Policy on Sex and Relationship Education

1 Introduction

1.1 What is Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)?

SRE comprises 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. SRE is part of the personal, social and health education curriculum in the school. While we use SRE to inform children about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. We do not use sex and relationship education as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

The Department of Health set out its ambition for all children and young people to receive high quality sex and relationships education in the Sexual Health Improvement Framework (2013), while the Department for Education’s paper The Importance of Teaching (2010) highlighted that ‘Children need high quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices’.

1.2 Our school’s policy on sex and relationship education is based on the DfES document ‘Sex and Relationship Education Guidance’ (DfES 0116/2000). We recognise ‘Sex and Relationship Education’ as the policy's full title, but, for brevity's sake, we will refer in the rest of this policy simply to 'sex education'. There are three main elements within this guidance document: Attitudes & values, Personal & social skills and Knowledge & understanding.

1.3 In the DfE document, sex education is defined as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development'. The guidance states, 'It is about understanding 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'.

1.4 Sex education is part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in our school and is taught alongside our science curriculum. When we inform our pupils through sex and relationship education about sexual issues, we do this with regard to morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. We do not use sex and relationship education as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 We teach children about:
• the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults;
• the way humans reproduce;
• respect for their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship;
• the importance of family life;
• moral questions;
• relationship issues;
• respect for the views of other people;
• what they should do if they are worried about any sexual matters.

3 Context

3.1 We teach about sex and relationship education in the context of the school's aims and values through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Science. While sex and relationship education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code, and of the Co-operative values which underpin all our work. We teach sex education on the understanding that:

• it is taught in the context of marriage and 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;
• it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
• children need to learn the importance of self-control.

4 Organisation

4.1 We teach about sex and relationship education through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main sex and relationship education in our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, we also do some sex and relationship education through other subject areas (e.g. science and PE) which we believe contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing.

4.2 In PSHE, we teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach about the parts of the body, and how these work, and we explain to the children what will happen to their bodies during puberty. For example, we teach the children that boys' voices will change during puberty, and we explain menstruation to both boys and girls. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

4.3 In science lessons, which is separate from sex and relationship education, teachers inform children about puberty and how a baby is born. For this aspect of our teaching, we follow the guidance material in the national scheme of work for science. In Key Stage 1, we
teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the fact that people are not all the same, and that we need to respect each other. In Key Stage 2, we teach about life processes, and the main stages of the human life cycle, in greater depth.

4.4 In Years 5 and 6, we place a particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how children's bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children.

4.5 We give the opportunity for all parents and carers of children in Years 5 to discuss this particular programme of lessons, to explain what the issues are, and how they are taught, and to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

4.6 We believe that all young people should receive sex and relationship education and therefore offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, taking specialist advice where necessary to ensure we are treating all equally and fairly. We will make reasonable adjustments so all pupils can access the sex and relationship education curriculum. We also intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups and understand that for some young people, it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We also aim to deal sensitively with children’s issues and answer appropriate questions raised as young people need to feel that relationship and sex education is relevant to them.

5 The role of parents and carers

5.1 The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex and relationship education lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents and carers of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we:

- inform parents and carers about the school's sex and relationship education policy and practice;
- answer any questions that parents or carers may have about the sex and relationship education of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents or carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for sex and relationship education in the school;
- encourage parents and carers to be involved in reviewing the school policy, and making modifications to it as necessary;
inform parents and carers about the best practice known with regard to sex and relationship education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

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.

5.2 Under the Education Act of 1993 parents can withdraw pupils from part of the Sex and Relationship Education that is outside the compulsory elements of sex education contained in the National Curriculum Science Orders. If a parent wishes for their child to be withdrawn from sex and relationship education lessons, they should discuss this with the head teacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in, giving reasons, the head teacher will then provide alternative arrangements.

6 The role of other members of the community

6.1 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, give us valuable support with our sex and relationship education programme.

7 Confidentiality

7.1 Teachers conduct sex and relationship education lessons in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of 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 head teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals (see also our policy on Child Protection).

8 The role of the head teacher

8.1 It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that both staff and parents/carers are informed about our sex and relationship education 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.

8.2 The head teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex and relationship education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with our children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and work within its framework.
8.3 The head teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis, and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the responsibility of the PSHE subject lead to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation according to our school’s policy. Implementation will be monitored by the Headteacher and PSHE subject lead and reported on to the Governing body.

9.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if necessary.