

# **SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY**

**August 2020**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The young people in our school are more likely to have disrupted educational experiences and to have missed out on key aspects of the curriculum and sex and relationship education. This could mean that their access to sources of information may be limited through lack of knowledge.

### **They may:**

- Miss out on school sex and relationship education due to poor attendance, truancy and frequent changes in educational placements.
- Have no guidance and support on sex and relationships from parents or family.
- Have been exposed to sexual/physical abuse leading to low self-esteem or inappropriate behaviour.
- Have had early exposure to sexual activity e.g. through prostitution, being sexually abused or abusing others.
- Lack the necessary skills and confidence to negotiate and sustain positive relationships.
- Have difficulty finding a safe place to talk about sex and relationship issues.

Effective Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is crucial to developing and maintaining emotional and physical health and is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives as they move from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. It will not be delivered in isolation but is firmly rooted within the PSHE programme.

The objective of Sex and Relationship Education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional, and moral development. They will be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. However, we recognise that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, students should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care will be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

### **Further Objectives:**

- To enable pupils to understand the biological aspects of reproduction
- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of family planning in terms of personal preference and their social and moral implications.
- To recognise and be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as conception, virginity, birth, child-rearing, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, values, beliefs and morality.
- To make pupils aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society and recognise the importance of personal choice in managing relationships so that they do not present risks to health and personal safety.
- To make pupils aware that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and that people have the right not to be sexually active.
- To understand the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact on lifestyles, e.g. the menopause.
- To recognise that parenthood is a matter of choice.
- To critically analyse moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups.
- To understand the concept of stereotyping and to discuss issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effects on individuals.
- To understand aspects of legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender and equal opportunities and to make aware the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships.

Students need also to be given accurate information and helped to develop skills to enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others and for the purpose also of preventing and removing prejudice. Secondary Students should learn to understand human sexuality, learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay, and learn about obtaining appropriate advice on sexual health.

Sex and Relationship Education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of Students at school and of society and preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Effective Sex and Relationship Education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills that are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Research has shown that more than a quarter of young people are sexually active before they reach 16. Young people under 16 are the group least likely to use contraception and concern about confidentiality remains the biggest deterrent to seeking advice.

*'Any young person, in or out of care, may become sexually active or use other compulsive behaviour as a way of seeking physical affection and affirmation of themselves as desirable and attractive individuals. Some may try to boost their self-esteem by being actively sexist, homophobic, verbally or physically abusive or by abusing younger children. Some may resort to sexual abuse.'* (Source: National Children's Bureau 1998)

**Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, teachers who promote contraception to a young person under 16 years of age, providing they are acting to protect the young person, are not liable to prosecution under specific amendments.**

## **WHAT IS SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION?**

It 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. SRE is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.

## **IT HAS THREE MAIN ELEMENTS:**

### **Attitudes and values**

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- learning the value of respect, love and care.
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- 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.
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of 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, and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

## **USE OF MATERIALS**

Materials used in schools will be in accordance with the PSHE framework and the law. Inappropriate images will not be used nor will explicit material not directly related to explanation. Schools will ensure that students are protected from teaching and materials, which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the students concerned. Schools will also ensure that students are protected from accessing unsuitable materials on the Internet.

## **Key Stage 3 and 4**

Schools will set sex education within a broader base of self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Schools should:

- Teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex.
- Focus on boys as much as girls.
- Build self-esteem.
- Teach the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood.
- Provide young people with information about different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment.
- Use young people as peer educators, e.g. teenage mothers and fathers.
- Give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure.
- Link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.
- Ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

## **Working with the Wider Community**

Delivery of sex and relationship education is not the sole responsibility of schools. A range of people in the wider community including health professionals, social workers, youth workers, peer educators and visitors also provides elements of sex

and relationship education. People in the wider community have much to offer at all levels of planning and delivering sex and relationship education, bringing a new perspective and offering specialised knowledge, experience and resources.

**It should be noted that health professionals who are involved in delivering programmes are expected to work within the school's sex and relationship education policy and on the instructions of the Lead Teacher. However, when they are in their professional role, such as a school nurse in a consultation with an individual Student, they should follow their own professional codes of conduct (this is the case irrespective of who is paying them).**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION**

Schools must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

If a member of a school's staff (teaching or non-teaching) suspects that a young person is a victim of abuse or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk of abuse, they should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns and to whom they should do so.

Effective sex and relationship education should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and, in some circumstances, to treat young people confidentially, and part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents/carers. In order to be able to take responsibility for their actions, young people need to be more generally aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and local confidential services.

Nonetheless, there may be cases where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse. In these circumstances, schools ought to be in a position to take steps to ensure that:

- wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer.
- any child protection issues are addressed.
- the young person has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

When the teacher who receives the information believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, they should refer the case to the Lead Teacher. They should also make clear to the student that they cannot guarantee confidentiality. The teacher should ensure that the student understand that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

It is only in the most exceptional case that schools should be in the position of having to handle such information without parental knowledge, and where younger Students were involved this would be grounds for serious concern. The Lead Teacher should monitor the frequency of such cases.

### **The Parental Right to Withdraw their Son or Daughter from Sex Education Lessons:**

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their children from this programme. In this case, such parents should write to the Lead Teacher, stating their objections. Schemes of work will enable parents to estimate the point at which specific aspects of sex education will be delivered to their child. The biological element of reproduction remains within the National Curriculum Science Order for Key Stage 3 and is covered in detail during the Fourth Year as part of the GCSE course. Other issues are dealt with in Religious, Personal and Social Education as well within the 24-hour curriculum in cooperation with Care and Clinical.

### **Advice to Individual Pupils:**

It is understood that it is important to distinguish between the school's function of providing education generally about sexual matters and the giving of advice to individual pupils on these issues. Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of their pupils. It is also understood that this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It is understood that particular care must be exercised in relation to giving contraceptive advice to pupils under the age of sixteen, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. It is the general rule that giving an individual pupil advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be inappropriate.

Where the circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the pupil has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law, the teacher has the general responsibility to ensure that the pupil is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice.

*This policy is reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. However, where there are changes to legislation/guidance or in response to recommendation from any significant incident, review of the policy will take place immediately.*

<b>Reason for update</b>	<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>
<i>Created</i>	<i>January 2015</i>	<i>Tariq Verpalen</i>
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	<b>Date</b>
Agreed	August '20
To be reviewed	August '23

<b><i>I have read and understand this policy</i></b>		
<b>Name member of staff</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>



