

Bilbrook Church of England Middle School Sex and Relationships Education policy

Introduction

Schools are key settings in the promotion of positive relationships and sexual health, and the prevention of teenage pregnancies. The role of education and prevention is a major focus of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (1999). The main aims of this strategy are to:

- Achieve a 50% reduction in teenage pregnancies in England by 2010
- Increase the participation of teenage mothers in education, training and work to reduce the risk of long term social exclusion

DCFS guidance on sex and relationship education (July 2000 DfES) states that all schools must have an up to date policy which is reviewed regularly. Governing bodies and head teachers should consult parents in developing their policy to ensure that they reflect parents' wishes and the culture of the community they serve. The policy should be a working document that describes the process and the provision for SRE and support for vulnerable young people.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is an integral part of PSHE (personal, social and health education) and citizenship, and a component of the National Curriculum Science Orders. Aspects of relationships are also covered in RE in both key stages. OFSTED inspectors consider whether the school;

- Is working to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for PSHE and citizenship
- Ensures that pupils are developing confidence and responsibility, making the most of their abilities, preparing to play an active role as citizens, developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
- Has an up to date SRE policy (which may be part of the PSHE policy)
- Meets statutory requirements in relation to SRE and drug education
- Is accredited or working towards Healthy Schools status
- Has a member of staff who has gained the DCFS 'Certificate in the Teaching of PSHE'
- Is contributing to the five national outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'

Context

Bilbrook Middle is a mixed school that opened in 1976 and is part of a three-tier pyramid. The age of the pupils ranges from nine to thirteen. The school serves an area which has pockets of social deprivation and this is reflected in the social needs of our pupils. The school, in partnership with Lane Green First School, has extended services on site to cater for the health and social needs of many of our pupils as a necessary precondition for their effective learning. In our school we have a commitment to ensure that our Sex and Relationships Education programme is relevant to all pupils and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate.

The development of the policy

The policy has been developed by the Deputy Headteacher in consultation with the school's leadership team, the Head of Science, the Head of Religious Education, the School Health Adviser, officers from the Local Authority, and school governors. There has been consultation with parents and pupils.

Parental rights

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from SRE lessons that fall outside those aspects covered in the National Curriculum science lessons. Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their children, but will be made aware of the implications of removing children.

Our school seeks to work in partnership with parents to provide effective SRE and support for pupils. Parents need to know that the school's SRE programme will complement and support their role as parents and that they can be actively involved in the determination of the school's policy.

Aims for Sex and Relationships Education

SRE is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment in which pupils can develop their feelings of self worth and confidence, especially in relationships with others
- To enable pupils to develop the following areas of knowledge and skills in the context of sex and relationships:
 - valuing themselves as unique individuals
 - keeping themselves and others healthy and safe
 - communication
 - decision making and assertiveness
 - knowing how and where to gain information and support
 - participating in society
 - respecting the differences between people

These aims are supported by the school environment and ethos, where all are valued and encouraged, positive relationships are modeled and encouraged, and there is a secure school environment which is conducive to learning.

SRE curriculum

In our school we focus on teaching SRE in the context of relationships using a variety of formal and informal opportunities and strategies. This helps pupils to develop their self-esteem and emotional well being, and to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, which are based on respect for themselves and for others.

SRE is firmly rooted within the non-statutory framework for PSHE and citizenship, the statutory curriculum for science, and the delivery of Religious Education. It is not delivered in isolation. Many opportunities exist throughout the curriculum for promoting SRE. The programme is developmental and builds on young people's existing knowledge, experience and perceptions. There is progression across key stages.

Consideration is given to pupil's needs, ethnic origin and culture. The programme demonstrates educational inclusion in respect of the new OfSTED framework.

The Programme of Study

The programme has 3 main elements:

- gaining knowledge and understanding
- developing positive attitudes and values
- extending personal and social skills.

The programme will include:

Knowledge and understanding:

- That life processes common to humans and other animals include growth and reproduction
- The main stages of human life
- The physical changes that take place at puberty, why they happen and how to manage them
- The many relationships in which they are involved
- Where individual families and groups can find help
- How to keep safe in risky activities
- That actions have consequences and being able to anticipate outcomes

- Different forms of bullying, and the feelings of bullies and victims
- Diversity of lifestyles and the wide range of family arrangements
- Diversity of values and customs in the school and in the community
- The need for trust and love in established relationships

Skills and attributes:

- Expressing opinions, for instance about relationships and bullying
- Listening to and supporting others
- Respect for the points of view and beliefs of other people
- Recognising their changing emotions with friends and family, and being able to express their feelings positively
- Identifying adults they can trust and who they can ask for help
- Being self confident in a wide range of new situations, such as seeking new friends
- Form opinions that they can articulate to a variety of audiences
- Recognising their own self worth and identifying positive things about themselves
- Balancing the stresses of life in order to promote both their own mental health and well-being and that of others
- Seeing things from people people's point of view, for instance their parents and carers
- Discuss moral issues
- Listen to and support their friends and manage friendship problems
- Recognise and challenge stereotypes, for example in relation to gender
- Recognise the pressure of unwanted physical contact, and know ways of resisting it

Assessment

Assessment in SFE should be active and participatory, helping pupils to recognise the progress they are making in developing skills and taking part, as well as in their knowledge and understanding. A range of activities can be undertaken to form the basis of assessment, including:

- Speaking and listening
- Role play and games
- Drawing and writing
- Resolving conflicts
- Making safe and healthy choices
- Assessing risk
- Writing letters and replies to 'agony' columns

Assessment will follow the procedures of the individual subjects delivering the various aspects of the programme, ie PSHE and citizenship, science and RE.

Teaching and learning styles

It is essential that SRE is delivered in a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. We believe that the following elements are essential to ensure this:

- The establishment of clear ground rules, understood by all, covering confidentiality, right to privacy and respect, and boundaries
- The use of distancing techniques, including depersonalised discussions, role play and theatre in education
- The use of clear language that avoids misunderstandings, prejudice and assumptions about children and young people's abilities, desires, background and experiences
- The ability to deal with unexpected questions, comments from pupils and sensitive issues

Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships through a carefully planned and constructed SRE curriculum. The core principles of teaching and learning in SRE are:

- To ensure that every pupil succeeds through the provision of an inclusive education within a culture of high expectations

- To build on pupils' knowledge and experiences: teaching is structured and paced to ensure pupils understand what is being taught and how
- To ensure that learning is vivid and real, developing understanding through enquiry, group discussion and problem-solving
- To provide a range of opportunities for pupils to learn, practise and demonstrate skills, attitudes and knowledge
- To make learning enjoyable and challenging with teaching techniques and strategies matched to a range of learning styles and needs
- To promote assessment for learning; making pupils partners in their own learning and allowing time for reflection and consolidation
- To ensure that staff training needs are identified and met to enable them to meet these principles

Responding to sensitive issues and supporting pupils

There are guidelines for staff on confidentiality and handling sensitive and controversial issues and supporting young people. The school uses the DfES (2000) guidelines for handling sensitive issues. These guidelines are made available to the staff who deliver any aspect of the Sex and Relationships Education programme. The guidelines cover issues such as: teaching about sexuality; gender and the needs of boys and girls; religious and cultural beliefs; homophobic bullying; confidentiality; dealing with inappropriate sexual behaviour; provision for girl's periods; referring pupils for specialist support; handling the media. However, if a member of staff feels uncomfortable about teaching any of these issues then other arrangements are made to deliver those aspects of the programme.

Teachers and other adults involved in SRE will sometimes hear disclosures that suggest a child may be at risk of abuse. It is essential that all are aware of the school's child protection policy and inform the headteacher, as the designated teacher for child protection of any concerns relating to an individual pupil.

As part of the school pastoral programme, the school will endeavour to identify and support those pupils who are more vulnerable to social problems. Additional support can be provided by the Inclusion Manager.

The school believes that there should be minimum disruption to the schooling/learning of pupils who are pregnant or have given birth. It would be very unusual for this situation to occur with this age group of pupils, and in the unlikely event of it occurring the school would take advice from the Education Welfare Service and other agencies such as Social Services.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of the policy

Responsibility for monitoring the aspects delivered through the various subjects lies with the subject leader, specifically science, PSHE and RE.

Over-all monitoring, evaluation and review of the effectiveness of the policy lies with the deputy headteacher, the leadership team and the governors.

Appendix

Key documents and sources of advise

Sex and Relationship Education guidance, issued by DfEE in July 2000
www.dfes.gov.uk/sreguidance

SRE and Parents, leaflet for parents including information about their right to withdraw their child from SRE
www.dfes.gov.uk/sreandparents

Sex and Relationships Education: Support for School Governors factsheet produced by the National Children's Bureau
www.ncb.org.uk/resources

OfSTED report on Education about Sex and Relationships
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications

DfES Anti-Bullying Pack – 'Don't Suffer in Silence'
www.dfes.gov.uk

Useful Web Sites:

Sex Education Forum
www.ncb.org.uk/sef

National Children's Bureau
www.ncb.org.uk

Teacher Net
www.teachernet.gov.uk

Wired For Health
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

QCA
www.qca.org.uk/7835.html

Teenage Pregnancy Unit
www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/dsp_Content.cfm?PageID=85