



St. Matthew's CE Primary School **Sex and Relationship Policy**

Rationale

The contextual starting point for this policy is the Church of England publication 'Valuing All God's Children' (2014) which states:

"Church of England Schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child's fulfilment. We want all pupils to want to engage in learning in a safe and welcoming ethos."

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) provides an excellent forum to provide pupils with life-skills that will enable them to make informed decisions and protect themselves against harmful and exploitative situations. SRE is therefore a tool to safeguard children.

SRE contributes to the foundation of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship and offers a valuable vehicle for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-worth whilst recognising, accepting and respecting differences.

Introduction

Our school's policy on sex and relationship education is based on the DfES document *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*.

In the DfES document, SRE 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'.

Statutory SRE requirements are taught in the Science programme of study. The SRE over and above the statutory requirements, which is decided upon by the Headteacher and governors, forms part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in our school. When we inform our pupils through SRE 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 SRE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

Aims and objectives

Primary Care Trust target is to reduce teenage pregnancy by making sure that all young people receive a planned programme of sex and relationship education, delivered within the PHSE framework.

Good quality SRE should provide consistent messages in an ongoing and progressive framework, which supports children's confidence and self-esteem as they move from childhood to adulthood.

Context

We teach about sex in the context of the school's aims and values framework (see the values statement in the Curriculum Policy). While SRE 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 values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach about sex in the belief that:

- Sex should be taught about in the context of marriage and family life;
- SRE 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

Organisation

- We teach about sex through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main SRE in our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, we also do some SRE through other subject areas (for example, 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.
- 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.
- In science lessons, in both key stages, 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.
- In Year 6 we place a particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. We liaise with the Local Health Authority about suitable teaching materials to use with our children in these lessons. 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.

SRE is delivered in a variety of ways, including:

- Classroom lessons, topics, story time, circle time, discussions, question and answer sessions;
- National Curriculum Science (KS1 and KS2) which covers life processes, including human reproduction and living things;
- Collective worship and assemblies;

Responding to and supporting pupil questions

Questions do occur and it is important that we, as a school, are consistent in our approach. Questions should be handled sensitively and discreetly and should be age-appropriate. On some occasions, referring children to their parent or religious leaders may be appropriate. It may also be more sensitive for staff to discuss a child's questions with their parents privately. Staff need to be aware that once an issue has been aired, questions may continue to occur days and weeks after the topic has been completed. They should prepare to provide continued support for these situations.

The role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's SRE lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. Parents will be informed about the sex and relationships education programme at the start of the academic year, as part of information provided on what their children will be learning which will include curriculum factsheets.

The school will liaise with parents through:

- SRE workshops
 - Newsletters
 - School website
 - Class letter
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- We arrange a meeting for all parents and carers of children in Year 6 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.
 - Answer any questions that parents may have about the SRE of their child;
 - Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for SRE in the school;
 - Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to SRE, 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.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the SRE programme that we teach in our school. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from SRE lessons, they should discuss this with the Headteacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in.

The role of other members of the community

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 SRE programme. Other people that we call on include local clergy, social workers and youth workers.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct SRE 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 Headteacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals (see also our policy on Child Protection).

Children must be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and if their confidentiality has to be broken they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.

The role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our SRE policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach about sex effectively, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Headteacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school SRE 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.

The Headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis, and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

Monitoring

The Governing Body monitors the impact of our SRE policy on an annual basis (or pending new guidance). The Governing Body gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the SRE programme, and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require the Headteacher to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of our SRE programme.

Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible, informed and healthy decisions about their life, both now and in the future.