

Howard Park Community School

Sex & Relationship Education (SRE) Policy

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations and the latest DfES guidance 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (DfES 0116/2000).

1. What is SRE?

The term *sex and relationships education* – *SRE* – is used in this policy rather than *sex education*. This is to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

According to the latest DfES 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' DfES 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', 2000.

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

Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

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.

The schools approach to SRE consists of:

1. The taught National Curriculum Science Programme of Study.
2. SRE modules within each Key Stage delivered within a planned PSHE programme.
2. Pastoral support for pupils who experience difficulties.
3. Provision of appropriate information through leaflets and books in the library and display of posters.

3. Why SRE?

3.1 Legal obligations

Maintained primary 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 National Curriculum Science.

3.2 The needs of young people and the role of schools

The overall aims of the school and National curriculum are:

1. To provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve.
2. To promote pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The DfE'S 'Sex and Relationship Guidance' (2000) 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.

'Research demonstrates 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'.

DfES 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', 2000.

3.3 National and local support and guidance for schools to develop SRE

At a local level support and guidance for schools to develop SRE includes:

- SRE training for teachers funded through the LA and PCTs.
- Advice and support for schools from expert LA and PCT personnel.
- Support from the Kirklees Health Promoting Schools Scheme (which is accredited to the National Healthy School Standard) to develop whole school approaches to SRE.
- DfES/Department of health PSHE Certification for PSHE and Sex and Relationships.

4. 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.

We also believe that pupils have an entitlement to:

- Age and circumstance appropriate SRE.
- Access to help from trusted adults and helping services.

SRE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The school's approach to SRE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on personal bias. We shall endeavour to have an approach that is educational, rather than one based on propaganda.

4. Inclusion

'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 relationship 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'

DfEE SRE Guidance July 2000

Young people may have varying needs regarding SRE depending on their circumstances and background. The school strongly believes that all pupils 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:

The needs of boys as well as girls

Girls tend to have greater access to SRE than boys, both through the media (particularly magazines) and the home. We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying.

Ethnic and cultural diversity

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to SRE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

Varying home backgrounds

We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We shall take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

Sexuality

On average, about 5% of our pupils will go on to define themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual (GLB). Students may also have GLB parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All our pupils will meet and work with GLB people. Our approach to SRE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. We shall actively tackle homophobic bullying.

Special educational needs

We shall take account of the fact that some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular SRE needs.

The teaching programme for Sex and Relationship Education

We intend that all pupils shall experience a programme of sex and relationships education at a level which is appropriate for their age and physical development, with adaptations for those whose cognitive development is particularly slow.

5. A Whole School Approach

A whole school approach will be adopted to SRE that actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding SRE. In particular:

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

Teaching staff

All teachers are involved in the school's SRE provision. Some SRE is taught through the PSHE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to pupils. (Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding sex or relationships issues). Teachers will be consulted about the school's approach to SRE and aided in their work by 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 pupils. 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 Governor's meetings.

Parents/carers have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's SRE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish (see section 7.7). The school will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers. The school's approach to SRE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

The school nurse can play a key role in supporting the teacher in SRE both in terms of advice, input into lessons, provision of pastoral support for pupils and resources. The school will work in ongoing consultation and partnership with the school nurse.

Outside agencies and speakers may be involved in inputting to SRE lessons. The school will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to pupil needs. We shall work in partnership with them and jointly plan their work within the school.

Pupils 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.

6. The Taught SRE Programme

The SRE programme will be delivered as part of the school's approach to PSHE and Citizenship.

6.1 Aims of the programme

The overall aims of the SRE programme are:

1. To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, SRE issues.
2. To dispel myths.

3. To explore a range of attitudes towards SRE issues and to help pupils to reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle.
4. To develop respect and care for others.
5. To increase pupils' self esteem.
6. To 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.

6.2 Place in the curriculum

The main SRE programme will be delivered through PSHE lessons. In addition certain biological aspects are delivered through Science lessons and other aspects of SRE arise in (fill in other relevant subject areas).

6.3 Content and learning objectives

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

6.4 Methodology and resources

Active learning methods which involve children's full participation will be used. This includes use of research, role play, video, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers.

Sex and Relationship education takes place within mixed sex classes or single gender groups as deemed appropriate and relevant, with the pupils' usual class teacher. Should a teacher be absent it would not be undertaken by a short-term supply teacher.

Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment through the use of ground rules and distancing techniques so that pupils are not put on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils.

6.5 Ground rules and distancing techniques

Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of sex and relationships. To this end ground rules have been agreed to provide a common values framework within which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in whole class setting and what will be dealt with on an individual basis.

- Pupils will be given preparation so that they will know how to minimise any embarrassment they feel.
- No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- Only the correct names for body parts will be used.
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

6.6 Answering difficult questions

Sometimes an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered and can be addressed later. This school believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and refer to the PSHE/Citizenship Co-ordinator concerned.

6.7 Dealing with questions

- Teachers should establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting.
- Teachers should set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which does not encourage giggling and silliness.
- Pupils should be encouraged to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box, the teacher will have time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate.
- If a verbal question is too personal the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis.
- Teachers should not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child.
- Pupils must not be given the impression that teenagers inevitably have sex, the view that sex should be between two people who are mature enough to make informed decisions should be emphasised.
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse the Headteacher should be informed and the usual child protection procedures followed.

6.8 Monitoring, evaluation and assessment

The programme is evaluated by the PSHCE co-ordinator. The views of students and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring and evaluation can be informed by the Ofsted Framework for the Inspection of Schools. Whilst it is difficult and often inappropriate to assess attitudes and students' personal lifestyle choices, much of the SRE programme of study is capable of formal assessment, particularly the knowledgeable components.

6.9 Confidentiality and informing parents/carers

We are aware that some parents find it hard to cope with their children's sexual development, and are happy for the school to take the initiative. We will take every opportunity to inform and involve parents and carers:

- by making our commitment clear in the school prospectus
- by placing sex education on the agenda at the relevant governors' meeting

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated 'sex education' lessons. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of SRE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where SRE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas.

We will work in active partnership with parents/carers, value their views and keep them informed about our SRE provision. If a parent/carer has any concerns about the SRE provision we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If any parents/carers decide to withdraw their child we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision.

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures about abuse are made.

It is very rare for a pupil to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement about whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the pupil may be experiencing.
- The pupil's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Where it is clear that a pupil would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek the consent of the student to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the pupil. Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer.

7. Pastoral Support for Pupils who experience difficulties

7.1 The nature of support available to pupils

The school takes its role in the promotion of pupil wellbeing seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive support for pupils in a number of ways. Staff may be approached for help on an individual basis. They offer a listening ear and, where appropriate, information and advice. The school nurse offers a health and support service to pupils. Where appropriate, pupils are referred to the school nurse and/or outside helping agencies. The school will keep up to date about the development of local services and national help lines for young people and form working relationships with local agencies that are relevant to pupil needs.

7.2 Dealing with bullying

Bullying commonly includes inappropriate and hurtful comments and behaviours concerning sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex/relationship issues. The school takes the issue of bullying very seriously and this is reflected in the school's anti-bullying policy. Staff will challenge and deal sensitively with any evidence of bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to report any incidents. Staff will endeavour to investigate any incidents of bullying as soon as possible and give feedback to pupils who complain of bullying. The SRE and PSHE programmes will consider bullying and aim to discourage bullying based on sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex/relationship issues.

