



Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) Policy

Version 2.03

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SRE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This written statement contains guidelines for teaching SRE within the school. Both the policy and the guidelines should be regularly reviewed and shared between all staff members. The teaching of SRE should fall within the personal, social and moral standards of the school community and reflect the ethos of the school. This policy is also reflected in the Restorative Relationship and Single Equality policies.

It is important to encourage a whole school approach to the teaching of SRE within the personal, social and health education curriculum. This policy introduces a carefully planned programme, where all those who work in or with the school; the staff, the governors, pupils, parents and health professionals can contribute and understand the contents and context of the framework. This policy has been received and endorsed by the School Governing Body.

Rationale:

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. It should encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow pupils to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner, encourages them to take action to minimise risks and inspires them to build robust self esteem. Sex and relationship education is life long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of a loving and caring relationship. It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. Research demonstrates that good comprehensive sex and relationship education does not make young people more likely to become sexually active at a younger age. This policy establishes a holistic approach to the teaching and learning of SRE.

WHY IS SRE IMPORTANT?

Every parent and every school wants to see children grow up safely and be able as an adult to enjoy the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships, to be informed, comfortable with the changes during puberty and emotionally supported. Parents play a vital role in providing the building blocks for healthy and fulfilling social and personal relationships while protecting their children and young people from harm. They should lead on instilling values, but schools have a clear role in giving young people accurate information and helping them to develop the skills they need to make safe and responsible choices.

It is important that children start to build up the vocabulary and confidence to talk openly and positively about emotions, relationships and their bodies. Learning the words to describe feelings and emotions, the correct terms for parts of the body and developing "health literacy" is vital for children to stay safe and seek help if they feel at risk or are being harmed. When cases of sexual abuse have come to light years after the event parents, teachers and young people have spoken of their regret that SRE was started so late and that they/the child was unable to report it because they did not have the language and did not know that what was happening to them was wrong. There is now anecdotal evidence where parents acknowledge their gratitude to SRE in school because their child had had the confidence and language to tell when they have been approached inappropriately rather than after abuse has taken place.

In the 21st Century, children and young people are also exposed to sexual imagery and content in a wide array of media including adverts, the internet, video games, mobile phones, pop songs, TV and magazines. These media often present a distorted and inaccurate view of sex and relationships, and provide increasingly explicit images of sex and sexuality. In addition some children and young people will use the new technology to bully and intimidate others or to place themselves in compromising positions e.g send revealing photos of themselves to girl or boy friends. Far from "destroying their innocence" SRE equips children and young people with the values, skills and knowledge to understand and deal appropriately with these social and cultural pressures.

School provides a safe place for children and young people to make sense of the information they have picked up from the media and also playground myths. Guided by a skilled teacher, children and young people are able to separate facts from fiction and clarify and strengthen their own values.

Some children start puberty as young as eight years old. SRE prepares children for the physical and emotional changes of puberty. Many parents do talk to their children about growing up before puberty starts – but where this is absent some girls describe their fear to see that they were bleeding when their periods started. Boys talk about feeling isolated from discussions which only seem relevant to girls and might turn to other sources of information such as the internet and pornography.

As children approach adolescence so the nature of their relationships with parents, carers and their peers begins to change. They want new experiences and want to form new friendships and relationships. SRE is critical in that it provides accurate information about social norms to correct the myth that "everyone is doing it" and can support young people in resisting pressure. While it is only the minority of young people who first have sex before the age of 16 and, while remaining sensitive to the ethos of the school, it is vital that all young people have information about contraception. Currently approximately half of teenage conceptions end in abortion, indicating that they were unwanted or unintended. Many early sexual encounters are associated with alcohol consumption and coercion and these topics also need to be

addressed. Reference should also be made to KSCB procedures for '*working with sexually active young people*',

http://www.kscb.org.uk/professionals/sexually_active_young_people.aspx

In addition, the school curriculum has a role to play in reducing the likelihood of sexist, sexual, homophobic and transphobic bullying occurring in part through addressing some of the underlying attitudes and values that underpin it. SRE within PSHE education is the most obvious location for specific coverage of issues relating to bullying, gender equality and sexuality..

SRE within PSHE education is an important part of a whole-school approach to pupil well-being. Pupils who are happy in their relationships with peers and adults at school are likely to be better able to learn. By addressing a range of personal and social issues and providing information about where and how to get help, SRE supports pupils who face difficulties to get help and thus helps them to stay on track with learning.

WHAT IS SRE ?

Sex and relationships education (SRE) is learning about our bodies, health and relationships; with a particular focus on puberty and growing up, sexual health, sexual intimacy, dealing with emotions and managing personal relationships.

SRE is taught gradually, so that learning can be built up year-by-year in a way that is appropriate to the age and maturity of each child; responds to the needs they have, and enable them to successfully manage the challenges they face as they grow up.

SRE teaches children and young people to develop values, attitudes, and learn personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding to enable them to make informed decisions and healthier life choices.

SRE makes an essential and significant contribution to safeguarding children and young people during their school-age years and into the future. SRE should enable young people to develop skills and confidence to access professional advice and appropriate health services. It enables children to understand their physical and emotional development and enable young people to take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and that of others.

SRE has three main elements:

Values and attitudes

Because of the personal and social nature of the topics covered in SRE, **values and attitudes** are a central part of learning and moral development. There are clear values that underpin SRE including:

- mutual respect,
- the value of family life, marriage and of loving and stable relationships in bringing up children
- rights and responsibilities, for self and others
- commitment to safety and wellbeing
- gender equality
- acceptance of diversity, and
- that violence and coercion in relationships are unacceptable

Children and young people should be supported to identify and develop these values as they progress through their school years. For example;

- the importance of fairness, equity and caring for one another is introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- friendships is a central thread of primary SRE
- the importance of respect and consent in intimate relationships is developed at secondary level

The values in SRE are consistent with the values underpinning the National Curriculum, which aims to enable all children and young people to become:

successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;

confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, and

responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society,

and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners.

Throughout SRE (both in discrete lessons and in other curriculum areas) children and young people benefit from opportunities to identify and reflect on their own values and those of others including their peers. SRE in school provides a safe environment for this exploration and development of positive attitudes. Teachers are able to facilitate discussion while maintaining the underpinning values listed above as a central reference point.

Knowledge and understanding

SRE should also increase pupils' **knowledge and understanding** at appropriate stages by:

- learning and understanding emotional and physical development
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning how to resist unwelcome pressures to be sexually active
- learning how to avoid unplanned pregnancy and STIs including learning about contraception and infection avoidance
- learning about pregnancy and the choices available
- learning about the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services available
- understanding the legal aspects of sexual behaviour
- learning about the links between sexual health and alcohol
- understanding the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships
- learning about the impact of coercion and violence and understanding that consent is critical.

Personal and social skills

As well as knowing facts, it is important that children and young people develop **personal and social skills** to make informed decisions and life choices, including:

- learning to identify their own emotions and those of others
- managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- communicating openly and respectfully about sex and relationships
- making and carrying out decisions
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- coping with and resisting unwelcome peer pressure
- managing conflict
- learning how to identify risk,
- recognising and avoiding exploitation and abuse, and
- asking for help and accessing advice and services.

WHERE AND HOW WILL SRE BE TAUGHT?

Harbour Specialist School specifically delivers Sex and Relationship Education through its PSHE Programme, RE and Science lessons at KS1, KS2, KS3, and KS4.

Much of the Sex and Relationship Education at Harbour Specialist School takes place within PSHE lessons. Teaching staff deliver the PSHE Curriculum with support from professionals where appropriate. Teaching staff work closely with their pupils over a number of years and we believe that they are usually the best people to work with the students on many of the SRE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. SRE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Science Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

Any SRE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

SRE is made up of all the experiences from which we acquire knowledge, attitudes, values and skills. These come from planned or unplanned sources from family, school, peers, community and the media. Within school pupils will experience sex education from a planned programme but also individual questions and incidents will be dealt with as they arise.

At Harbour Specialist School we appreciate that pupils are at different developmental levels, even within the same year group, and so their understanding and sex education needs will vary a great deal.

A whole school policy towards health and sex education is important, where sex education will be matched to the pupils' developmental stage.

The school's 'hidden curriculum' has an important part to play in sex education for all pupils, reflecting the caring ethos of the school. Its transmission is the responsibility of all staff members.

Effective support for each member of staff will be achieved by a clear commitment from the senior staff and through a Subject Co-ordinator and also through communication with other agencies and professionals together with good liaison with parents and the community.

Sex education will be taught using a wide variety of teaching and learning approaches. These can be divided into two areas:

Firstly, those which emphasise active participation of pupils and use the pupils' own experiences and resources, such as;

- Small and large group work.
- Role play
- Simulations & games
- Projects and research
- Debate
- Peer counselling.

Secondly, those which draw on external sources, such as;

- Films, T.V., video and media
- Worksheets & posters
- Visitors
- Off-site visits
- Courses.

Sex and health education needs to incorporate work that extends knowledge, explores attitudes and develops skills related to the relevant issues.

ISSUES RELATING TO SEX EDUCATION

Often arise unplanned and spontaneous, which must be dealt with straight away by the member of staff on hand. When dealing with these incidents staff need to give support through a consistent message based on the following principles.

- To challenge inappropriate behaviour and views between peers and to ensure that there is no gender bias.
- To assert the rights and responsibilities of individuals.
- To work within a restorative framework.
- To work closely with parents and other support agencies.
- To record and monitor inappropriate behaviour.
- To use relevant and appropriate language when communicating with pupils.
- To support other members of staff.
- To counsel, support and advise pupils when and where appropriate, for instance as pupil experience puberty.
- To review curriculum materials.

Working with Parents

It is very important to work closely with parents in all aspects of sex education both in the taught curriculum and the unplanned questions and incidents. Parents' views, beliefs and family backgrounds should be taken into account and the staff, particularly the senior leadership team, should always be prepared to discuss any problems.

The Subject Co-ordinator will notify parents at the prior to the teaching of the SRE topics that will be covered that term so that parents can support the learning or discuss any concerns or issues that arise.

The Parental Right to Withdraw their Son or Daughter from SRE Lessons:

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order. It is accepted that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents and carers may wish to withdraw their children from this programme. In this case, such parents should contact the PSHE Coordinator, stating their objections. The schemes of work contained within this document will enable parents to estimate the point at which specific aspects of sex education will be delivered to their child. The biological element of reproduction remains within the National Curriculum Science

(DfE Draft Guidance 2010)

Confidentiality and child protection:

All staff members and external visitors who work with our pupils will be given a copy of this policy and our School's Child Protection Policy. The School's Child Protection Officer will have a discussion with any health professional or other adult before they start to work with our children to ensure they are familiar with our policy and expectations regarding correct practice and how to respond to issues, including those that may relate to Child Protection matters. We make clear to pupils what our procedures are with regard to confidentiality. All staff work within the guidelines of our Confidentiality Policy. Teachers, schools nurses and outside visitors who are involved in the delivery of SRE will set out clear boundaries which encourage discussion but make clear what will happen if a child or young person makes a disclosure that causes concern. If this does happen, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

APPROVAL & ADOPTION

This policy was formally approved and adopted at a Children's Team Meeting held on:

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

UPDATE SCHEDULE

<u>Version</u>	Date	Reason for Update
2.0	July 07	Review of Policy
2.01	July 12	Complete Revision of Whole Policy
2.02	Sep. 13	Revision and updated in line with DfE Guidance
2.03	July 18	Review of Policy