that teachers who are well set-up with the right skills and the right support enjoy the challenges of RSE teaching. They emphasise the importance of this learning, and value the opportunity to positively impact students' lives.

"Specifically in my Year 9 health class – [on some topics I tell them] 'Park this until you're ready… I want to tell you now, because I might not get the opportunity again.'" - Teacher

"It takes a certain kind of person to be able to do that and to facilitate a safe space… [You need] consistent delivery with appropriate, adequate, and robust resources." - Teacher

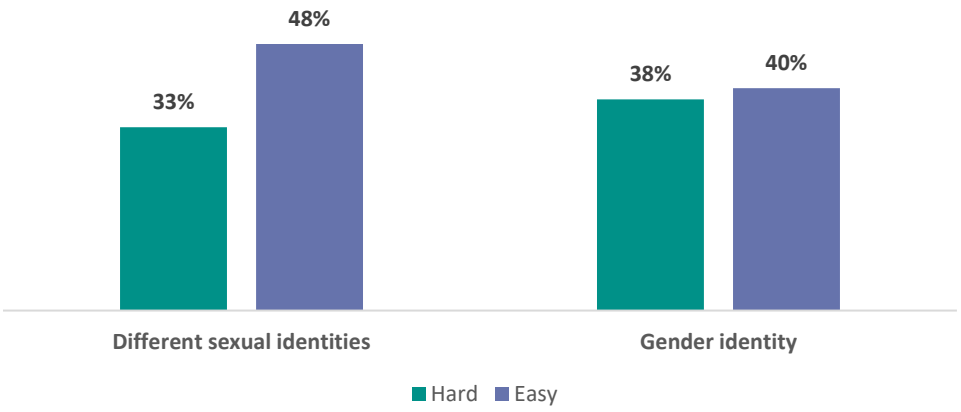
"Why I teach some of the stuff that I do - So that students understand differences and different ideas and also the ability to be able to value that diversity. And I think if we don't teach some of that stuff, then kids don't get it… the ability to value the diversity of others, to be empathetic, to support other people, [are] really important skills." – Teacher

Teachers find teaching different sexual identities and gender identity the most difficult.

Across year levels, teachers report teaching sexual identities and gender identity is hardest. As the year levels get younger, the more difficult teachers find it to teach each of these topics.

One third of teachers (33 percent, n = 121) find teaching about different sexual identities challenging, whilst almost half (48 percent, n = 174) find it easy. Nearly two in five teachers (38 percent, n = 131) find teaching about gender identity difficult, whilst two in five (40 percent, n = 140) find it easy.

Figure 50: *Teachers reporting difficulty of teaching RSE topics*



As discussed above, teachers are less confident teaching sensitive topics because they are most likely to cause offence. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, genders and sexualities are two of the most contentious topics, as well as human reproduction. This aligns with research that found that primary teachers often found topics related to gender identity and sexual identity challenging to navigate.[81]

Teachers are aware that students of faith are especially likely to be offended by content on genders and sexualities (set out in more detail in Chapter 4). This can make it stressful for teachers to deliver RSE in schools that are affiliated to a religion.

> "It becomes difficult to teach certain things such as gender differences due to different cultural beliefs within our school. There is also the question about how young can students be when you start teaching this? Teachers would rather keep themselves safe by not teaching these things so they don't get into conflict with parents" – Primary teacher

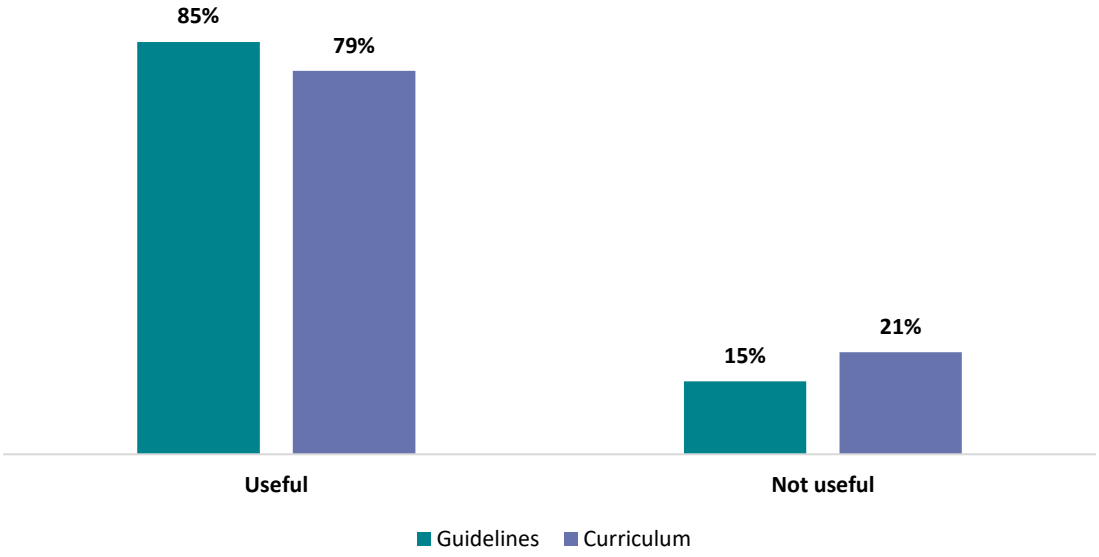
7. Are the curriculum and guidelines useful?

Most schools find the curriculum and RSE guidelines useful.

As outlined in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, the two key documents that inform what is taught as part of RSE are the curriculum, and the RSE Guidelines. The curriculum for RSE is high-level, with information on the topics that should be covered included in the RSE guidelines.

Over four in five school leaders find the curriculum (79 percent, n = 389) and RSE guidelines (85 percent, n = 391) useful for developing their school approach to RSE.

Figure 51: *School leaders views on whether the curriculum and guidelines are useful*



As discussed earlier, schools are using the curriculum and guidelines to inform what is taught and to provide information to parents.

> "Removal of guidelines around RSE will cause schools only teaching the things that they think are important. For example, if a school is in a conservative area then they might not teach queer sex ed at all, or not even teach sex ed." - Teacher

They also find that having established, 'official' documents supports their challenging conversations with parents and whānau, as these help to 'back up' what they are teaching.

> "It's been useful to have 'Navigating the Journey', to have something to stand on." – Intermediate school leader

> "My school is very traditional, conservative. The 'Aroha and Diversity [in Catholic Schools]' document helped, with talking to the board. Showing that they [students from rainbow communities] have a right to be here." – School counsellor at a Catholic boys' school.

However, leaders and teachers who don't find the guidelines useful, told us that they contain too much information for teachers to be able to engage with, given the time that they have. Some leaders also find some language in RSE guidelines is not written in a way parents and whānau can easily understand and can lead to misinterpretation.

School boards told us that some of the language could be improved to make the guidelines more useful to schools. In some cases, schools had shared the guidelines with parents and whānau, and the language really hadn't been sensitised for this audience.

> "Throughout the RSE guidelines there are several small, but what we perceive to be inflammatory, remarks that put people off the entire document, when a lot of it was really good content." - Board chair at a primary school

Conclusion

With our current curriculum and consultation settings, against the backdrop of increasing community division on key topics, RSE is becoming very difficult for many Aotearoa New Zealand schools.

The requirement for school boards to consult with the school community at least once every two years is creating significant challenges. On some topics parents and whānau are split in their views on what to teach, how much to teach, and when to teach it. Agreement is often impossible, and leaders and teachers get caught in the middle of opposing views of parents and whānau – and often, additional intervention from people that aren't directly connected to the school. School staff can be subject to ongoing abuse and intimidation. To protect themselves, some schools respond by reducing teaching RSE teaching and learning, meaning that students miss out.

We also found that not all teachers are well prepared to teach RSE, particularly in primary schools where RSE is often taught by the classroom teacher, rather than a specialist health teacher like most secondary schools. One in three teachers find teaching RSE stressful. It is important all teachers have the skills and support they need for this critical area of our students' learning.

The next chapter brings together ERO's overall findings and recommendations from our evaluation, including opportunities to address these challenges for schools.

Chapter 9: Findings and areas for action

The seven questions that we asked as part of this evaluation have led to 21 key findings. Based on these findings we have identified three key areas of action, that will improve the quality and consistency of RSE being taught across the country, improving the safety and health of children and young people.

ERO was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of RSE to look at how RSE is currently taught and how well it meets the needs of students, expectations of parents, and capabilities of schools. In undertaking this evaluation, we drew on evidence from a range of data and analysis, including:

- an in-depth review of national and international literature
- in-depth reviews of national and international guidance and policy documents
- ERO's own data collection including over 12,000 survey responses, visits to 20 schools, and interviews with over 300 participants – with students, teachers, school leaders, board chairs and presiding members, parents and whānau, recent school leavers, and other expert informants.

From this evidence, we have identified 20 key findings across the following five areas.

- **Area 1:** Is teaching RSE in schools supported?
- **Area 2:** What is being taught in RSE?
- **Area 3:** Does RSE meet students' needs?
- **Area 4:** Does RSE meet the expectations of parents and whānau?
- **Area 5:** Is teaching RSE manageable for schools?

Context

Relationships and sexuality education focuses on a range key issues for children and young people, including preventing bullying, promoting healthy relationships and sexual health, and reducing discrimination in the classroom and more widely in society. In Aotearoa New Zealand we continue to have a range of worrying health and safety issues that directly relate to relationships and sexuality, including family and sexual violence, bullying, and racism. At a time where young people are increasingly exposed to harmful online content, including pornography and misinformation through social media, and hate speech, RSE plays an increasingly important role.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a similar requirement to teach RSE as other countries, but a less prescriptive curriculum, stronger requirements for consultation, and less guidance and support for teachers. RSE falls under the 'Health and Physical Education' learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum, which is compulsory in Years 1-10 (approx. ages 5-14). RSE-related learning is woven into the curriculum, but there isn't a specified set of teaching or learning outcomes that schools must cover, or a dedicated RSE 'unit' that schools have to teach. Schools design their own RSE programmes, using the New Zealand Curriculum or optional guidelines from the Ministry of Education. School boards are required to consult their school community on RSE (as part of their health programme) at least once every two years.

Our evaluation led to 21 key findings in five areas.

Area 1: Is teaching RSE in schools supported?

We looked at whether students and parents and whānau support RSE being taught in schools.

Finding 1: There is wide support from students and parents and whānau for RSE being taught in schools.

- → Over nine in 10 (91 percent, n = 4,225) students support RSE being taught in schools. Girls are more likely to support it being taught, with 95 percent (n = 2,953) of girls supporting it, and 88 percent (n = 1,207) of boys.
- → Most parents and whānau (87 percent, n = 3,078) support RSE being taught in schools.
- → Parents and whānau who know what is being taught are happier with RSE.
- → Some students decide to miss school to avoid RSE (7 percent, n = 371), but others go to school because they want to learn RSE (9 percent, n = 447).

Finding 2: Pacific parents, parents of primary aged students, and parents of faith are less supportive.

- → Nearly three in 10 (29 percent, n = 66) Pacific parents do not support RSE being taught in schools, due to cultural beliefs and reasons to do with their faith. Seventy-one percent do support it.
- → Primary school parents and whānau are slightly less supportive (82 percent, n = 91) than intermediate (89 percent, n = 558) and secondary school (89 percent, n = 1,604) parents and whānau, due to concerns about RSE content being appropriate for their children's age.
- → Parents and whānau who practice a faith are over two times more likely to not support RSE being taught. Over one in five parents who practice a faith (22 percent, n = 271) do not support RSE being taught, compared to 9 percent (n = 20) of parents who do not practice a faith.
- → Six percent of parents and whānau withdraw their child from RSE.

Area 2: What is being taught in RSE?

Finding 3: What students learn about depends on where they go to school.

- → There is a lot of flexibility for schools around exactly which RSE content is taught, and how it is taught. Schools can develop their own programmes, rely on external providers, or both. No RSE content is compulsory, which means what students learn depends entirely on their school.
- → RSE teaching across the country includes coverage of a wide range of topics, which relate broadly to personal safety, managing feelings, bodies, health, diverse identities, wellbeing, and relationships with other people.
- → Students in girls' schools are more likely to learn about consent, different sexual identities, and gender identity than students at co-ed schools. For example, eight in 10 students (81%, n = 1,037) in girls' schools learn about consent but only half (58 percent, n = 81) of students in co-ed schools do.

Finding 4: What students are taught changes as they grow up.

- → In Years 0-4 (ages 5-8), almost all students learn about feelings and emotions (n = 168), friendships and bullying (n = 167), and personal safety (n = 164). As they progress through Years 5-8 (ages 8-12), they begin to learn about getting help with their health and changes to their body.
- → At Years 9-10 (ages 12-14), around eight in 10 students learn about consent (n = 177), romantic relationships (n = 163), sexual identities (n = 162), human reproduction (n =157), and gender identity (n = 147).

→ Students do not have to learn RSE in Years 11-13 (ages 14-18), but many do.

Finding 5: Sensitive topics are taught later. Different sexual identities, gender identity, and human reproduction are mostly taught in secondary school.

→ Less than one in five teachers of students aged 8-10 report teaching sexual identities, gender identity, and human reproduction, compared to three-quarters of teachers of students aged 12-14.

Finding 6: What is taught in RSE is changing over time, as society changes.

→ Only around one third of recent school leavers report they learnt about gender identity (n = 815), gender stereotypes (n = 821, and celebrating differences (n = 880), compared to over two-thirds of current Year 11-13 students who report they learn about these topics.

Area 3: Does RSE meet students' needs?

We looked at how well RSE is meeting the needs of students, and how this differs across different groups.

Finding 7: Most students agree that they are taught the right amount of most RSE topics and at the right age, though some topics aren't being delivered at the right time to meet students' needs.

→ Across most topics, seven in 10 students say they are being taught the right amount and around half (41-55 percent) agree that they are learning it at the right time.
→ Seven in 10 students want to learn personal safety (69 percent, n = 3,914) and friendships and bullying (76 percent, n = 4, 310) earlier.
→ Six in 10 (60 percent, n = 459) of Years 5-6 and half (51 percent, n = 767) of Years 7-8 students want to learn about human reproduction later.

Finding 8: Boys are more likely to want to learn all topics later than girls, reflecting that boys may go through puberty later.

→ Boys are more likely to want to learn **all topics later** than girls. The most common topics they want to learn about later are human reproduction (35 percent, n = 579), different sexual identities (22 percent, n = 327), and romantic relationships including intimate relationships (22 percent, n = 285).
→ Girls often want to learn more and earlier on key topics. Over a quarter of girls want to learn **more** about managing feelings and emotions (25 percent, n = 835) and gender stereotypes (31 percent, n = 840). Over three-quarters of girls want to learn about friendship and bullying (82 percent, n = 3,070) and personal safety including online safety (75 percent, n = 2,810) **earlier**.

Finding 9: Students' views are split about when and how much they learn about human reproduction, different sexual identities, gender identity, and romantic relationships.

→ Three in 10 students want to learn about human reproduction earlier (28 percent, n = 1,491), and three in 10 want to learn it later (28 percent, n = 1,496)
→ A third of students want to learn about different sexual identities (33 percent, n = 1657), gender identity (36 percent, n = 1814), and romantic relationships (31 percent, n = 1,421) earlier, and nearly one in five want to learn about these subjects later (16-18 percent).

Finding 10: Students' faith and sexuality impacts how well RSE meets their needs.

- → Students of faith are more likely to want to learn less about gender identity (24 percent, n = 202), and different sexual identities (23 percent, n = 202), than students who do not practice a faith.
- → Secondary school students from rainbow communities want to learn about all RSE topics earlier than other students.

Finding 11: Recent school leavers report that there were significant gaps in their RSE learning.

- → Over three-quarters of the students didn't learn and would have liked to learn about consent (82 percent, n = 93), managing feelings and emotions (78 percent, n = 206), personal safety including online safety (78 percent, n = 84), and changes to their body (75 percent, n = 118). This reflects that what they learn depends on schools individual programmes.

Area 4: Does RSE meet the expectations of parents and whānau?

We looked at how well RSE is meeting the needs of parents and whānau, and how this differs across different groups.

Finding 12: A third of parents and whānau want to change what or how RSE is taught, and over one in 10 do not want it taught in schools.

- → Thirty-four percent (n = 1,213) of parents and whānau think that RSE should be taught, but what or how it is taught should change. The proportion is higher for primary school parents and whānau (38 percent, n = 424) than secondary (32 percent, n = 577) because they are concerned about RSE content not being age appropriate.
- → Fifty-three percent (n = 1,865) of parents and whānau think that what or how RSE is taught should stay as it is now. The proportion is higher for secondary school parents and whānau (57 percent, n = 1,027) than for primary (44 percent, n = 486).
- → Thirteen percent (n = 472) of parents and whānau do not want RSE taught in schools.

Finding 13: For most RSE topics, parents and whānau broadly agree their child is learning the right amount, but primary school parents more often want sensitive topics taught later.

- → More than six in 10 parents and whānau think that the right amount of each individual RSE topic is being taught.
- → More than half of primary school parents and whānau want human reproduction (63 percent, n = 578), gender identity (54 percent, n = 468), and gender stereotypes (51 percent, n = 442) covered later because they are concerned about age appropriateness.

Finding 14: Many parents and whānau want their children to learn more about consent, relationships, and health, and learn earlier about friendships, safety, and managing emotions.

- → The most common topics that parents and whānau want their children to learn more about are consent (31 percent, n = 717), romantic relationships (28 percent, n = 441), and health and contraception (27 percent, n = 630). The most common topics that parents want their children to learn earlier are friendships and bullying (61 percent, n = 1,673), personal safety including online safety (58 percent, n = 1,587), and managing feelings and emotions (47 percent, n = 1,262).

Finding 15: Parent and whānau views are split on teaching about gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes.

- → Almost a third (31 percent, n = 791) of parents and whānau want different sexual identities taught earlier and a quarter (n = 499) want it taught more. A quarter want it taught later (n = 613) / less (n = 460).
- → Almost a third of parents and whānau want gender stereotypes taught earlier and a quarter want it taught more. Almost a third want it taught later and a quarter want it taught less.
- → A quarter (25 percent, n = 639) of parents want gender identity taught earlier and one-fifth want it taught more (22 percent, n = 484). A third (37 percent, n = 915) want it taught later and a quarter want it taught less (26 percent, n = 555).

Finding 16: Parents' gender, faith, and their children's identities, impacts how well RSE meets their expectations.

- → Mothers are more likely to report their children are learning too little, in particular around consent, managing feelings and emotions, gender stereotypes, and friendships and bullying, because of protective concerns about their children's safety.
- → Fathers are more likely to report that their child is learning too much, particularly around gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes, in line with more traditional values.
- → Parents and whānau that practice a faith want less RSE, in particular around gender identity, different sexual identities, and gender stereotypes, because of concerns that this content does not align with the views outlined in their faith, and that it is the role of their church or faith-based community to teach RSE to their child - especially some of the more sensitive topics.
- → Parents and whānau of students from rainbow communities are more likely to want their children to learn about all RSE topics earlier, especially topics on diverse identities and bodies.
- → Parents and whānau of girls want their children to learn about changes to their body and consent earlier, compared to parents and whānau of boys.

Area 5: Is teaching RSE manageable for schools?

We looked at how school leaders, teachers, and boards are finding the current settings and requirements for RSE teaching.

Finding 17: Not all schools are meeting the current consultation requirement.

- → Just over a quarter (28 percent, n = 87) don't know they are required to consult at least once every two years and worryingly almost one in 10 board chairs (8 percent, n = 26) last consulted their community *more* than two years ago. One-fifth of board chairs (20 percent, n = 62) *don't know* when their school last consulted.

Finding 18: Schools face significant challenges in consulting on what to teach in RSE, particularly rural schools and schools with a high Māori roll.

- → Schools find consulting difficult and divisive – almost half (45 percent, n = 237) of schools find consulting challenging or very challenging. In the worst cases, consultation processes result in abuse and aggression.
- → Rural schools find it particularly challenging to maintain relationships with parents and whānau during consultation. Over four in 10 rural schools (44 percent, n = 41) find maintaining relations challenging compared to one third of urban schools (34 percent, n = 80), because consultations often involve the wider community, not only school parents and whānau.

- → Around half (52 percent n = 57) of schools with a high Māori roll find it challenging to consult with their community, because schools often need to consider more carefully how to build trust with whānau Māori and which methods of engagement will work best.

Finding 19: Schools most commonly deliver RSE as modules, but nearly a quarter deliver RSE on an ad-hoc basis.

- → Schools have flexibility in how and when they deliver RSE which means there is wide variation.
- → Only 16 percent (n = 89) of schools deliver RSE lessons regularly throughout the year.
- → Most schools (68 percent, n = 375) deliver RSE as modules at particular times of the year.
- → A quarter (23 percent, n = 126) deliver RSE on an ad-hoc basis.

Finding 20: Most, but not all teachers have the capability they need to teach RSE and many find it stressful, particularly in primary.

- → Most schools are using teachers from their school to deliver RSE, either exclusively (58 percent, n = 320) or in combination with external providers (37 percent, n = 202).
- → One in 10 (n = 51) school leaders do not think their teachers have the capability to teach RSE, this rises to one in seven (n = 54) in primary schools.
- → Almost one third (32 percent, n = 213) of teachers find teaching RSE stressful. Teachers in primary school (37 percent, n = 110) find it more stressful than teachers in secondary school (20 percent, n = 45) because they usually aren't subject specialists and because they are often dealing with parents and whānau concerns about what is age appropriate to teach.

Finding 21: Most schools find the Curriculum and RSE guidelines useful.

- → Four in five school leaders find the curriculum (79 percent, n = 389) and RSE guidelines (85 percent, n = 391) useful for developing their school approach to RSE. Teachers who don't use the RSE guidelines are 1.6 times more likely to be stressed.

Areas for action

Based on these 21 key findings, ERO has identified three areas that require action to improve RSE and support the impact that it needs to have. These are set out below.

Area 1: Extend teaching and learning of RSE into senior secondary school.

The findings show that RSE is a key area of learning for children and young people, particularly at a time of increased risks through social media and harmful online content.

ERO found widespread support from parents and whānau and students for RSE to be taught in schools. Eighty-seven percent (n = 3,078) of parents and 91 percent (n = 4,225) of students support RSE being taught in schools.

However, we also found that students aren't always getting the content that they need, at the right time for when they need it. We found that boys in particular want to learn about RSE later when key topics become more relevant to them. Boys later maturity means that stopping RSE at Year 10 may be too early. We also heard from young people who have finished secondary school that they did not receive RSE knowledge that they need for their life beyond school.

In the senior secondary school, timetables are crowded and students have choice about the subjects they study. But even in this context RSE is too important to leave to chance.

Recommendation 1: RSE continues to be compulsory from Years 1 to 10.

Recommendation 2: The Government consider how to extend RSE teaching and learning into Years 11 to 13 (including whether it should be compulsory), and schools looks at how they can prioritise it.

Area 2: Increase consistency of what is taught.

The findings show that RSE is not being consistently taught across schools. There is variability in what students are taught and when they are taught it depending on where they go to school. This was highlighted in ERO's previous reviews (2018 and 2007) and remains a problem.

Aotearoa New Zealand's approach to RSE is significantly less prescriptive than other countries, where there are clearer and consistent national expectations for what will be covered. The flexibility of our curriculum, combined with the autonomy given to individual schools and teachers in delivering RSE, has led to significant variations in the education received by our children and young people.

The challenges our children and young people face are also changing, for example from increased risks of social media and online bullying and abuse. Many parents and students agree on the essential topics they wish to see addressed in RSE at an earlier stage, such as friendships, combating bullying, safety (including online safety), managing emotions, and understanding consent.

ERO has also found that not all teachers are well prepared to teach RSE, particularly in primary schools where RSE is often taught by the classroom teacher. One in three teachers find teaching RSE stressful. It is important all teachers have the skills and support they need.

Recommendation 3: The Ministry of Education review the relationships and sexuality education (RSE) curriculum (within the Health and Physical Education learning area) to ensure clarity on what should be taught and when, spanning from Years 0 to 13. This review should clarify the knowledge, skills, and understanding students are expected to develop.

Recommendation 4: The Ministry of Education provides evidence based resources and supports for school leaders and teachers, including curriculum and teaching guidance.

Recommendation 5: Teachers, especially those in primary schools, receive the professional development necessary to effectively teach RSE. This support should include training during their initial teacher education, as well as ongoing professional development.

Area 3: Look at the consultation requirement on boards.

ERO has found that the requirement for school boards to consult at least once every two years is creating significant challenges for schools. The increasingly divided views on sensitive topics that are being seen globally are reflected in our findings. On some topics parents and whānau have conflicting views on what should be taught, the extent of that teaching, and the appropriate timing for teaching it. Achieving consensus is frequently difficult, leaving schools caught between opposing perspectives from parents and whānau, as well as external influence from individuals and groups not directly connected to the school. School staff can be subject to ongoing abuse and intimidation. Some schools respond by scaling back RSE teaching, which results in students missing out on learning opportunities.

A more prescriptive curriculum (Recommendation 3) could reduce the need for schools to consult their community as there will be less local variation in what they will teach.

Aotearoa New Zealand is unique in the level of consultation that is required for RSE. The health and physical education learning area is the only part of our national curriculum that mandates consultation at least every two years. Other countries require less or no consultation, instead *informing* parents about the

content and delivery of in-school RSE programmes and allowing them to opt out of lessons if it doesn't fit their needs. Our study found that parents and whānau do take up the option of withdrawing their children. We also found that the provision of clear information for parents and whānau about what will be taught significantly increases how happy they are with a school's RSE programme. Parents who know most of what is being taught are most likely to be happy with RSE being taught as it is now (65 percent). Parents who don't know what is being taught are most likely to disagree that RSE should be taught.

Recommendation 6: Consider replacing the requirement on school boards to consult the school community on RSE (as part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum) with a requirement to inform parents and whānau about *what* they plan to teach and *how* they plan to teach it, before they teach it. Schools should continue to take steps to understand students' needs. Schools should also ensure that parents and whānau know that they can withdraw their children from any element of RSE that they are uncomfortable with.

Recommendation 7: Retain the ability for parents and whānau to withdraw their children from RSE lessons and provide clear information about how to do this.

Conclusion

We found that relationships and sexuality education is critical to the learning, development, and wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand's young people. We also heard that this is more important than ever, considering increased access to harmful online content and social media, global division on key topics of gender and sexuality, and our own country's worrying climate of bullying, sexual harm, and relationship- and sexuality-related violence. Our schools need to provide clear, consistent, and useful RSE knowledge and skills.

The areas for action we have identified have the potential to make significant improvements that serve our children and young people, their parents and whānau, and our valued school leaders and teachers.

Chapter 10: Limitations

This chapter discusses the limitations of this study.

Limitations

Scope

This research does not make judgement about individual schools or individual RSE providers. The following was out of scope for this evaluation

- → School type
  - Māori medium schools
  - Alternative Education
  - Special schools
  - Teen Parent Units
- → Participants
  - RSE external providers
- → Areas of focus
  - Quality of RSE guide or curriculum content
  - Quality of provision/delivery by schools
  - Quality of provision/delivery by external providers
  - Quality of RSE support resources

Data collection and analysis

- → Surveys were voluntary and respondents did not have to answer all the questions. This meant that were missing data, that were excluded from the analyses.
- → Some teachers, school leaders, and board members were not willing to share their school information, therefore we were unable to analyse school-level variables for these respondents.

Appendix 1: Student surveys

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, not all year levels of students were asked about all topics, and the wording of some topics was changed for younger children. In this section, we include the three separate surveys that were presented to students in:

- → Year 5-6
- → Year 7-8
- → Year 9-13.

See Appendix 7 for a summary of which survey questions were related to each topic area of RSE, for students of different ages.

Different surveys were also presented to parents, teachers, and leaders, depending on the age of the students they were responding about. These surveys are found in Appendices 1 – 6.

a) Student informed consent information

All student surveys included the following consent statement:

> What is this survey about? Researchers at the Education Review Office (ERO) are doing some research about relationships and sexuality education (when you learn at school about friendships, bodies and safety).
>
> We want to hear from students. We want to ask you about relationships and sexuality education (when you learn about friendships, bodies and safety) at your school.
>
> Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers come directly to us. No-one except the research team will be able to see your answers.
>
> You do not have to do the survey or answer some of the questions if you do not want to. We will write a report that will be about all of Aotearoa New Zealand – we won't talk about individual students or schools.
>
> If this survey raises any issues for you, please talk to your parents, your teacher, another trusted adult or you can contact Youthline on 0800 376 633 or text 234
>
> This survey will take about 10 minutes. Thank you very much for doing this survey. Click on the NEXT button to start the survey, if you agree to the following:
>
> - → I know this survey is about relationships and sexuality education (friendships, bodies and safety)
> - → I have chosen to do this survey, and I know I can stop at any time I understand only the research team will see my answers
> - → I understand my survey responses will help ERO's report
> - → No one will be able to recognise me in the report.

b) Year 5-6 student survey

1. What school do you go to?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)

- → NZ European/Pākehā
- → Māori
- → Pacific Peoples
- → Latin American
- → African
- → Middle Eastern
- → Other European
- → Asian
- → Chinese
- → Indian
- → Prefer not to say
- → Other (please specify)

3. Are you a:
   - → Boy
   - → Girl
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Another gender (please specify)
4. Do you have a long-term disability? (lasting 6 months or more) (e.g., impaired hearing, visual impairment, in a wheelchair, learning difficulties)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know
   - → Prefer not to say
5. What year are you in in school?
   - → Year 0-4 (if a student selected 'Years 0-4', the survey ended right away)
   - → Year 5-6
   - → Year 7-8
   - → Year 9-10
   - → Year 11-12
   - → Year 13

The following questions are about what you learnt.

6. Did you learn about:
   How your body changes
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   How babies are made
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Getting help with your health

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Managing feelings and emotions

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Keeping safe

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different genders

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different types of families

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

7. Did you learn:

How your body changes

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

How babies are made

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Getting help with your health

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Friendships and bullying

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Managing feelings and emotions

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Keeping safe

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Consent

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little

→ I didn't learn about this

Who you are (your identity)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Different genders

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Different types of families

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

8. At what age do you think you should learn about:

How your body changes

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

How babies are made

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Getting help with your health

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Managing feelings and emotions

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Keeping safe

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Consent

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Different genders

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me

→ I don't know

Different types of families

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

9. Is there anything else you would like to learn more about? *(open text response)*

The following question is about how you are taught.

10. Which of these best describes how friendship, bodies and safety are taught at your school?
    → I was taught by my teacher at school
    → I was taught by someone else who came from outside school
    → Both
    → None of the above
11. Have you ever gone to school especially because you have friendship, bodies and safety lessons?
    → Yes
    → No
12. Have you ever missed school because you have friendship, bodies and safety lessons?
    → Yes
    → No

General

13. Do you think friendship, bodies and safety should be taught in schools?
    → Yes
    → No
    → Don't know
14. Do you get to learn about people like you in friendship, bodies and safety?
    → Yes
    → No
    → Don't know
15. What could be done to make learning about friendship, bodies and safety better for you? Is there anything else you want to tell us? *(open text response)*

c) Year 7-8 student survey

1. What school do you go to?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
    → NZ European/Pākehā

- → Māori
- → Pacific Peoples
- → Latin American
- → African
- → Middle Eastern
- → Other European
- → Asian
- → Chinese
- → Indian
- → Prefer not to say
- → Other (please specify)

3. Are you a:
   - → Boy
   - → Girl
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Another gender (please specify)
4. Do you have a long-term disability? (lasting 6 months or more) (e.g., impaired hearing, visual impairment, in a wheelchair, learning difficulties)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know
   - → Prefer not to say
5. What year are you in in school?
   - → Year 0-4 (if a student selected 'Years 0-4', the survey ended right away)
   - → Year 5-6
   - → Year 7-8
   - → Year 9-10
   - → Year 11-12
   - → Year 13

The following questions are about what you learnt.

6. Did you learn about:

   Changes to your body, including puberty

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Human reproduction (how babies are made)

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Health and contraception

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Romantic relationships

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different genders

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

7. Did you learn:

Changes to your body, including puberty

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Health and contraception

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Romantic relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Friendships and bullying

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Expressing feelings and needs

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Personal safety including online safety

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Consent

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Who you are (your identity)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Different genders

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

8. At what age do you think you should learn about:

Changes to your body, including puberty

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Health and contraception

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Romantic relationships

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Expressing feelings and needs

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Consent

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me

→ I don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Social expectations on boys and girls

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Different genders

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

9. Is there anything else you would like to learn more about? *(open text response)*

The following question is about how you are taught

10. Which of these best describes how relationships and sexuality education are taught in your school?
    → I was taught by my teacher at school
    → I was taught by someone else who came from outside school
    → Both
    → None of the above
11. Have you ever gone to school especially because you have relationships and sexuality education lessons?
    → Yes
    → No
12. Have you ever missed school because you have relationships and sexuality education lessons?
    → Yes

→ No

General

13. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be taught in schools?
    → Yes
    → No
    → Don't know
14. Do you get to learn about people like you in relationships and sexuality education?
    → Yes
    → No
    → Don't know
15. What could be done to make learning about relationships and sexuality education better for you? Is there anything else you want to tell us? *(open text response)*

d) Year 9-13 student survey

1. What school do you go to?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
    → NZ European/Pākehā
    → Māori
    → Pacific Peoples
    → Latin American
    → African
    → Middle Eastern
    → Other European
    → Asian
    → Chinese
    → Indian
    → Prefer not to say
    → Other (please specify)
3. Are you a:
    → Boy
    → Girl
    → Prefer not to say
    → Another gender (please specify)
4. Do you have a long-term disability? (lasting 6 months or more) (e.g., impaired hearing, visual impairment, in a wheelchair, learning difficulties)
    → Yes
    → No
    → Don't know
    → Prefer not to say
5. What year are you in in school?

    → Year 0-4 (if a student selected 'Years 0-4', the survey ended right away)
    → Year 5-6

- → Year 7-8
- → Year 9-10
- → Year 11-12
- → Year 13

6. Do you identify as part of the rainbow / takatāpui / LGBTQIA+ community? (e.g., if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, takatāpui etc.)

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → If you wish, you may specify further here

7. Do you practice a faith/religion of any kind? (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Prefer not to say
8. Have you ever been in Oranga Tamariki (OT) care?
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Prefer not to say

The following questions are about what you learnt.

9. Did you learn about:

   Changes to your body across your lifetime

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Human reproduction

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Health, contraception, sexual health

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know

   Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

10. Did you learn:

Changes to your body across your lifetime

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Human reproduction

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Health, contraception, sexual health

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Friendships and bullying

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Personal safety including online safety

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ I didn't learn about this

Giving and receiving consent

→ The right amount

- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Who you are (your identity)

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → I didn't learn about this

11. At what age do you think you should learn about:

Changes to your body across your lifetime

- → Younger than me
- → At my age
- → Older than me
- → I don't know

Human reproduction

- → Younger than me
- → At my age
- → Older than me

→ I don't know

Health, contraception, sexual health

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Younger than me
→ At my age
→ Older than me
→ I don't know

12. Is there anything else you would like to learn more about? *(open text response)*

The following question is about how you are taught

13. Which of these best describes how relationships and sexuality education are taught in your school?
    → I was taught by my teacher at school
    → I was taught by someone else who came from outside school
    → Both
    → None of the above

The following questions are about your attendance at school relating to relationships and sexuality education.

14. Have you ever gone to school especially because you have relationships and sexuality education lessons?
    → Yes
    → No
15. Have you ever missed school because you have relationships and sexuality education lessons?
    → Yes
    → No

General

16. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be taught in schools?
    → Yes
    → No

- → Don’t know

17. Do you get to learn about people like you in relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don’t know
18. What could be done to make learning about relationships and sexuality education better for you? Is there anything else you want to tell us? *(open text response)*

Appendix 2: Recent school leaver survey

1. At what New Zealand school did you do most of your secondary schooling?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
   - → NZ European/Pākehā
   - → Māori
   - → Pacific Peoples
   - → Latin American
   - → African
   - → Middle Eastern
   - → Other European
   - → Asian
   - → Chinese
   - → Indian
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Other (please specify)
3. Are you:
   - → Male
   - → Female
   - → Other
   - → Prefer not to say

Do you identify as - (you can select more than one group):

- → Rainbow
- → LGBTQI+
- → Takatāpui
- → Not applicable
- → Prefer not to say

What year did you finish school?

- → 2024
- → 2023
- → 2022
- → 2021
- → 2020

Have you ever been in Oranga Tamariki care?

- → Yes
- → No
- → Prefer not to say

Do you have a long term disability? (lasting 6 months or more)

- → Yes
- → No
- → Prefer not to say

Do you practice a faith of any kind? (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism)

- → Yes
- → No
- → Prefer not to say

Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ curriculum?

→ Yes, as it is now
→ Yes, but not as it is now
→ No

Questions about your experience with relationships and sexuality education

Did you learn about this at school?

Changes to your body across your lifetime

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Human reproduction

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Health, contraception, sexual health

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ I learnt about this
→ I did not learn about this and I wanted to
→ I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
→ I don't know

Who you are (your identity)
- → I learnt about this
- → I did not learn about this and I wanted to
- → I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
- → I don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)
- → I learnt about this
- → I did not learn about this and I wanted to
- → I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
- → I don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
- → I learnt about this
- → I did not learn about this and I wanted to
- → I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
- → I don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
- → I learnt about this
- → I did not learn about this and I wanted to
- → I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
- → I don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media
- → I learnt about this
- → I did not learn about this and I wanted to
- → I didn't learn about this but I'm OK with that
- → I don't know

Did you learn?

Changes to your body across your lifetime
- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → None

Human reproduction
- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → None

Health, contraception, sexual health
- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → None

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships
- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little
- → None

Friendships and bullying
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Personal safety including online safety
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Giving and receiving consent
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Who you are (your identity)
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None
Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media
→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little
→ None

Approximately what age roughly did you learn about this?

Changes to your body across your lifetime
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Human reproduction
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Health, contraception, sexual health
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Friendships and bullying
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Personal safety including online safety
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Giving and receiving consent
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Who you are (your identity)
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know
Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media
→ Lower primary school (ten or under)
→ Intermediate or upper primary (11-12)
→ Secondary school (13-18)
→ I don't know

Did you learn about this at the right age?

Changes to your body across your lifetime
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Human reproduction
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Health, contraception, sexual health
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Friendships and bullying
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
→ I learnt this too early
→ I learnt this at the right time
→ I learnt this too late

Personal safety including online safety
→ I learnt this too early

- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Giving and receiving consent

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Who you are (your identity)

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → I learnt this too early
- → I learnt this at the right time
- → I learnt this too late

What, if anything, would you have liked to learn more about *(open text response)*

Appendix 3: Parent and whānau surveys

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, the wording of some topics was changed for parents of younger children. In this section, we include the survey questions that were presented to:

- → all parents
- → parents of students in Year 1-6
- → parents of students in Year 7-8
- → parents of students in Year 9-13.

See Appendix 7 for a summary of which survey questions were related to each topic area of RSE, for students of different ages.

Different survey questions were also presented to students, teachers, and leaders, depending on the age of the students they were responding about. These different surveys are found in Appendix 1 – 6.

a) Questions asked of all parents

All parents were asked the following 27 questions (1-14 and 19-31).

1. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
   - → NZ European/Pākehā
   - → Māori
   - → Pacific Peoples
   - → Latin American
   - → African
   - → Middle Eastern
   - → Other European
   - → Asian
   - → Chinese
   - → Indian
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Other (please specify)
2. Are you:
   - → Male
   - → Female
   - → Another gender
   - → Not sure
   - → Prefer not to say
3. What is your age?
   - → under 25
   - → 26-35
   - → 36-45
   - → 46-55
   - → 56+

4. Does your family practice a faith of any kind? (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Prefer not to say
5. What school does your child go to? (We won't report on individual schools)

If you have more than one child in your care, please choose one child to answer this questionnaire about.

6. How long has your child been at this school?
   - → Less than two years
   - → Two years or more
7. What is your child's gender
   - → Male
   - → Female
   - → Another gender (please state)
8. Does your child identify as part of the rainbow/takatāpui/LGBTQIA+ community (e.g., if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or takatāpui)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know
   - → Prefer not to say
9. Does your child have a long-term disability? (lasting 6 months or more) (e.g., impaired hearing, visual impairment, in a wheelchair, learning difficulties)
   - → Yes
   - → No
   - → Don't know
   - → Prefer not to say

The following questions are about your views on relationships and sexuality education

10. How much do you know about what your child is learning about in relationships and sexuality education?
    - → I know most of what is being taught
    - → I know some of what is being taught
    - → I don't know what is being taught
11. Are you happy with what your child is being taught in relationships and sexuality education?
    - → All of it
    - → Some of it
    - → None of it
    - → Don't know
12. Does your child get to learn about people like them in relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
13. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ curriculum
    - → Yes, as it is now
    - → Yes, but not as it is now
    - → No

14. What year is your child at school?
    - → Year 1- typically 5 years old
    - → Year 2- typically 6 years old
    - → Year 3- typically 7 years old
    - → Year 4- typically 8 years old
    - → Year 5- typically 9 years old
    - → Year 6- typically 10 years old
    - → Year 7- typically 11 years old
    - → Year 8- typically 12 years old
    - → Year 9- typically 13 years old
    - → Year 10- typically 14 years old
    - → Year 11- typically 15 years old
    - → Year 12- typically 16 years old
    - → Year 13- typically 17 years old

Parents were then asked different sets of questions based on the year level of their child. These different question sets are below, in sections b, c, and d.

Following the year level-specific questions (see sections b, c, and d), all parents and whānau were asked this next set of questions (19 – 31):

The following questions are about how your child's school engages with you.

19. The school has told me when relationships and sexuality education lessons will happen
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
    - → My child is new to this school this year and I haven't been given information on this yet
20. The amount of information the school has given me about what would be taught in relationships and sexuality education is:
    - → More than I need
    - → The right amount
    - → Too little
    - → I have not received any information
    - → My child is new to this school this year and I haven't been given information on this yet
21. The school has given me the option to withdraw my child from relationships and sexuality education lessons
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
22. Have you withdrawn your child from any relationships and sexuality education lessons?
    - → Yes
    - → No
23. *(If answered 'yes' to question 22)* Which relationships and sexuality education lessons or topics have you removed your child from? *(open text response)*

24. *(If answered 'yes' to question 22)* What was the main reason for withdrawing your child from some or all of relationships and sexuality education?
    - → I do not want my child to learn about this at school
    - → I do not want my child learning about this at this age
    - → I do not want my child to learn about this
    - → My child does not want to learn about this
    - → Other (please specify) *(open text response)*

Schools are required to consult on the health curriculum, which includes relationships and sexuality education.

25. In the last two years, have you been consulted about how your school delivers relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
26. If you were consulted, did you feel listened to?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
    - → I wasn't consulted

The following questions are about how relationships and sexuality education[t] impacts your child's engagement and attendance in school.

27. Has your child ever gone to school especially because they have relationships and sexuality education[u] lessons?
    - → Yes
    - → No
28. Has your child ever missed or avoided school because they have relationships and sexuality education[v] lessons?
    - → Yes
    - → No

Overall

29. What works well or needs to be improved about what is covered in classes *(open text response)*
30. What works well or needs to be improved about how the classes are taught *(open text response)*
31. What works well or needs to be improved about how schools ask parents and whānau about what is taught *(open text response)*

[t] 'friendships, bodies and safety' was used instead of 'relationships and sexuality education' for parents of year 1-6 students

[u] 'friendships, bodies and safety' was used instead of 'relationships and sexuality education' for parents of year 1-6 students

[v] 'friendships, bodies and safety' was used instead of 'relationships and sexuality education' for parents of year 1-6 students

b) Parents of Year 1-6 students survey (RSE topic questions)

Note: this is a standardised list and doesn't reflect individual school practices or any changes to what is taught based on your school's community consultation.

15. Did your child learn about this in the last 12 months?

How their body changes

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

How babies are made

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Getting help with their health

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Managing feelings and emotions

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Keeping safe

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who they are

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Gender stereotypes

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different types of families

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

16. Did they learn

How their body changes

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

How babies are made

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Getting help with their health

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Friendships and bullying

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Managing feelings and emotions

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Keeping safe

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Consent

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Who they are

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Gender stereotypes

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Different gender identities

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Different types of families

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

17. What age do you think they should learn this at school?

How their body changes

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

How babies are made

→ At their age
→ When they were younger

→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Getting help with their health

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Managing feelings and emotions

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Keeping safe

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Consent

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Who they are

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Gender stereotypes

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different gender identities

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different types of families

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

18. Is there anything else to do with friendship, bodies and safety that you would like your child to learn about? *(open text response)*

c) Parents of Year 7-8 students survey (RSE topic questions)

Note: this is a standardised list and doesn't reflect individual school practices or any changes to what is taught based on your school's community consultation.

15. Did your child learn about this in the last 12 months?

Changes to their body, including puberty

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Health and contraception

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Romantic relationships

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who they are (their identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Gender stereotypes

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

16. Did they learn

Changes to their body, including puberty

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Health and contraception

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Romantic relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Friendships and bullying

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Expressing feelings and needs

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Personal safety including online safety

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Consent

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Who they are (their identity)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Gender stereotypes

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

17. At what age do you think they should learn this?

Changes to their body, including puberty

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Health and contraception

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Romantic relationships

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Consent

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Who they are (their identity)

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Gender stereotypes

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ At their age

- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

18. Is there anything else to do with relationships and sexuality education that you would like your child to learn about? *(open text response)*

d) Parents of Year 9-13 students survey (RSE topic questions)

Note: this is a standardised list and doesn't reflect individual school practices or any changes to what is taught based on your school's community consultation.

15. Did your child learn about this in the last 12 months?

Changes to their body across their lifetime

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Human reproduction

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Health, contraception, sexual health

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Friendships and bullying

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

- → Yes

→ No
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who they are (their identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

16. Did they learn

Changes to their body across their lifetime

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Human reproduction

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Health, contraception, sexual health

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Friendships and bullying

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Personal safety including online safety

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Giving and receiving consent

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Who they are (their identity)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ The right amount
→ Too much
→ Too little

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → The right amount
- → Too much
- → Too little

17. At what age do you think they should learn this?

Changes to their body across their lifetime

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Human reproduction

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Health, contraception, sexual health

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Friendships and bullying

- → At their age
- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Who they are (their identity)

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ At their age
→ When they were younger
→ When they are older
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ At their age

- → When they were younger
- → When they are older
- → Don't know

18. Is there anything else to do with relationships and sexuality education that you would like your child to learn about? *(open text response)*

Appendix 4: Teacher surveys

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, the wording of some topics was changed for teachers of younger children. In this section, we include the survey questions that were presented to:

- → all teachers
- → teachers of students in Year 1-6
- → teachers of students in Year 7-8
- → teachers of students in Year 9-13.

See Appendix 7 for a summary of which survey questions were related to each topic area of RSE, for students of different ages.

Different survey questions were also presented to students, parents and whānau, and leaders, depending on the age of the students they were responding about. These different surveys are found in Appendix 1 – 6.

a) Questions asked of all teachers

All teachers were asked the following 20 questions (1-6 and 9-22).

1. What school do you teach at?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
   - → NZ European/Pākehā
   - → Māori
   - → Pacific Peoples
   - → Latin American
   - → African
   - → Middle Eastern
   - → Other European
   - → Asian
   - → Chinese
   - → Indian
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Other (please specify)
3. Are you:
   - → Male
   - → Female
   - → Another gender
   - → Prefer not to say
4. What is your age?
   - → under 25
   - → 26-35
   - → 36-45
   - → 46-55

- → 56+

5. How many years have you been teaching for?
   - → Less than two years
   - → Two to five years
   - → More than five years
6. What year level do you teach relationships and sexuality education to? If multiple, please choose one option to base this survey on.
   - → Year 1-2
   - → Year 3-4
   - → Year 5-6
   - → Year 7-8
   - → Year 9-10
   - → Year 11-12
   - → Year 12-13

Teachers were then asked different sets of questions based on the year level of the students they teach. These different question sets are below, in sections b, c, and d.

Following the year level-specific questions (see sections b, c, and d), all teachers were asked this next set of questions (9 – 22):

The following questions are seeking your views on your experience teaching relationships and sexuality education.

9. Overall, how comfortable are you in teaching relationships and sexuality education?
   - → Very comfortable
   - → Comfortable
   - → Not comfortable
   - → Not at all comfortable
10. How safe do you feel when teaching relationships and sexuality education?
   - → Very safe
   - → Safe
   - → Not safe
   - → Not safe at all
11. How stressful do you find teaching relationships and sexuality education?
   - → Very stressful
   - → Stressful
   - → Not stressful
   - → Not stressful at all
12. How easy is it to engage with parents and whānau about relationships and sexuality education?
   - → Very easy
   - → Easy
   - → Hard
   - → Very hard
13. How supported by your leaders are you in teaching relationships and sexuality education?

- → Very supported
- → Supported
- → Not supported
- → Not at all supported

14. Are students withdrawn from any of the relationships and sexuality classes that you teach?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don't know
15. How easy is it to manage withdrawing the students from the classes?
    - → Very easy
    - → Easy
    - → Hard
    - → Very hard
16. What impact does relationships and sexuality education have on your relationships with parents?
    - → Improves
    - → No impact
    - → Makes worse

The following questions are seeking your views on resources to support teaching relationships and sexuality education.

17. Thinking about the resources your school can access, do you have:
    - → Not enough resources
    - → Enough resources
    - → Too many resources
18. When developing your school curriculum content for relationship and sexuality education, does the content of the NZ Curriculum and the relationship and sexuality guidelines give you:
    - → Not enough detail
    - → The right amount of detail
    - → Too much detail
19. How useful are the following resources in developing and teaching your school curriculum for relationships and sexuality education?

    Relationships and sexuality guide
    - → Not useful at all
    - → Not useful
    - → Useful
    - → Very useful
    - → I am not aware of this resource

    NZ curriculum
    - → Not useful at all
    - → Not useful
    - → Useful
    - → Very useful
    - → I am not aware of this resource

    Ministry of Education/TKI Supporting LGBTQIA+ students guide
    - → Not useful at all

→ Not useful
→ Useful
→ Very useful
→ I am not aware of this resource

Are there any other resources you use? (please specify) *(open text response)*

General questions

20. How likely are students to attend relationships and sexuality education lessons compared to other lessons?
    → Students are more likely to attend
    → Student attendance is the same as usual
    → Students are less likely to attend
21. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ curriculum?
    → Yes, as it is now
    → Yes, but not as it is now
    → No
22. What works well for / needs to be improved about teaching relationships and sexuality education in schools? Is there anything else you want to tell us? *(open text response)*

b) Teachers of Year 1-6 students survey (RSE topic questions)

The following questions are seeking your views on what is being taught.
The curriculum will be taught in different ways for each school, and is informed by the community consultation process.
The information will be anonymous and not used for reporting purposes.

7. Do you teach the following content to the year level you are basing this survey on?

How your body changes
→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

How babies are made
→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Getting help with your health
→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying
→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Managing my feelings and emotions
→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Keeping safe
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Consent
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Who you are (your identity)
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Gender stereotypes
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference
- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

8. How hard/easy is it to teach the following content?

How your body changes
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

How babies are made
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Getting help with your health
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Friendships and bullying
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Managing my feelings and emotions
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Keeping safe
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Consent
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Who you are (your identity)
- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Gender stereotypes

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Accepting and celebrating difference

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

c) Teachers of Year 7-8 students survey (RSE topic questions)

The following questions are seeking your views on what is being taught.
The curriculum will be taught in different ways for each school, and is informed by the community consultation process.
The information will be anonymous and not used for reporting purposes.

7. Do you teach the following content to the year level you are basing this survey on?

Changes to your body including puberty

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don’t know

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don’t know

Health and contraception

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Romantic relationships

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Friendships and bullying

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Gender stereotypes

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

8. How hard/easy is it to teach the following content?

Changes to your body including puberty

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Health and contraception

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Romantic relationships

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Friendships and bullying

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Expressing feelings and needs

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Personal safety including online safety

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Consent

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Who you are (your identity)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Gender stereotypes

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

e) Teachers of Year 9-13 students survey (RSE topic questions)

The following questions are seeking your views on what is being taught.
The curriculum will be taught in different ways for each school, and is informed by the community consultation process.
The information will be anonymous and not used for reporting purposes.

7. Do you teach the following content to the year level you are basing this survey on?

Changes to your body across your lifetime

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Human reproduction

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Health, contraception and sexual health

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Intimate relationships

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Friendships and bullying

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Personal safety including online safety

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Giving and receiving consent

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Who you are (your identity)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Yes
→ No
→ Don't know

8. How hard/easy is it to teach the following content?

Changes to your body across your lifetime

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Human reproduction

→ Very hard

→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Health, contraception and sexual health

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Intimate relationships

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Friendships and bullying

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Personal safety including online safety

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy

→ I do not teach this topic

Giving and receiving consent

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Who you are (your identity)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ I do not teach this topic

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Very hard

- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → I do not teach this topic

Appendix 5: Leader surveys

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, the wording of some topics was changed for teachers of younger children. In this section, we include the survey questions that were presented to:

- all leaders
- leaders of students in Year 1-6
- leaders of students in Year 7-8
- leaders of students in Year 9-13.

See Appendix 7 for a summary of which survey questions were related to each topic area of RSE, for students of different ages.

Different survey questions were also presented to students, parents and whānau, and teachers, depending on the age of the students they were responding about. These different surveys are found in Appendix 1 – 6.

a) Questions asked of all leaders

All leaders were asked the following 35 questions (1-7 and 9-36).

1. What school do you work at?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
   - NZ European/Pākehā
   - Māori
   - Pacific Peoples
   - Latin American
   - African
   - Middle Eastern
   - Other European
   - Asian
   - Chinese
   - Indian
   - Prefer not to say
   - Other (please specify)
3. Are you:
   - Male
   - Female
   - Another gender
   - Prefer not to say
4. How long have you been in a leadership role in schools?
   - Less than two years
   - Two to five years
   - More than five years
5. What is your age?

- → under 25
- → 26-35
- → 36-45
- → 46-55
- → 56+

6. What year levels do you have in your school? (Select even if you don't have all of the years in a category)
   - → Year 1-6
   - → Year 7-8
   - → Year 9-13

Overall views

These questions ask about your general views about developing and teaching relationships and sexuality education in your school.

7. Overall, how hard/easy is it to deliver relationships and sexuality education in your school?
   - → Very hard
   - → Hard
   - → Neither
   - → Easy
   - → Very easy

Leaders were then asked different sets of questions based on the year levels included at their school. If leaders selected multiple year level groups in question 6 above (e.g. they were from a year 1-8 or Year 1-13 school) they answered the questions for each of these year groupings. The different question set for each year grouping is below, in sections b, c, and d.

Following the year level-specific questions (see sections b, c, and d), all leaders were asked this next set of questions (9– 36):

9. How much of your time does relationships and sexuality education take?
   - → Too much of my time
   - → About the right amount of time
   - → Very little time

RSE in your school

10. In your school, which of these describes when relationships and sexuality education is delivered? (select all that apply)
    - → Lessons/learning are delivered regularly, throughout the year
    - → Lessons/learning are delivered as modules (over several weeks to a term) at specified times of the year
    - → Our programme is integrated across the curriculum/learning programme
    - → Our programme is delivered in full day(s) blocks
    - → Lessons/learning are delivered on an ad-hoc basis, as needed
11. In your school, which of these describes how relationships and sexuality education is delivered in your school, for each year level grouping? (select all that apply)

- → Our programme is taught by teachers from the school
- → Our programme is delivered by an external provider who comes to the school (primary/secondary)
- → Our programme includes a combination of teachers from the school and external providers
- → If you use external providers, what parts do they teach? (please specify) *(open text response)*

12. What does your school use to guide the content of your relationships and sexuality education programme? (tick all that apply)
    - → NZ curriculum
    - → Relationships and sexuality education guidelines
    - → An outside agency develops our curriculum (e.g., Life Education Trust) Material from a religious organisation
    - → Material from another organisation (e.g., Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa - recently Family Planning lesson plans, Tūturu lesson resources) (Tell us who) *(open text response)*

Awareness of legislative requirement to consult.

The following questions are about how you and other board members engage with the relationships and sexuality education consultation process.

These questions are asking your understanding of your legal obligations. This information is confidential, will not be shared with your evaluation partner and we will not report individually on your responses. If you have questions about your obligations please reach out to ERO.

13. Did you know that boards are required to consult with their school community on the Health Curriculum (including relationships and sexuality education) every two years?
    - → Yes, I knew it was every two years
    - → Yes, but I didn't know it was every two years
    - → No
14. When did you last consult on the Health Curriculum, including relationships and sexuality education?
    - → One year ago or less
    - → One to two years ago
    - → More than two years ago
    - → Don't know
15. How easy is it to:

    Consult the community on relationships and sexuality education

    - → Very easy
    - → Easy
    - → Challenging
    - → Very challenging
    - → I don't have a view

    Get community engagement on relationships and sexuality education

    - → Very easy
    - → Easy
    - → Challenging
    - → Very challenging
    - → I don't have a view

Balance different views

- → Very easy
- → Easy
- → Challenging
- → Very challenging
- → I don't have a view

Manage influences outside the school community

- → Very easy
- → Easy
- → Challenging
- → Very challenging
- → I don't have a view

Maintain the relationships with parents and whānau during consultation

- → Very easy
- → Easy
- → Challenging
- → Very challenging
- → I don't have a view

16. What is included in your consultation with the school community? (select all that apply)
    - → sending newsletters/information to parents and whānau
    - → information evenings for all parents and whānau together
    - → information evenings for parents and whānau of same year level
    - → information evenings for parents and whānau of the same class
    - → surveys of parents and whānau
    - → workshops/wānanga with small groups of parents and whānau
    - → one-on-one meetings with parents and whānau
    - → other opportunities for parents to ask questions or give feedback (please describe) *(open text response)*
17. Do you think consultation on relationships and sexuality should be compulsory?
    - → Yes, schools should consult
    - → Consultation is necessary but schools shouldn't have to do it
    - → No, consultation is not necessary
    - → Don't know

Working with parents

18. Are parents and whānau:

Made aware of what is being learnt about in relationships and sexuality education?

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don't know

Told when relationships and sexuality education lessons will happen?

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don’t know

Given an option to withdraw from all relationships and sexuality education lessons?

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don’t know

Given an option to withdraw from some relationships and sexuality education lessons?

- → Yes
- → No
- → Don’t know

19. Have parents and whānau withdrawn their children from all or some RSE lessons in the last 12 months?
    - → Yes
    - → No
    - → Don’t know
20. Across your entire school, approximately how many students each year are withdrawn from:
    - → All relationships and sexuality classes (number) *(open text response)*
    - → Some relationships and sexuality classes (number) *(open text response)*
21. For which of the following reasons have parents and whānau withdrawn their children from relationships and sexuality education learning in your school this year? (select all that apply)
    - → Parents and whānau do not want children to learn about this at school
    - → Parents and whānau do not want their children learning about this at this age
    - → The children already know about this
    - → Parents and whānau do not tell us why they want to withdraw their children
    - → Other (please tell us) *(open text response)*
22. Which parts of the school's relationships and sexuality education lessons do parents typically remove their children from? *(open text response)*

Teachers

Generally, in your school:

23. How capable are teachers at teaching relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Very capable
    - → Capable
    - → Not capable
    - → Not capable at all
24. How comfortable are teachers with teaching relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Very comfortable
    - → Comfortable
    - → Not comfortable
    - → Not comfortable at all

25. How stressful do teachers find teaching relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Very stressful
    - → Stressful
    - → Not stressful
    - → Not stressful at all
26. How safe do teachers feel when teaching relationships and sexuality education?
    - → Very safe
    - → Safe
    - → Not safe
    - → Not safe at all
27. What impact does relationships and sexuality education have on your teachers' relationships with parents and whānau?
    - → Improves
    - → No impact
    - → Makes worse
28. What impact does relationships and sexuality education have on your teachers' relationships with students?
    - → Improves
    - → No impact
    - → Makes worse

Relationships and sexuality guidelines, NZ Curriculum and other resources

29. When developing your school curriculum content for relationship and sexuality education, does the content of the NZ Curriculum and the relationships and sexuality guidelines give you:
    - → Not enough detail
    - → The right amount of detail
    - → Too much detail
30. How useful do you find the following resources:
    Relationships and sexuality guidelines
    - → Not useful at all
    - → Not useful
    - → Useful
    - → Very useful
    - → I am not aware of this resource

    NZ curriculum
    - → Not useful at all
    - → Not useful
    - → Useful
    - → Very useful
    - → I am not aware of this resource

    Ministry of Education/TKI Supporting LGBTQIA+ students guide
    - → Not useful at all
    - → Not useful
    - → Useful

- → Very useful
- → I am not aware of this resource

Ministry of Education community consultation guidance

- → Not useful at all
- → Not useful
- → Useful
- → Very useful
- → I am not aware of this resource

Tūturu- Community Consultation for Health Education

- → Not useful at all
- → Not useful
- → Useful
- → Very useful
- → I am not aware of this resource

Are there others? (please specify) *(open text response)*

31. Thinking about the resources your school can access to deliver relationships and sexuality education, do you have:
    - → Too many resources
    - → Enough resources
    - → Not enough resources

Overall

32. What are the top three challenges that your school faces with relationships and sexuality education:
    - → Curriculum content
    - → Usefulness of the relationships and sexuality education guidelines
    - → Having suitable teaching materials
    - → Consultation with parents and whānau/community
    - → Parent and whānau expectations
    - → Alignment of curriculum content with school beliefs
    - → Teacher capability
    - → Student participation
    - → Other (please specify) *(open text response)*
33. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ Curriculum?
    - → Yes, as it is now
    - → Yes, but not as it is now
    - → No
34. What works well for / needs to be improved about **content:** *(open text response)*
35. What works well for / needs to be improved about **delivery:** *(open text response)*
36. What works well for / needs to be improved about **consultation:** *(open text response)*

b) Leaders of Year 1-6 students survey (RSE topic questions)

8. How hard/easy is it to deliver the following parts of relationships and sexuality in your schools: **Year 0-6**

   How your body changes

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

How babies are made

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Getting help with your health

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Romantic relationships

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Friendships and bullying

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Managing my feelings and emotions

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Keeping safe

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Consent

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Who you are (your identity)

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Gender stereotypes

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Accepting and celebrating difference

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

c) Leaders of Year 7-8 students survey (RSE topic questions)

8. How hard/easy is it to deliver the following parts of relationships and sexuality in your schools: **Year 7-8**

Changes to your body including puberty

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Human reproduction (how babies are made)

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither

- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Health and contraception

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Romantic relationships

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Friendships and bullying

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Expressing feelings and needs

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Personal safety including online safety

- → Very hard
- → Hard

- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Consent

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Who you are (your identity)

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Gender stereotypes

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

- → Very hard

- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

d) Leaders of Year 9-13 students survey (RSE topic questions)

8. How hard/easy is it to deliver the following parts of relationships and sexuality in your schools: **Year 9-13**

Changes to your body over time

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Human reproduction

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Health, including contraception and sexual health

- → Very hard
- → Hard
- → Neither
- → Easy
- → Very easy

→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Intimate relationships

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Friendships, bullying and mental health

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Expressing feelings and needs in relationships

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Personal safety including online safety (including pornography)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Giving and receiving consent

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy

→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Who you are (your identity)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither
→ Easy
→ Very easy
→ We do not teach this topic in our school
→ We do not have this year level in our school

Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

→ Very hard
→ Hard
→ Neither

- → Easy
- → Very easy
- → We do not teach this topic in our school
- → We do not have this year level in our school

Appendix 6: School board survey

1. What school are you in the Board of Trustees for?
2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (you can select more than one group)
   - → NZ European/Pākehā
   - → Māori
   - → Pacific Peoples
   - → Latin American
   - → African
   - → Middle Eastern
   - → Other European
   - → Asian
   - → Chinese
   - → Indian
   - → Prefer not to say
   - → Other (please specify)
3. Are you:
   - → Male
   - → Female
   - → Another gender
   - → Prefer not to say
4. How long have you been on your school's Bord of Trustees?
   - → Less than two years
   - → Two to three years
   - → Four to five years
   - → More than five years
5. What is your age?
   - → under 25
   - → 26-35
   - → 36-45
   - → 46-55
   - → 56+

The following questions are about how you and other board members engage with the relationships and sexuality education consultation process

These questions are asking your understanding of your legal obligations. This information is confidential, will not be shared with your evaluation partner and we will not report individually on your responses. If you have questions about your obligations please reach out to ERO.

6. Did you know that boards are required to consult with their school community on the Health Curriculum (including relationships and sexuality education) every two years?
   - → Yes, I knew it was every two years
   - → Yes, but I didn't know it was every two years
   - → No

7. When did your school last consult on the health curriculum, including relationships and sexuality education?
   - → One year ago or less
   - → One to two years ago
   - → More than two years ago
   - → Don’t know
8. Do you think schools should be required to consult?
   - → Yes, schools should consult
   - → Consultation is necessary but schools shouldn’t have to do it
   - → No, consultation is not necessary
   - → Don't know
9. How easy is it to:

   Consult the community on relationships and sexuality education

   - → Very easy
   - → Easy
   - → Challenging
   - → Very challenging
   - → I don’t have a view

   Get community engagement on relationships and sexuality education

   - → Very easy
   - → Easy
   - → Challenging
   - → Very challenging
   - → I don’t have a view

   Balance different views

   - → Very easy
   - → Easy
   - → Challenging
   - → Very challenging
   - → I don’t have a view

   Manage influences outside the school community

   - → Very easy
   - → Easy
   - → Challenging
   - → Very challenging
   - → I don’t have a view

   Maintain the relationships with parents and whānau during consultation

   - → Very easy
   - → Easy

- → Challenging
- → Very challenging
- → I don't have a view

General

10. Do you think relationships and sexuality education should be part of the NZ curriculum?
    - → Ye, as it is now
    - → Yes, but not as it is now
    - → No
11. What works well for / needs to be improved about teaching relationships and sexuality education in schools? Is there anything else you want to tell us? *(open text response)*

Appendix 7: Survey questions for RSE topic areas by year level

To make our surveys, interviews, and focus groups age-appropriate, not all year levels of students were asked about all topics, and the wording of some topics was changed for younger children. The tables below summarise which survey questions were related to each topic area, by student year group. See Appendices 1-6 for full surveys.

Student surveys: wording for topic areas

Topic area	Wording for Year 5-6 students	Wording for Year 7-8 students	Wording for Year 9-13 students and recent school leavers
Changes to their body	How your body changes	Changes to your body, including puberty	Changes to your body across your lifetime
Human reproduction	How babies are made	Human reproduction (how babies are made)	Human reproduction
Health and contraception	Getting help with your health	Health and contraception	Health, contraception, sexual health
Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	N/A	Romantic relationships	Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships
Managing feelings and emotions	Managing feelings and emotions	Expressing feelings and needs	Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
Consent	Consent	Consent	Giving and receiving consent
Personal safety including online safety	Keeping safe	Personal safety including online safety	Personal safety including online safety
Your identity	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)
Gender identity	Different genders	Different genders	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
Different sexual identities	Different types of families	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
Gender stereotypes	Social expectations on boys and girls	Social expectations on boys and girls	Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism,

			homophobia and transphobia)
Celebrating differences	Accepting and celebrating difference	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

Parent and whānau surveys: wording for topic areas

Topic area	Wording for parents and whānau of Year 0-6 students	Wording for parents and whānau of Year 7-8 students	Wording for parents and whānau of Year 9-13 students
Changes to their body	How their body changes	Changes to their body, including puberty	Changes to their body across their lifetime
Human reproduction	How babies are made	Human reproduction (how babies are made)	Human reproduction
Health and contraception	Getting help with their health	Health and contraception	Health, contraception, sexual health
Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	N/A	Romantic relationships	Romantic relationships, including intimate relationships
Managing feelings and emotions	Managing feelings and emotions	Expressing feelings and needs	Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
Consent	Consent	Consent	Giving and receiving consent
Personal safety including online safety	Keeping safe	Personal safety including online safety	Personal safety including online safety
Your identity	Who they are	Who they are (their identity)	Who they are (their identity)
Gender identity	Different gender identities	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
Different sexual identities	Different types of families	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)
Celebrating differences	Accepting and celebrating difference	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

Teacher surveys: wording for topic areas

Topic area	Wording for teachers of Year 0-6 students	Wording for teachers of Year 7-8 students	Wording for teachers of Year 9-13 students
Changes to their body	How your body changes	Changes to your body including puberty	Changes to your body across your lifetime
Human reproduction	How babies are made	Human reproduction (how babies are made)	Human reproduction
Health and contraception	Getting help with your health	Health and contraception	Health, contraception and sexual health
Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	N/A	Romantic relationships	Intimate relationships
Managing feelings and emotions	Managing my feelings and emotions	Expressing feelings and needs	Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
Consent	Consent	Consent	Giving and receiving consent
Personal safety including online safety	Keeping safe	Personal safety including online safety	Personal safety including online safety
Your identity	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)
Gender identity	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
Different sexual identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)
Celebrating differences	Accepting and celebrating difference	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

Leader surveys: wording for topic areas

Topic area	Wording for leaders of Year 0-6 students	Wording for leaders of Year 7-8 students	Wording for leaders of Year 9-13 students
Changes to their body	How your body changes	Changes to your body including puberty	Changes to your body across your lifetime
Human reproduction	How babies are made	Human reproduction (how babies are made)	Human reproduction
Health and contraception	Getting help with your health	Health and contraception	Health, contraception and sexual health
Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying	Friendships and bullying
Romantic relationships including intimate relationships	Romantic relationships	Romantic relationships	Intimate relationships
Managing feelings and emotions	Managing my feelings and emotions	Expressing feelings and needs	Expressing feelings and needs in relationships
Consent	Consent	Consent	Giving and receiving consent
Personal safety including online safety	Keeping safe	Personal safety including online safety	Personal safety including online safety
Your identity	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)	Who you are (your identity)
Gender identity	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary	Different gender identities, including trans and non-binary
Different sexual identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities	Different sexual identities, including gay, straight and other identities
Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Gender stereotypes	Attitudes that reinforce stereotypes (e.g. sexism, homophobia and transphobia)
Celebrating differences	Accepting and celebrating difference	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media	Accepting and celebrating difference, including online and in the media

Regression output A

Classification table

Teachers who find teaching RSE stressful	213
Teachers who do not find teaching RSE stressful	453

Model summary

Step	Log likelihood	R squared
1	-339.96945	0.1144

Model estimates

Variable in equation	B	S.E	Sig.	Odds ratio	Lower C.I	Upper C.I
Did not use the RSE guide	.479	.199	0.017	1.614	.087	.871
Did not feel supported by leadership to teach RSE	.514	.289	0.075	1.672	-.053	1.080
Thinks RSE should be taught but not as it is now	.648	.208	0.002	1.912	.240	1.056
Does not think RSE should be taught	2.178	.354	0.000	8.827	1.483	2.872
Primary teacher	.456	.238	0.056	1.578	-.011	.923
Intermediate teacher	.594	.270	0.028	1.811	.066	1.122
Male	-.263	.250	0.293	.769	-.753	.227
Under 36 years of age	.190	.218	0.383	1.210	-.237	.617
Māori	-.013	.274	0.962	.987	-.548	.521
Pacific	-.017	.436	0.969	.983	-.872	.838
Asian	.136	.692	0.844	1.146	-1.220	1.492
MELAA	.810	.995	0.415	2.249	-1.140	2.760

Regression output B

Classification table

Parents and whānau who are happy with RSE as it is taught now.	1835
Parents and whānau who are not happy with RSE as it is now, or don't think RSE should be taught at school	1645

Model summary

Step	Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	4438.901	.102	.136

Model estimates

Variable in equation	B	S.E	Sig.	Odds ratio	Lower C.I	Upper C.I
Dynata	-.011	.093	0.908	.989	.825	1.187
Small or very small school	.	.	0.361	.	.	.
Medium school	-.008	.151	0.958	.992	.737	1.335
Large or very large school	-.155	.164	0.342	.856	.621	1.180
NZ European	.177	.118	0.135	1.193	.946	1.504
Māori	-.176	.112	0.118	.839	.673	1.045
Pacific	-.338	.174	0.051	.713	.507	1.002
Asian	.356	.159	0.025	1.428	1.045	1.951
MELAA	-.103	.272	0.704	.902	.530	1.536
Age under 36	.	.	0.497	.	.	.
Age 36-45	.022	.116	0.849	1.022	.814	1.284
Age 46-55	.148	.129	0.251	1.160	.900	1.494
Age 56+	.098	.204	0.630	1.103	.740	1.646
Child has been at the school two years +	-.122	.080	0.127	.885	.757	1.035
Know most of what is being taught	.	.	0.000	.	.	.

Know some of what is being taught	-.520	.093	0.000	.594	.495	.713
Don’t know what is being taught	-1.170	.100	0.000	.310	.255	.378
Years 1 to 4	.		0.004	.	.	.
Years 5 to 6	.260	.138	0.060	1.296	.989	1.700
Years 7 to 8	.450	.138	0.001	1.568	1.197	2.054
Years 9 to 13	.559	.174	0.001	1.750	1.244	2.460
Rural	-.380	.122	0.002	.684	.538	.868
Auckland	.107	.120	0.373	1.113	.880	1.407
Rest of North Island	-.167	.099	0.090	.846	.697	1.026
Secondary	-.025	.149	0.869	.976	.729	1.306
Lower EQI	.	.	0.195	.	.	.
Moderate EQI	-.179	.101	0.075	.836	.686	1.018
Higher EQI	-.178	.160	0.265	.837	.612	1.144
Male	.	.	0.022	.	.	.
Female	.056	.090	0.534	1.058	.887	1.262
Other	-.854	.341	0.012	.426	.218	.830
Not religious	.769	.084	0.000	2.158	1.830	2.545
Child male	.	.	0.056	.	.	.
Child female	-.194	.081	0.017	.824	.703	.966
Child other	-.228	.469	0.627	.796	.318	1.997
Child not LGBT	-.177	.194	0.361	.838	.573	1.225
Child not disabled	-.186	.122	0.130	.831	.653	1.056
Integrated school	-.007	.119	0.955	.993	.786	1.255

Regression output C

Classification table

Parents and whānau who are happy with all of what is taught in RSE	1203
Parents and whānau who are happy with only some or none of what is taught in RSE	1272

Model summary

Step	Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	3133.527	.113	.150

Model estimates

Variable in equation	B	S.E	Sig.	Odds ratio	Lower C.I	Upper C.I
Dynata	-.259	.113	0.022	.772	.618	.964
Small or very small school			0.001			
Medium school	-.027	.189	0.888	.974	.673	1.410
Large or very large school	-.514	.204	0.012	.598	.401	.892
NZ European	.373	.143	0.009	1.452	1.097	1.922
Māori	-.021	.137	0.875	.979	.749	1.279
Pacific	-.504	.222	0.023	.604	.391	.934
Asian	.116	.192	0.547	1.123	.770	1.637
MELAA	.078	.312	0.803	1.081	.587	1.991
Age under 36			0.711			
Age 36-45	.092	.142	0.518	1.096	.830	1.448
Age 46-55	.124	.155	0.424	1.132	.836	1.533
Age 56+	-.068	.241	0.779	.935	.583	1.498
Child has been at the school two years +	-.107	.097	0.274	.899	.743	1.088
Know most of what is being taught			0.000			

Know some of what is being taught	-.860	.097	0.000	.423	.350	.511
Don’t know what is being taught	-1.171	.149	0.000	.310	.231	.415
Years 1-4			0.172			
Years 5-6	.297	.176	0.091	1.346	.954	1.899
Years 7-8	.308	.178	0.084	1.360	.960	1.927
Years 9-13	.433	.212	0.042	1.542	1.017	2.337
Rural	-.601	.159	0.000	.548	.402	.748
Wellington			0.006			
Bay of Plenty, Waiariki	-.365	.242	0.131	.694	.432	1.114
Canterbury, Chatham Islands	-.299	.174	0.086	.741	.527	1.043
Hawkes Bay, Tairāwhiti	-.750	.299	0.012	.472	.263	.848
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast	-.250	.464	0.590	.779	.314	1.933
Otago, Southland	-.549	.178	0.002	.577	.407	.818
Tai Tokerau	-.028	.550	0.960	.973	.331	2.860
Auckland	-.044	.158	0.781	.957	.702	1.305
Taranaki, Whanganui	-.394	.221	0.074	.674	.437	1.040
Waikato	-.777	.204	0.000	.460	.308	.686
Secondary	-.011	.175	0.948	.989	.702	1.393
EQI Fewer			0.826			
EQI Moderate	.029	.129	0.820	1.030	.800	1.326
EQI Many	-.076	.199	0.702	.926	.627	1.370
Male			0.156			
Female	.156	.110	0.157	1.169	.942	1.451
Another gender	-.367	.387	0.342	.693	.324	1.478
Not religious	.820	.100	0.000	2.271	1.866	2.763

Child male			0.853			
Child female	-.036	.097	0.709	.965	.798	1.166
Child another	-.233	.502	0.642	.792	.296	2.116
Child non-LGBTQIA+	-.207	.217	0.339	.813	.531	1.243
Child not disabled	-.072	.143	0.614	.930	.703	1.232
State-integrated school	.030	.146	0.839	1.030	.773	1.373

Appendix 8: Data tables

This table presents the number and proportion of sample across all six of the surveys, looking at person-level and school-level factors. Where category percentages do not add up to 100 percent, there were respondents who did not enter their school name when completing the survey, meaning we were unable to analyse these responses across school-level factors.

	Students		Teachers		Leaders		Board Chairs		Parents and whānau		Recent leavers	
Year 0-4			192	25%	521	74%			648	17%		
Year 5-6	952	15%	149	20%					515	14%		
Year 7-8	1,826	28%	168	22%	358	51%			659	17%		
Year 9-10	2,083	32%	208	27%	178	25%			866	23%		
Year 11-13	1,609	25%	42	6%					939	25%		
Under 25			47	6%	7	1%	0	0%	29	1%	506	100%
26-35			225	30%	55	8%	19	6%	549	14%		
36-45			223	29%	140	20%	158	46%	1,647	43%		
46-55			156	21%	293	42%	113	33%	1,394	37%		
56+			108	14%	206	29%	54	16%	180	5%		
Female	4,205	65%	577	76%	481	69%	210	61%	2,903	76%	303	60%
Male	2,057	32%	171	23%	212	30%	128	37%	843	22%	191	38%
Another gender	100	2%	3	0%	0	0%	0	0%	12	0%	6	1%
NZ European	4,329	67%	590	78%	576	82%	273	79%	2,882	76%	325	64%
Māori	1,218	19%	110	14%	103	15%	76	22%	514	13%	137	27%
Pacific	541	8%	40	5%	30	4%	19	6%	238	6%	50	10%
Asian	557	9%	14	2%	5	1%	2	1%	354	9%	68	13%
MELAA	289	4%	12	2%	5	1%	3	1%	82	2%	14	3%
LGBTQIA+	429	7%									100	20%

Faith	1,155	18%							1,340	35%	177	35%
Disability	588	9%									81	16%
Oranga Tamariki	108	2%									37	7%
Experience: Less than 2y			81	11%	105	15%	43	13%				
Experience: 2-5y			85	11%	161	23%	174	51%				
Experience: Over 5y			593	78%	435	62%	127	37%				
EQI Fewer	2,988	46%	131	17%	177	25%	20	6%	1,551	41%	124	25%
EQI Moderate	2,802	43%	143	19%	221	32%	51	15%	1,848	49%	257	51%
EQI More	680	11%	37	5%	69	10%	21	6%	362	10%	105	21%
Size Very small/small	920	14%	30	4%	98	14%	20	6%	506	13%	53	10%
Size Medium	2,597	40%	76	10%	164	23%	31	9%	1,140	30%	100	20%
Size Large/Very large	2,953	46%	193	25%	192	27%	41	12%	2,137	56%	345	68%
High Māori roll	952	15%	71	9%	157	22%	37	11%	611	16%	169	33%
High Pacific roll	347	5%	32	4%	38	5%	15	4%	331	9%	80	16%
Rural	1,343	21%	53	7%	128	18%	41	12%	768	20%	83	16%
Urban	5,127	79%	257	34%	341	49%	51	15%	3,013	79%	414	82%
Child: Female									2,058	54%		
Child: Male									1,685	44%		
Child: Another gender									29	1%		
Child: LGBTQIA+									149	4%		
Child: Disability									369	10%		

TOTAL	**6,470**	**759**	**701**	**344**	**3809**	**506**

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