

NZHEA Position Statement: quality sexuality education in The New Zealand Curriculum

NZHEA would like to reinforce the importance of quality sexuality education learning experiences as part of health education in The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). This information may be useful to teachers, SLT and/or Boards of Trustees.

Key considerations for planning for sexuality education include:

The Ministry of Education's (2015) revised Sexuality Guide for Principals, Boards of Trustees and Teachers is an excellent document to refer to when planning for curriculum-linked learning experiences in sexuality education.

Schools are required under the Education Act (Section 60B) to consult with their communities once every two years on the delivery of health education. See the NZHEA website for a good practice guide for 'consulting with the community' in a health education context.

It is NZHEA's belief that quality learning experiences in sexuality education, as part of a wider health education programme of learning, need to align closely with all aspects of The New Zealand Curriculum. This includes effective pedagogy, which reinforces the central role of the teacher. While external providers can be used to support health and sexuality education learning, one-off speakers are not known to be effective. Teachers and schools need to be critical before, during and after engaging with external providers, as reinforced by ERO (2018).

The New Zealand Curriculum is a framework curriculum, and does not specifically prescribe content to be covered. The Sexuality Education Guide does provide some ideas for teaching and learning for curriculum levels 1-8, however. Teaching about 'consent' or 'pornography' or other topics/issues need to be connected to a broader health education programme of learning, connected to the underlying concepts, strands and achievement objectives of the Health and Physical Education learning area, or woven into other curriculum areas, as suggested by ERO (2018).

NZHEA has a number of resources available for planning, teaching and learning, and PLD activities in NZ schools for sexuality education. This includes a curriculum-linked resource for exploring issues relating to pornography, which was specifically mentioned by ERO (2018) as one of the least well covered areas of sexuality education.

References and resources:

Education Review Office (2018). Promoting wellbeing through sexuality education. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/promoting-wellbeing-through-sexuality-education/>

Ministry of Education (2015). Sexuality education: a guide for principals, boards of trustees and teachers.
<http://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines/Sexuality-education-a-guide-for-principals-boards-of-trustees-and-teachers>

Ministry of Education (2007). The New Zealand Curriculum. Wellington: Learning Media.

NZHEA website:

<https://healtheducation.org.nz/sexuality-education/>

<https://healtheducation.org.nz/resources>

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