

Sex and Relationships Education Policy

The Government response to the report by the SRE Review Steering Group, October 2008, will begin to have an impact on SRE. Adjustments will eventually affect policy making and until such time this policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations and the last DfEE (now DfE) guidance 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance 2000'.

What is SRE?

The term **Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)** is used in this policy rather than sex education in order to indicate that our approach goes beyond the provision of biological information to students. We also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, developing self-esteem and the skills required in order to manage relationships effectively.

According to the latest DfE guidance SRE is: '...lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of 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'

The guidance suggests that SRE should have three main elements as follows:

Knowledge and understanding Attitudes and values Personal and social skills

Our school's approach to SRE consists of:

- the National Curriculum Science Programme of Study
- SRE modules within each Key Stage delivered within a planned PSHCE programme
- pastoral support for students who experience difficulties
- provision of appropriate information through leaflets and books in the Resource Centre, display of posters and appropriate websites.
- advice from the school nurse available through drop-in sessions, planned appointments and presentations in assemblies, lessons and tutorials.

Legal obligations

Maintained secondary schools in England and Wales have a legal responsibility to provide a 'sex education' programme. They also have a responsibility to keep an up to date written statement of the policy they choose to adopt and this must be available to parents. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from 'sex education' lessons which fall outside those aspects covered in the Science National Curriculum Programmes of Study .

The needs of young people and the role of schools

The overall aims of the school are for all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

The DfE guidance recommends that 'Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives'. The school has a key role, in partnership with parents/carers, in providing SRE. Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are more likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and to have fulfilling relationships. It also shows that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education does

not make young people more likely to enter into sexual activity. Indeed it can help them learn the reasons for, and the benefits to be gained from, delaying such activity.

National and local support and guidance for schools to develop SRE

Rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infection in the UK are among the highest of all European countries. The Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and SRE for students in both primary and secondary schools is seen, alongside other initiatives, as a key element. Our school's approach to SRE is in line with the Government's strategy and guidance given to schools in DfE 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', 2000. Our teaching and guidance provides a comprehensive body of knowledge and understanding about sexual health in order that our students might manage fertility and avoid infection.

Morals and Values Framework

Our approach to SRE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- the value of stable and loving relationships
- respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- the development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion
- the right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of
- the right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters

Inclusion

DfE guidance states 'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationships education. Sex and relationship education should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives'.

Young people may have varying needs regarding SRE depending on their circumstances and background. The school strongly believes that all students should have access to SRE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this the school's approach to SRE will take account of contraceptive advice to older students. Students will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If students need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.

A Whole School Approach

A whole school approach will be adapted to SRE that actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding SRE. In lessons students will be consulted about what issues they most want to discuss or seek advice about. Students will also be given the opportunity comment or ask questions anonymously in PSHCE lessons. If a member of staff deems that a student may be at risk because of something that is disclosed in a SRE setting then s/he will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

SLT will endeavour to support the provision and development of SRE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.

Teaching staff are all involved in the school's SRE provision. Some teach SRE through the PSHCE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding relationship and sex issues. Teachers will be consulted about the school's approach to SRE and aided in their work by the provision of resources, background

information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

Non-teaching staff may be involved in a supportive role in some SRE lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral support role with students. They will have access to information about the SRE programme and supported in their pastoral role.

Governors have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the SRE provision and policy and have regular reports at Governors' meetings. Good practice would be to have a designated governor with responsibility to oversee PSHCE, including SRE and access appropriate training.

Students have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate SRE and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted about their SRE needs and their views will be central to developing the provision.

The Taught SRE Programme

The SRE programme will be delivered as part of the school's approach to PSHCE programme and through the science curriculum.

Aims of the programme

The overall aims of the SRE programme are to:

- provide accurate information about, and understanding of, SRE issues
- dispel myths
- explore a range of attitudes towards SRE issues and to help students to reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle
- develop respect and care for others
- increase students' self-esteem
- develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations. Examples include communication with and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others
- contribute to a reduction in local and national teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and abortion rates.

Content

The SRE programme is delivered in a developmental manner so that issues are explored in greater depth as students mature.

A copy of this policy will be made available on the school website and parents may request a paper copy from the school.