



# Sex and Relationships Policy

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## Introduction

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 (RSE) and health education in which Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) becomes statutory for secondary pupils from September 2020. Additionally, from September 2020, it will be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education.

These changes reflect the increasingly complex world today's young people are living their lives in, both on and offline. In today's society, young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

In the DfE document, SRE is defined as 'learning about physical, moral, cultural, mental and emotional development'. The guidance states that in order to create a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficiency

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our school's provision for relationships and sex education will support pupils through their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. Our Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) curriculum aims to enable our pupils to put their knowledge into practice by developing resilience, knowing how and when to ask for help and where to access support.

The guidance also sets out both the rights of parents / carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that headteachers should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education, delivered as part of statutory RSE.

As the guidance states, schools are able to determine how to deliver the content set out in the DfE guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Staff are fully aware that the delivery of SRE lessons for some of our children may trigger experiences of past childhood trauma. This alone or in addition to a lower developmental age and understanding mean that when teaching SRE; close partnerships with the school's wellbeing team, parents, carers, social workers and virtual schools may be called upon to support the SRE work with the child/ young adult.

## **Aims and objectives**

We teach children about

- puberty and the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults; scientific anatomical names
- having respect for and being in control of their own bodies; body satisfaction and self-concept
- the way humans reproduce; the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship between adults; healthy relationships
- that there are different types of families, all of which have equal value; discrimination and stereotypes; inclusion
- respect for the views of other people; moral questions
- relationship issues including keeping safe online and seeking help; relationships and the media
- recognising the role of human rights in preventing violence against girls and women; unwanted contact and consent
- sexual abuse, and what they should do if they are worried about any sexual matters
- decision making, risk management and support seeking skills

## **Context**

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;
- children develop respect for diversity, risk management and support seeking skills.
- 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, enhancing their decision making and support seeking skills and reducing teenage pregnancy and risk taking behaviour

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 our school 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.

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.

### **Organisation and Content**

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 deliver some SRE through the statutory science curriculum and other subject areas, such as ICT and PE. We believe all these contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing. In PSHE, we use the PSHE Association programme of study for PSHE to inform our curriculum.

We teach children about relationships, and what a healthy relationship looks like, including boundaries and consent. 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, through real-world context. 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. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children.

Under the science curriculum, teachers inform children about males and females and how a baby is born. 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. Alongside this, we teach about life processes including reproduction and the main stages of the human life cycle, in greater depth.

### **The role of parents**

The school is well aware that the primary 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.

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.

We acknowledge that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education (but not relationships or health, as per DfE 2020

statutory requirements) 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.

Parents are encouraged to establish exactly what is covered in the SRE lessons relevant to their child's year group and discuss any concerns about lesson content with staff at the earliest opportunity. This is posted as a link on the school's website and has each class learning outlined linked to questions and themes.

Children's PSHE long term overview will be shared with parents and if a parent wishes for their child to be withdrawn from any sex education lessons, they are able to fill in the reply slip on the letter informing them of their child's PSHE learning or SRE week.

The PSHE lead is available as first point of call should the need arise to discuss aspects of the programme and any concerns they might have. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

### **The role of other members of the community**

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, workshops and theatre companies can give us valuable support with our SRE programme.

### **Confidentiality**

Teachers conduct SRE lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will deal with it as a matter of safeguarding/child protection.

Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will not try to investigate, but will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals and other relevant agencies, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy.

## **The role of the headteacher**

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our SRE policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the head teacher s responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach about sex and relationships effectively, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The head teacher/PSHE Lead liaises with external agencies regarding the school SRE programme, and ensures that all adults who work with our children on these issues are aware of the school policy, work within its framework and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

## **Monitoring and review**

The governing body is responsible for monitoring the delivery of our SRE policy. Governors give due consideration to any comments from parents about the SRE programme, and require the head teacher to keep a written record of parents comments.