Sex and Relationships Education Policy

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Reviewed Annually
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1. Introduction

1.1 Our school’s policy on Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is based on the requirements of the Education Act 2002 and the DfE document ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education’ (September 2020). This is new guidance published in 2019 that is to be taught in schools from September 2020.

1.2 From September 2020 the guidance document ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers’ will become statutory. This document clearly sets out the curriculum content that secondary schools must deliver on RSE and Health Education. This document contains information on what schools should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Unless otherwise specified, ‘school’ means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

1.3 In the DfE document, SRE is defined as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development'. The guidance states, ‘It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health’.

1.4 The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways in which the school’s provision for sex and relationships education will support pupils through their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

2. Aims and Objectives

Our SRE programme seeks to:

- be age appropriate and differentiated to the needs of the pupils including SEN, autistic, visually impaired pupils and any other disabilities that require a bespoke curriculum;
- present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner;
- encourage the development of social skills and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse;
- be fully inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and all types of families (LGBT inclusive);
- develop a clear understanding of the importance of consent; how to give, withdraw, ask for and recognise consent;
- reinforce the importance of loving relationships, rooted in mutual respect;
- explore the skills needed for effective parenting and how to assess one’s readiness to be a parent;
- to represent all types of families and to explore the different methods for starting a family;
- to ensure that BAME, LGBT and people with disabilities are positively represented in our curriculum;
- ensure pupils can identify the qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- allow pupils to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to explore the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- make pupils aware how and where to seek help if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship;
- prepare pupils for the journey from adolescence to adulthood;
• provide pupils with a safe environment to learn about sexual orientation and gender identity, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBT misconceptions, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia and gender stereotypes;
• ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive biology, including knowledge of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases;
• ensure pupils understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage in safe sexual activity by exploring a range of contraception;
• place paramount importance on online safety and the risks of using social media and the internet for sexual purposes;
• Develop pupils’ understanding of the dangerous of pornographic material.

3. Context

SRE is not about encouraging teenagers to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle of relationship choice. SRE is about providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults.

High quality sex and relationships education helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. We teach SRE on the understanding that:

• it is taught in the context of family life;
• it is part of a wider process of social, personal, spiritual and moral education;
• children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
• children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
• it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect, both in person and online;
• it makes a significant contribution to our duty to safeguard and protect all children;
• It plays a key role in improving health outcomes for children and young people such as reducing teenage pregnancy and risk taking behaviour.

3.2 Our SRE programme is one of the most important ways we act on our responsibility to safeguard and protect our children, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. We also refer to guidance from the government and expert organisations on specific safeguarding issues, which are relevant to our cohort of children, as listed in Keeping Children Safe in Education. To safeguard children effectively it is vital that opportunities are created in the curriculum to teach about healthy behaviour, caring relationships, online safety and when and how to get help. At Arnold Lodge we encourage children to develop skills in these areas so that they are equipped with strategies to help themselves in preventing or reporting harm or abuse.

3.3 In accordance with the principles of the Equality Act (2010), we believe that every child is entitled to receive SRE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, disability, sexuality, language needs or special educational needs. We use an inclusive, whole school approach to ensure SRE can be accessed in an age-appropriate way throughout a child’s school career.
4. Organisation and Content

4.1 We teach about sex and relationships through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main SRE in our PSHE curriculum, we also do some SRE through the statutory science curriculum and other subject areas, such as PE and ICT. We believe all these contribute significantly to children’s knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing.

4.2 In PSHE, we use the PSHE Association’s Programme of Study for PSHE to inform our curriculum. We teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss the changes that happen as they grow up. We teach about the parts of the body, including the private parts, inappropriate touching, why males and females are different, and we explain to the children what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know why children’s bodies change during puberty, how to manage puberty when it happens, and how babies are made and born in the context of an adult sexual relationship.

4.3 Under the science curriculum, teachers inform children about males and females and how a baby is born. In Key Stage 1, we teach children that animals, including humans, produce offspring, which grow into adults, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. In Key Stage 2, we teach about life processes including reproduction and the main stages of the human life cycle, in greater depth.

- Our curriculum content will cover the required themes as set out in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers:
  - Family
  - Respectful relationships
  - Online and media
  - Being safe
  - Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

4.4 In Key Stage 3 SRE is taught through the PSHE programme, which is delivered once a week. The focus is on healthy relationships, consent and body image, as well as looking at identity, contraception and STI’s.

4.5 In Key Stage 4 and 5 SRE is taught through PSHE sessions as part of the mentor programme. Issues such as self-examination, fertility, parenting, pregnancy and the importance of communication and respect in a healthy relationship. This is closely linked to teaching on mental health and protective behaviours.

5 Safe and Effective Practice

5.1 During Relationships & Sex Education lessons (and at other times) controversial topics may arise. The judgement of individual teachers will decide as to whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion. Teachers will try to answer pupils’ questions honestly, sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account. In all circumstances, the professional judgement of the teacher must come in to play.

5.2 If a question is felt to be too explicit, the teacher will acknowledge it and deal with it outside the whole class setting.
5.3 Teachers should establish a set of ground rules so that young people are aware of parameters.

5.4 Pupils should never be asked to disclose their sexual orientation or personal information about themselves or others.

5.5 Teachers and pupils will show respect for all genders, sexualities and different types of families.

5.6 Any concerns that arise about sexual abuse or any other safeguarding issues must be followed up under the school's safeguarding procedures.

5.7 Where discussions about sexual behaviour arise from apparently unrelated topics, teachers will give attention to relevant issues, again using professional judgement.

6 The role of parents

6.1 The school is well aware that a significant role in children's SRE lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we:

- inform parents about the school's SRE policy and practice;
- answer any questions that parents may have about the SRE of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for SRE in the school;
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy, and making modifications to it as necessary;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to SRE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home;
- make the SRE resources used in our lessons available for viewing;
- ensure parents are aware of the school's mandatory duty to protect children at risk of the illegal practice of FGM.

We believe that through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

6.2 We acknowledge that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or parts of the sex and relationship education taught in the school except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum: all children are expected to learn the content of the national science curriculum (see Appendix 1). Parents with concerns or that are considering withdrawing their child for SRE should in the first instance contact their child's Head of Key Stage, who will invite the parent to a meeting to discuss their concerns and reassure the parents of the health and educational benefits of SRE. Parents are welcome to review any SRE resources that the school uses.

7 The role of other members of the community

7.1 We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of the local health
authority, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, and our local community police officer, can give us valuable support with our SRE programme.

8 Confidentiality

Teachers conduct SRE lessons in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of any type of sexual abuse, including FGM the matter will be reported to the DSL as a matter of urgency. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then deal with the matter in consultation with other social, health and education professionals, in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures. Staff should be familiar with the specific procedures relating to the reporting of FGM (see our Safeguarding policy).

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice;
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the teacher responsible for Child Protection under the school's procedures. he young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers are not legally bound to inform parents or the headteacher of any disclosure unless the headteacher has specifically requested them to do so.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

9 Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive sex and relationship education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.
Engaging Stakeholders

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to deliver a high quality SRE program. During the summer term we offer an information evening for parents and carers which covers all aspects of the SRE curriculum and welcome feedback in order to help us continually improve.