



Sex and Relationships Policy

Name of Policy	Sex and Relationships Policy
Named Person(s)	Helen Samuels Wendy Goddard
Review Committee	n/a
Last review date	January 2018
Next review date	January 2020

Rationale

Sex and Relationship Education is lifelong learning about emotions, relationships, sexual health and ourselves. Good quality SRE is mindful of young people's early experience and is based on their development and expressed needs. It provides consistent messages, is ongoing and progressive, and supports children and young people's confidence as they move from childhood to adulthood. It helps them understand themselves, negotiate their relationships and prepares them for adulthood.

Bellingham Partnership of Schools believes that SRE should

- Provide ongoing, truthful and honest information in a non-judgemental way, in a relaxed and confidential setting
- Encourage young people to make informed decisions.
- Be linked to the ethos and values of our school

It is a legal requirement for schools to provide Sex and Relationships Education. The Education Act (1996) has now been supplemented by Sex and Relationships Education Guidance (DfEE 0116/2000) and the Learning & Skills Act (2000). This states that:

- 'All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes' (1.13)
- Children should learn 'how a baby is conceived and born' before they leave primary school (1.16)

The guidance (1.18) states that secondary schools should:

- Teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex
- Ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships
- Link SRE with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol
- Provide young people with information about different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment.

The Sex Education elements contained in the National Curriculum Science Orders are mandatory and for all students. Sex education in the National Science Curriculum covers anatomy, puberty and biological aspects of sexual reproduction.

Outside of the Science Curriculum, secondary schools are required to provide a SRE programme which includes (as a minimum) information about sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

All schools must provide an up to date policy which describes the content and organisation of SRE provided outside the Science Curriculum.

Safeguarding

SRE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. SRE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 38). Updated government safeguarding guidance is now available (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018) and includes a section about being alert to signs that young girls may be at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM). School summer holiday especially during the transition from primary to secondary schools is thought to be a key risk time for FGM. See also the government Multi-agency practice guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (2014) which includes a section for schools. We are aware of the OFSTED thematic report on 'The Sexual Exploitation of Children, it couldn't happen here, could it?'

Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). Inclusive SRE will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education have produced advice on The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE 2014b).

The government guidance on SRE (DfEE 2000) emphasizes the importance of schools working in partnership with parents. Under current legislation schools should enable parents to exercise their right to withdraw their children (until the age of 19) from any school SRE taught outside National Curriculum Science (Education Act 1996). This applies to maintained primary and secondary schools and includes pupils attending a sixth form that is part of a school.

Organisation

There are three key elements to SRE:

1. Acquiring information
2. Developing life skills
3. Exploring attitudes and values.

All 3 elements are closely inter-related.

1. **Acquiring information**

Young people are entitled to clear and relevant information which is accurate and non-judgmental. The content of SRE should address:

- what young people know already
- what young people say they need
- the emotional, biological, legal, social and cultural aspects of growing up, sexual development, sexual behaviour, sexuality and sexual health
- the potential consequences of unprotected sex, for example unintended pregnancy, young parenthood, abortion, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- the effect and impact of ignorance, prejudice, discrimination and stigma
- the advice and confidential support available to children and young people including leaflets, websites, help-lines and other health and support services
- how they are able to participate in their own learning.
- the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay.

2. Developing life skills

Young people are entitled to learn and practise key life skills which should include:

- emotional skills – managing emotions confidently, developing empathy for others, building emotional resilience and resourcefulness, developing independence of thought and behaviour.
- social skills – developing and maintaining relationships with others, taking responsibility for their own and others' emotional and sexual health
- communication skills – learning to participate effectively, to listen and ask questions, express emotions, give opinions, challenge and to be challenged
- negotiation skills – resisting peer pressure and ensuring that they get what is best for them, managing and resolving conflict, asking for what they want and not pressurising others
- practical skills – caring for self and others, accessing support and advice
- decision making skills – managing real life dilemmas, assessing risk, making informed choices and being able to act on them.

3. Exploring attitudes and values

By exploring and challenging attitudes and values, children and young people can be helped to develop a positive attitude to sexual health and well-being through:

- developing a positive values and moral framework that will support their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- gaining an understanding of the range of different social, cultural, ethnic and religious frameworks and their value systems

- developing a critical awareness of value systems represented in the media and amongst peers
- recognising that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable
- understanding that sexual intimacy involves strong emotions, and should involve a sense of respect for one's own and others' feeling, decisions and bodies
- understanding that all rights have responsibilities and all actions have consequences
- recognising the value and right to active participation in their learning.

Procedures and Practice

Bellingham Partnership of Schools will focus on the delivery of SRE, in the context of relationships, using a variety of formal and informal opportunities and strategies. This will be achieved by

- allocating designated time within the curriculum, including it as a part of the guidance programme or via occasional off-timetable experiences such as health days, and science
- supporting the training needs of all staff who are expected to deliver SRE
- working in partnership with LEA, school health advisor, parents, Teenage Pregnancy Team, voluntary and statutory youth agencies, such as our Operation Encompass Designated Safeguarding Officer from Northumbria Police, NDAS, and the school nurse.
- Offering year 5 puberty sessions and year 8 contraception sessions with the school nurse.

The content will be delivered by

- establishing a safe learning environment in which open and non-judgmental discussions about sex, sexuality and sexual health can be held
- developing a group agreement to ensure acceptable boundaries for discussion that safeguard young people and professionals
- ensuring that one-to-one work also acknowledges the need for boundaries and supportive frameworks
- respecting the privacy and confidentiality of young people within the boundaries of child protection, and informing young people of these rights
- linking SRE to information about advice services that young people can access
- using a range of strategies including health days and drop-in facilities.

Resources will

- be age appropriate and up to date
- avoid racism, sexism, gender and homophobic stereotyping.
- include positive images of a range of young people
- encourage active and participatory learning methods.

Age 5–10

- At this age children are interested in knowing about love and the different kinds of families and will be more aware of different types of partnerships and relationships.
- Gender stereotypes and homophobia can be explained and challenged.
- They will be curious about puberty and sexual feelings and changing body image.
- They will want more details about conception, how babies develop and are born and why families are important for having babies.
- They will also be interested in knowing about how people can get diseases, including HIV, from sex and how they can be prevented.
- They will also want to know who they can talk to if they want help or advice and information about growing up and personal safety including online.

Age 11–13

- Most young people will be going through puberty and will be interested in hormones, how they will be affected by them, the menstrual cycle, wet dreams, erections, fertility, pregnancy – how it can be avoided, and safer sex. They may also be wondering if their physical development is ‘normal’.
- Young teens also want to know about the difference between sexual attraction and love and whether it is usual to be attracted or in love with someone of the same sex.
- Young people will be asking questions about relationships, when is the right time to have sex, how to avoid pressure, and where they can get more information if they need it, including the best websites.
- Identifying how prejudice operates and being able to play a part in stopping prejudice based on gender identity and sexual orientation is also important.

The needs of children with special educational needs will be met by

- policy and programme involvement for those who teach young people with SEN
- consideration of the needs of each young person
- consultation with appropriate people including parents
- appropriate training for staff working with young people with SEN.

Practice will be reflected on by

- assessing what young people have learnt and understood
- monitoring and evaluating the methods used to deliver SRE to ensure effective future planning.

Confidentiality and Ethical Issues

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Child Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy.

Parents/carers can withdraw young people from non-statutory parts of the curriculum only. If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their son/daughter, the young person would spend time with a teaching assistant.

Consultation

Consultation is an essential part of the programme planning process. Health professionals, youth workers, teaching staff, students, parents and governors have considered and commented on a draft policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Both young people and teachers will be fully involved in evaluation of SRE. Lesson observation and student feedback will be an integral part of the review process. The SRE policy will be reviewed bi-annually.