



Sex, Relationship Education Policy

2017



Our Ethos:

‘Everyone in our school community has a right to learn and grow, be treated with respect and feel safe. Each has a responsibility too to conduct themselves in a way that helps promote these rights helping us to ensure that we continue to develop a culture and ethos in which every person feels valued and knows how to value the contribution of others.’

Centre Policy Statement

In South Somerset Partnership School we feel that everyone has the right to be informed about Sex and Relationships in a safe and caring environment. It is believed that people will learn better if they feel able to speak openly and are not in a position to feel embarrassed or intimidated. That is why some lessons may be taught in single gender groupings, to allow everyone freedom of expression.

Teachers are always well informed and able to answer most questions that are asked. If they don't know the answer themselves they will point students in the right direction. There are often specialists on hand too. The atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable, but focussed.

There are notices provided in the centre for information about STIs, helplines, contraceptive advice etc. Telephone numbers and up-to-date information are posted on these boards.

We have access to specialists e.g. School Nurses and Adolescent Support Workers.

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Introduction:

This policy is a 'stand-alone' policy that comes under the umbrella of Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) in the school. It takes account of the '*Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*' published by the DfEE in July 2000 that updated Circular 5/94 '*Sex Education in Schools*'. The policy is based on a framework produced by a countywide multi-disciplinary group. All teachers have access to the policy which is on the school intranet and website. In addition a copy is held in the centre office and it can be made available on request.

Rationale:

In South Somerset Partnership School, we believe that effective Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is essential if our pupils, as they grow, are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It contributes to promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional, mental and physical development of our pupils, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We believe SRE should not be delivered in isolation, but be firmly rooted in our Personal, Social and Health Education programme, supplemented by Science and other subjects of our taught curriculum.

Definition of Sex and Relationship Education:

Sex and Relationship Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of making and maintaining a stable marriage or relationship. We recognise that to be human is to experience sexual feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships, which may be physical or non-physical. Our teaching of sex and relationship education is applicable to all sexual orientations and will include teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

SRE seeks to enable young people to feel positive about themselves, manage relationships and access the infrastructure of support available.

Aims and Objectives

We aim to provide our pupils with an age appropriate SRE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. It should enable them to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. We seek to achieve this aim by having three main elements to our programme as outlined in '*Sex and Relationship Guidance*', DfEE, Ref 0116/2000, p.5:

Attitudes and values

- learning to care about other people and being sensitive towards their needs and views
- learning the importance of values, and individual conscience and moral considerations
- accepting the differences between people and learning not to exploit them
- learning the value of family life, marriage, and the importance of stable, loving and caring relationships for the nurture of children
- learning the importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all its members;
- learning to respect oneself and others and being honest, loyal and trustworthy in relationships
- learning to take responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas; and developing critical thinking as part of decision-making

Personal and social skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- learning how to make well informed and responsible decisions about their lives and developing an appreciation of the consequences of the choices made
- managing conflict
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

Knowledge and understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

We believe that SRE will be achieved by providing an environment and atmosphere where pupils feel safe, relaxed, not intimidated, but focussed; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of their teachers.

Moral Framework:

Pupils will be taught SRE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- Being honest with themselves and others
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others
- Acknowledging the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in sexual relationships
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for the upbringing of children
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation
- Having self-discipline regarding their sexuality.

Working with Parents

The school is committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers who are the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships. Parents/carers are consulted prior to SRE lessons.

A parent or carer, who is concerned about any element of this policy, or is unhappy about their child's participation, is invited to discuss their feelings with the Head of Centre. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of those aspects of the SRE programme which are NOT part of the statutory National Curriculum Science

Content and Organisation

The organisation of SRE is no different from other curriculum areas. It is delivered through planned programmes within Science and PSHE. Occasionally, issues about SRE may arise spontaneously in other lessons (e.g. while studying English Literature) where it is not the main focus of the lesson. This is not considered to be part of the planned SRE programme and parents or carers cannot withdraw pupils in these circumstances.

Provision may be made for pupils in mixed age classes to be taught in separate age groups. Normally, male and female pupils will be taught together. However, when deemed appropriate, there may be occasions when pupils are taught in separate gender groups.

The intention is for all our pupils to achieve the age-related learning outcomes recommended by OFSTED in their report entitled 'Sex and Relationships' published in 2002.

Where visitors are invited to deliver aspects of the SRE programme, the school follows the guidance in '*School use of visitors and outside agencies in health promotion*' published by the Somerset Healthy Schools Team, 2001. Visitors will be used to support not supplant, the role of the teacher and they will always be accompanied in the lesson by a teacher. Visitors will always be fully briefed on their contribution to the programme and will be given a copy of the current policy beforehand.

Aspects of SRE are encompassed within the ethos of the centre and may be delivered through:

- PSHE lessons
- Core subjects
- Tutorial periods
- Circle time
- Focus days e.g. World AIDS Day
- Project/theme lessons

The SRE programme will be delivered by:

- Centre teachers
- Invited specialist teams

A range of teaching approaches will be used which include didactic and participatory methods e.g. small group work for discussion, etc.

The overview and co-ordination of the taught curriculum is the responsibility of the Head of Centre who will always identify staff who have the appropriate skills, qualities and knowledge to teach the more sensitive and contentious aspects of SRE. Continuous professional development and training will always be provided to ensure a high level of expertise for teachers involved in delivering the SRE programme in the school.

Equal Opportunities:

SRE is inclusive of all students; they have an equal entitlement to good quality SRE. The programme will be delivered in line with the school's Equalities policy within an atmosphere of mutual respect. The centre will support an approach which ensures that no individual will be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Resources selected to support the programme will be free from cultural bias wherever possible and will avoid gender, race, disability or sexual orientation stereotyping. The programme will be sensitive to the needs of all pupils in the centre.

The school will not discriminate against any member of the school community who is infected or affected by HIV.

Specific Issues:

Personal Beliefs

The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence their teaching of SRE.

Language and Ground Rules in Lessons

All staff teaching SRE will set ground rules in their classes. For example:

- * *no one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question*
- * *no one will be forced to take part in a discussion*
- * *the only language used will be easily understood and acceptable to everyone in the class*
- * *only the correct names for body parts will be used*
- * *meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.*

Students will be involved in the negotiation/setting of these rules. Distancing techniques will also help to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of information. These may include case studies, role play and speaking in the third person.

Dealing with difficult questions

We have a variety of strategies for dealing with difficult questions. For example:

- if a question is too explicit or is inappropriate, the teacher will attend to it later, on an individual basis and a decision will be taken whether or not to inform the child's parents/carers
- if a child makes a disclosure that causes the teacher concern then they should follow child protection procedures established within the county

Menstruation

Our programme will include preparation for menstruation. Basic information about the process of menstruation will be given to both boys and girls.

We will make appropriate and sensitive arrangements for the changing and disposal of sanitary wear for our pupils.

Contraception

Trained staff are able to give pupils full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception, and their effectiveness and appropriateness. Individual advice cannot be given to pupils. Trained staff can, however, give both individual pupils and groups of pupils additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.

Abortion

Pupils will consider the moral and personal dilemmas involved in abortion, euthanasia and genetic engineering. Part of the discussion will necessarily involve the media's drive to portray human bodies as perfect and how this can feel to those who do not perceive themselves as fitting into that model. Our Centre's will be conscious of every student's life, both as a child and as a potential parent and will be sensitive and supportive to those who are, or may perceive themselves to be, impaired. All discussions will necessarily be respectful of all pupils regardless of differing cultures, religions, abilities, or sexual identity and gender. Pupils may also debate issues related to abortion in subjects such as English, Religious Education and Drama.

Awareness of Breast Cancer / Testicular Cancer

It is important that students are made aware of the benefit of self-examination in the early detection of breast and testicular cancer.

Safer Sex, HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

STIs are major causes of ill health which can have long-term physical and psychological health consequences.

Teaching about safer sex remains one of the Government's key strategies in reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals diagnosed with genital infections, including chlamydia, genital warts and gonorrhoea.

Young people may become complacent. Therefore, teaching includes:

- Helping students to clarify their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STIs.
- Teaching them assertiveness skills for negotiating relationships.
- Enabling them to become effective users of services that offer advice on prevention and treatment of STIs.

Teaching About Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Relationships

The diversity of sexual orientation found within society may also be reflected in the school community. Students will need to be given information regarding access to relevant support agencies. The school will seek to ensure that SRE is relevant and positive for all students, and that teaching about sexuality is undertaken by teachers who are trained and comfortable with such issues.

'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance', DfEE, Ref 0116/2000 makes it clear that schools should

'Make sure that the needs of all pupils are met in their programmes.' (p12) This guidance also states that *'The Secretary of State for Education and Employment is clear that teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.'* (p13)

It would be insensitive if gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues were only addressed in limited or negative contexts or prejudice e.g. teaching about HIV/AIDS. The school will therefore seek to take account of different sexual orientations throughout SRE. For example, there may be a number of occasions where, in order to avoid the impression that programmes are based on an assumption of heterosexuality, it is appropriate to use inclusive language such as 'partner' rather than 'boyfriend/girlfriend'.

Homophobic bullying (i.e. based on perceived gay or lesbian sexuality) is totally unacceptable. The school has a specific Behaviour Policy. All teachers are aware of this policy and a copy is available on request.

Confidentiality

'Schools must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy should ensure good practice throughout the school which both pupils and parents understand. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.'

Parents/carers will be informed of the school's confidentiality policy. The school will be acting in loco parentis. Whenever a pupil makes a disclosure, they will be persuaded to talk to their parents or carers. Child Protection issues will be addressed if necessary; but if not necessary, the wishes of the pupil will be taken into account. Information about local advice and support is available to pupil's e.g. notice board, in pupils' toilets, leaflets in centres where everyone can see it in private.

Different codes of conduct apply to different professionals working in our centre. Through the dissemination of our Confidentiality Policy students, parents, staff and health professionals working with us are aware of the different roles people have within the centre, the confidential support available and how confidentiality works in practice.

(i) Doctors, Contraceptive & Sexual Health Service Clinics.

Through SRE lessons students will be made aware of the confidential support available from doctors and local clinics (including the child protection qualification).

(ii) Centre staff.

Staff may encounter the situation where it appears that a student under 16 is about to disclose that they are in or are about to begin a relationship involving sexual intercourse or that they believe they may be pregnant and/or are seeking contraceptive advice. At this point staff should indicate that they wish to help the student in their situation but that they cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

If a student talks to a teacher at an inappropriate time the teacher should talk to the student again before the end of the day. 'School Nurse Drop-In Guidelines' published by Somerset Health Authority state that:

'The teacher should be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague whilst retaining the anonymity of the pupil... Teachers do not have to break a confidence if, in their professional judgement, it is in the best interest of the student. They are not legally bound to inform parents of any disclosure. Teachers should only break confidentiality if they believe that a student is at risk of physical or sexual abuse.'

Staff **must** follow child protection guidelines. Members of staff who are not health care professionals must not give individual contraceptive advice. It is also appropriate to remind students of information about access to support that has been outlined in lessons. These actions (reminding them of information) do not involve a requirement to inform parents/carers. Similarly, as students under 16 are able to access doctors or clinics for contraceptive advice, where a member of staff advises students to seek medical advice at a GP's surgery or clinic there is not a requirement to inform parents/carers. However students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer and will be supported in so doing. In each circumstance the best interests of the young person will be seen as paramount.

(v) Confidentiality in lessons.

Staff teaching SRE have a duty of care and may wish to make a ground rule that opinions and ideas expressed in discussion should not be repeated outside the lesson. Again it must be stressed that no absolute confidentiality can be promised. Clearly a lesson situation is also a significantly different context to a conversation with an individual. Students should be reminded of this difference. Through distancing techniques and ground rules students should understand that lessons are not an appropriate place to disclose personal information.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The SRE policy is monitored and evaluated through an annual review process.

Date of issue/revision:

Chair of Management Committee:

Headteacher:

Date:

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 became law in May 2004. Act outlines the law with regard to non-consensual offences including, rape, and assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Specific detail is given regarding child sexual offences (under the age of 16) and rape and other offences against children under 13.

It is clear that those who act with the purpose of protecting a young person from pregnancy, STIs, protecting their physical safety or promoting their emotional well-being, will not be guilty of arranging or facilitating a child sex offence. This applies not just to health professionals but to anyone acting in the best interests of the young person, such as teachers, youth workers, Connexions PAs, social care professionals and parents. Young people under 16, including under 13s, can continue to seek contraceptive and sexual health advice or treatment in confidence.

The aim of the Act is to protect young people from abuse or exploitation. It is not intended to prosecute mutually agreed sexual activity between young people of a similar age where there is no evidence of exploitation.

The statement below has been agreed by Home Office to explain the Act to young people

“In England and Wales, the law on Sexual Offences has been updated. Under this law, the legal age for young people to consent to have sex is still 16, whether you are straight, gay or bisexual.

The aim of the law is to protect the safety and rights of young people and make it easier to prosecute people who pressure or force others into having sex they don't want. Forcing someone to have sex is a crime.

Although the age of consent remains at 16, it is not intended that the law should be used to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involves abuse or exploitation.

Under the Sexual Offences Act you still have the right to confidential advice on contraception, condoms, pregnancy and abortion, even if you are under 16. But remember, whatever your age, you shouldn't have sex until you feel ready.”

The Act also outlines the law relating to the abuse of children by those in a position of trust. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child. This applies to any person over the age of 18 working with a position of trust in an educational establishment. The offence covers all children under 18, however it is principally designed to protect young people aged 16 and 17 who, even though they are over the age of consent for sexual activity, are considered to be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation from particular classes of persons who hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.

Useful Contacts:

The following contacts are available for further information and advice on the content of this document and on Sex & Relationship Education in general.

Sex Education Forum National Children's Bureau,

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE
www.ncb.org.uk
telephone 0207 843 6052

Useful websites for curriculum resources & young people:

www.l8r.uk.net
www.talktofrank.com

HEALTH INFORMATION WEBSITES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

www.ruthinking.com
www.teenagehealthfreak.org

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS:

Avert

International charity providing information on HIV/AIDS. Its website includes sections aimed specifically at young people.

www.avert.org.uk

Brook

Confidential sexual health advice and contraception for young people up to 25

www.brook.org.uk telephone 0800 185 023

Centre for HIV and Sexual Health

The centre provides a variety of resources, including booklets for parents/carers on talking and listening to their children.

www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk

Childline

Helpline for children and young people in danger or distress. Telephone counselling for any child with any problem. 24 hour support, advice and referrals.

www.childline.org.uk

Contact a Family

Provides support, advice and information to families across the UK. with a disabled child www.cafamily.org.uk

Department of Health

Health information for practitioners and websites for young people

www.dh.gov.uk

Early Years

www.teachingideas.co.uk/earlyyears

FPA (formerly Family Planning Association)

Provides resources and training for SRE

www.fpa.org.uk

National Children's Bureau (NCB)

NCB is a charitable organisation which acts as an umbrella body for organisations working with children and young people in England and Northern Ireland, including the Sex Education Forum (see below). Through working in partnership, sharing knowledge, resources and services they aim to create a powerful, authoritative and influential voice to improve the lives of children and young people.

www.ncb.org.uk

Ofsted www.ofsted.gov.uk

Parentline Plus

A freephone helpline offering support and information to anyone parenting a child. It also runs parenting courses.

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

PSHE Association

The association provides a central support network for teachers of PSHE, giving them a focal point to receive advice, gather and share examples of good practice and promote existing guidance.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

QCA is committed to building a world-class education and training framework. They regulate, develop and modernise the curriculum, assessments, examinations and qualifications. Includes guidance for teachers on effective Sex and Relationship Education

www.qca.org.uk

Sex Education Forum (SEF)

The SEF provides comprehensive information and support for SRE and a telephone information line. Its website offers a number of free resources and factsheets to download.

www.ncb.org.uk/sef

Stonewall

Stonewall is an organisation which campaigns for equal rights for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. One campaign focuses on challenging homophobic bullying in schools.

www.stonewall.org.uk

Tacade

This site provides information about a range of publications, training and consultancy products and services that aim to enable children and young people to achieve positive changes in their knowledge, attitudes, abilities, choices and behaviour.

www.tacade.com