

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Rationale

At The Blue School, we believe that effective Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is essential if our pupils, as they grow, are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It contributes to promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional, mental and physical development of our pupils, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We understand that there is a statutory requirement for us to have in place such a policy compiled by the School Governors.

Definition of Sex and Relationship Education

Sex and Relationship Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of making and maintaining a stable marriage or relationship. We recognise that to be human is to experience sexual feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships, which may be physical or non-physical. Our teaching of sex and relationship education is applicable to all sexual orientations and will include teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

SRE seeks to enable young people to feel positive about themselves, manage relationships and access the infrastructure of support available.

Aims and Objectives

At The Blue School we aim to provide our pupils with an age appropriate SRE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. It should enable them to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. We seek to achieve this aim by having three main elements to our programme as outlined in '*Sex and Relationship Guidance*', DfE,

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; and
- 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; and
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay; and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

We believe that SRE will be achieved by providing an environment and atmosphere where pupils feel safe, relaxed, not intimidated, but focussed; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of their teachers.

Moral Framework

Pupils will be taught SRE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- Being honest with themselves and others
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others
- Acknowledging the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in sexual relationships
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for the upbringing of children
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation
- Having self-discipline regarding their sexuality.

Working With Parents

The school is committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers who are the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships. We encourage parents and carers to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through HSE activities. We ask that they are vigilant and responsive to concerns relating to inappropriate material available or viewed on-line.

A parent or carer, who is concerned about any element of this policy, or is unhappy about their child's participation, should discuss their feelings with the Pastoral Team Leader. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of those aspects of the SRE programme which are NOT part of the statutory National Curriculum Science Orders. We strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of their education. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take.

Content and Organisation

Aspects of SRE are encompassed within the ethos of the school and may be delivered through:

- Core and foundation subjects
- Assembly time
- Tutorial periods
- Collapsed timetable mornings
- Theatre in Education visits
- Project/theme lessons

The SRE programme will be delivered by:

- Class Teachers/Tutors
- The School Nurse (or other specified visitor/s or agency) and other health professionals.

Occasionally, issues about SRE may arise spontaneously in other lessons (eg while studying English Literature) where it is not the main focus of the lesson. This is not considered to be part of the planned SRE programme and parents or carers cannot withdraw pupils in these circumstances.

The overview and co-ordination of the resources is the responsibility of the PSHEC Co-ordinator/Manager in the school. The Senior Management Team will always identify staff who have the appropriate skills, qualities and knowledge to teach the more sensitive and contentious aspects of SRE. Continuous professional development and training will always be provided to ensure a high level of expertise for teachers involved in delivering the SRE programme in the school.

Equal Opportunities

SRE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual references. Prejudiced views will be challenged and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the anti-bullying policy and the behaviour policy.

Personal Beliefs

The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence their teaching of SRE

Language and Ground Rules in Lessons

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles may be discussed; this will accompany a discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box; this will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified;;
- making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Students will be involved in the negotiation/setting of these rules. Distancing techniques will also help to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of information. These may include case studies, role play and speaking in the third person.

Dealing with difficult questions

We have a variety of strategies for dealing with difficult questions. For example:

- if a question is too explicit or is inappropriate, the teacher will attend to it later, on an individual basis and a decision will be taken whether or not to inform the child's parents/carers;
- if a child makes a disclosure that causes the teacher concern then they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

'Schools must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy should ensure good practice throughout the school which both pupils and parents understand. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.'

('Sex and Relationship Education Guidance', DfEE, Ref 0016/2000. p.30)

Whenever a pupil makes a disclosure, they will be advised to talk to their parents or carers. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the School will encourage this as much as possible.

Information about local advice and support is available to pupils through designated health notice boards, in student toilets, where everyone can see it in private. Support is also offered through the following services at school

- i) Counselling Service.
- (ii) Drop-in clinic
- (iii) School staff.

Staff **must** follow child protection guidelines. Members of staff who are not health care professionals must not give individual contraceptive advice. It is also appropriate to remind students of information about access to support that is available in the school or has been outlined in lessons. These actions (suggesting that students see specific members of staff or reminding them of information) do not involve a requirement to inform parents/carers unless there is a concern for the young person's safety or vulnerability within the relationship. Similarly, as students under 16 are able to access doctors or clinics for contraceptive advice, where a member of staff advises students to seek medical advice at a GP's surgery or clinic there is not a

requirement to inform parents/carers. However, students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer and will be supported in so doing. In each circumstance the best interests of the young person will be seen as paramount.

Advice and treatment

Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the School's SRE provision. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex.

Staff who are approached by pupils with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease will seek advice from the DSL.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SRE policy is monitored and evaluated through a review process at least every two years.