

An example of a school's SRE policy, with thanks to Jonathon Heywood and Yatton Church of England Junior School

[Name of School]

Policy for Sex and Relationship Education

Date policy adopted:

What is Sex and Relationship Education? (SRE)

The DfEE's guidance for Sex and Relationship Education (2000) was written to take account of the revised National Curriculum and the new Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is an integral part of the non-statutory guidance for PSHE in primary schools and, therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's PSHE and Citizenship Policy and Guidelines.

The DfEE's guidance defines SRE as follows:

"It is the 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. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity- this would be inappropriate teaching."

Elements of sex education are included in the National Curriculum for Science. There is a legal duty upon schools to teach these aspects. Other aspects, including the relational context of sex education, are delivered through PSHE and Citizenship which is non-statutory at KS1 and KS2. Sex and Relationship Education in Primary Schools remains at the discretion of the governing body, apart from the biological aspects included in science.

What we believe

"Building on our Christian foundation as a Church of England school, we aim to:

- Foster a happy, secure and supportive environment.
- Value all individuals, enabling mutual respect and trust.
- Celebrate children's differences and achievements.
- Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum providing equal opportunities for all.
- Uphold high standards of behaviour."

(Extract from the *Aims of our school*, especially relevant to SRE.)

Although, ideally, parents should be considered the key people in educating their children about sex and relationships, we believe that, as a school, we can and should provide opportunities for children to discuss and explore issues as part of a balanced

and carefully considered programme of work for SRE. Learning about sexual relationships is an inescapable element of school and home life. Children will talk about these issues at play as well as in the classroom and they are likely to be aware of them through the media. It is important in a world where children and young people are surrounded by many different, conflicting messages that they are given accurate information, so misconceptions can be dispelled and they feel reassured about themselves and others. We believe that children have a right to know about the changes that are taking place, and will take place, in their bodies and how these may affect their feelings and attitudes.

As a Church of England School, we believe that sexual relationships are a gift of God as part of creation and that sex education should be placed within a Christian context of love, faithfulness and forgiveness. Children need to come to understand their own bodies and feelings and so be prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of stable relationships. We recognise the value of secure loving relationships, the importance of family life and hold in high regard God's ideal of a lifelong marriage commitment as a context for raising children. However, it is also important for us to recognise that many children in our school community grow up within alternative frameworks and that these beliefs and issues are handled with sensitivity.

“As part of sex and relationship education, pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. But ... there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care needs to be taken that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.”

(DfEE Circular 116/2000)

We recognise that as children progress through KS2 and beyond, they need opportunities and support in working out their own belief system. This will take account of their response to faith or moral teaching they have received within school, culture or from home.

Our aspirations_(see also PSHE policy)

To help children to:

- Discover how the body changes as they approach puberty and support them in becoming prepared for these changes.
- Recognise how people's emotions change as they grow up and how they might deal with their feelings towards themselves, their family and others in positive and sensitive ways.
- Understand the main stages of the human life cycle and life processes.
- Become aware of different types of relationship and to appreciate the value of stable, loving relationships such as marriage.
- Be familiar with Christian beliefs and attitudes regarding sex and relationships.
- Develop skills to be effective in relationships, to care about the feelings of others and appreciate that their own actions affect not only themselves but also those around them.

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships and to explore values and moral issues.
- Be aware of pressures to behave in unacceptable or undesirable ways and know where they can go for help, advice and support. We want children to feel safe and secure and protect them from the dangers of unhealthy relationships and unwanted advances.
- Appreciate we are all faced with choices and to help them make decisions based on accurate information rather than misconceptions or ignorance.
- Celebrate their uniqueness.
- Recognise love, in its many forms, as being central to Christian philosophy and as the basis of meaningful human relationships.
- Begin to appreciate the responsibilities and commitments needed in bringing up a child.

Responsibilities

The provision of SRE is the responsibility of the governors in conjunction with the head and the PSHE subject leader.

The PSHE coordinator will provide support to those members of staff teaching SRE and will keep the head and governors informed of any training needs and the involvement of outside agencies.

It is the responsibility of the PSHE subject leader to ensure that such visitors are aware of the schools Christian values.

The Diocesan Board of Education recommends:

- (a) *Primary schools should teach that:*
- sexual relationships should be seen as the fulfilment of a relationship and not as the basis for a relationship*
 - sexual relationships between those who are not in loving long term relationships often do not meet the long term happiness of both those involved (or indeed of either)*
 - sexual relationships between those who are in loving long term relationships can provide a context within which both partners learn the basic ground rules of mutual respect on which to base good relationships within their wider family and beyond.*
- (b) *Schools should not avoid the issue of sexual orientation in their policy. The topic should be discussed calmly and objectively as part of the curriculum in secondary schools (and in primary schools if the issue arises) without either approval or disapproval. Homophobic name-calling should be dealt with firmly, in the same way as racist name-calling. This should be covered by the school's anti-bullying policy.*
- (c) *Schools should ensure that children in both primary and secondary schools know that under age sex is illegal and can also lead to unplanned pregnancy. Schools should support children in resisting peer pressure to have sex by teaching them that they actually have the right to say "no" to sex. They*

should be helped to understand that saying “no” shows maturity and strength and not inadequacy or weakness.

- (d) Schools should ensure that children know the possibility and dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and their possible consequences.*
- (e) There should be opportunities for the school's policy on sex and relationship education to be explained to parents. Parents of children in the year groups that will be having sex education should be invited to a meeting at which the content of the programme is explained. They should know when the lessons take place so that they can provide adequate support in the home.*
- (f) If inviting health professionals into school to contribute to the sex and relationship programme, church schools should be careful to emphasise the Christian ethos in which this education should take place.*

Teaching methods and classroom arrangements for SRE

A range of teaching methods will be employed which encourage children's full participation and provide plenty of opportunities for reflection and discussion. All classes are mixed but single gender groups may be formed for some sessions if deemed appropriate and relevant.

Sex Education sessions will normally take place in a familiar setting.

A question box will be available in each class for children to place questions or concerns that they may not wish to raise in front of their peers.

Children are encouraged to discuss issues with their parents, carers or other adult they can trust.

As with Circle Times, it is important for ground rules to be agreed and established before class discussions on Sex Education issues take place.

Ground rules will include

- No-one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question.
- No-one will be forced to take part in discussion.
- No 'put-downs' or teasing.
- Meanings of words will be explained or discussed in a sensible and factual way, as appropriate.
- Everyone should try to use the correct names for parts of the body.

Special Educational Needs

We believe that children with special educational needs should be properly included in sex and relationship education. Activities and questioning should be differentiated where appropriate so that all children can be helped to understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives.

Specific Issues

Relationships with Parents

We believe that it is vitally important for parents to be closely involved and well informed with regards to the school's sex education programme of work so that they can share the work in this area of their child's development. Materials and resources, as well as this policy, will be made available to parents who wish to supplement the school's sex education teaching at home. Parents will be notified before programmes of Sex Education begin or when issues relating to sex education are planned to be discussed.

Withdrawal of Children from Sex and Relationship Education

Schools have a legal duty to teach the biological aspects of Sex Education identified within the National Curriculum for Science. These must be taught to all pupils and parents are not allowed to withdraw their children from these lessons.

Parents are permitted to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education that falls outside of the National Curriculum. Such requests should be made in writing to the Head Teacher. We will attempt to establish reasons why parents wish to withdraw their child. If the decision to withdraw a child is made, we must ensure alternative arrangements are made and should try to ensure these arrangements cause minimal embarrassment to the child and minimal disruption to the programme. Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot participate in Sex Education sessions until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Incidental Sex Education

Sometimes the teaching of unrelated topics will result in discussion of aspects of growing up, the nature of relationships or sexual issues. This will not constitute sex education so long as discussion is relatively limited and is set within the context of the other topic or subject. Although proper attention should be given to relevant issues, teachers will try to respect pupils' and parents' sensitivities. Staff should discuss any concerns with the PSHE coordinator.

Responding to Children's Questions

Occasionally a child may ask a difficult or sexually explicit question that could be deemed inappropriate for discussion with this age group. We believe that teachers need to feel able to use their skill and discretion in these situations. If in doubt as to how best to respond to a question or situation that arises, teachers should refrain from providing an immediate or direct answer and discuss the best way forward with the PSHE coordinator. In such a situation, the child may be encouraged to discuss the issue with their parents or carers. For their own protection, staff should not

organise one-to-one meetings with children to discuss sensitive or personal issues. Use of the class question box will help teachers to have more control over the issues discussed in whole class discussions.

Confidentiality

Some activities, especially discussions about relationships, can give rise to disclosures of a child protection issue. Children need to be made aware that confidentiality cannot always be maintained. If a child discloses information that causes concern and/or the adult considers the child to be at risk or in danger they should inform the designated member of staff responsible for Child Protection as soon as possible. [IMPORTANT: Refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for more detailed guidance.]

Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and appropriateness of our Sex and Relationship Education programme.

This will be achieved by:

- Pupil feedback
- Staff / Year Group reviews and feedback
- Parental comments
- Diocesan feedback.
- OFSTED inspection

How we plan to teach SRE

- **Through the Science curriculum:** pupils will be taught about the life processes common to humans and other animals, which include reproduction and growth, and about the main stages of the human life cycle. (See *Science policy and scheme of work.*)
- **Through our PSHE & Citizenship programme:** pupils will regularly be involved in activities and discussions to help them think about themselves, their relationships, making choices and decisions and peer pressures. (See *school PSHE policy and guidelines*)
- **Through discrete Sex Education sessions.**

Content of these sessions will include:

- **Body knowledge**, including an understanding of pubertal changes and reproduction.
- **The context of sexual relationships**, including values and attitudes.
- **Personal awareness and safety.**

- ***Also, less formally, through acts of worship and day-to-day life in school:***
e.g., discussing and demonstrating the importance of the way we treat and respect each other in the school and wider community, the value of the family unit and the way we celebrate our differences, similarities, uniqueness and life itself.

Resources

- The most significant resource in the classroom is the teacher. It is important that sex education issues are discussed with the children primarily by a familiar adult with whom they feel comfortable.
- If a member of staff feels uncomfortable with teaching sex education units, even after support is provided, the PSHE coordinator or Year Group colleague may deliver the programme
- A range of resource material is available for delivering the sex education programme. This is made available for parents to view on request. It is important that any resources are used skilfully and selectively by the teacher and that they reflect the values agreed within this policy.
- Health and Sex Education is a shared responsibility. What is learned at school can be supported by experiences in the home and community. Therefore, it will sometimes to be appropriate to involve visitors from outside agencies (e.g., Health or Welfare Professionals), religious leaders or visits by parents and babies. If so, it is important that they are familiar with the school’s values and approaches identified within this policy. Teachers will ensure appropriate planning and follow- up work takes place for such visits. Any visitors must be accompanied by a teacher familiar with the school’s values and approaches and who is ready to intervene as deemed necessary.

The policy will be reviewed as determined in the School Improvement Plan and the Policy Review Cycle.

Policy Review

- 2007.....
- 2008.....
- 2009.....
- 2010.....