

Sex and relationship education policy

Introduction

The School recognises its responsibility to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of its pupils. It aims to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adolescence and adult life.

It seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment which, in partnership with parents and the wider community, will enable pupils to learn about moral, physical and emotional development.

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

This policy is underpinned by the stated school aim that each individual is encouraged to behave in a natural, happy and responsible way and to be mindful of the needs of others.

The Aims of SRE

1. What is Sex and Relationship Education?

It has three main elements:

1. Attitudes and values
2. Personal and social skills
3. Knowledge and understanding

It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It prepares children for the changes and challenges of puberty and allows them to consider the responsibilities of adulthood. It also teaches about reproduction and sexual health but does not promote early sexual activity.

2. Why should it be taught in school?

SRE begins at a very early age and, while much of it is learnt from parents, it is also received from friends, books, magazines, television, internet, music, films and so on. Some of this information can be incorrect, confusing or frightening. SRE in school provides a secure framework and environment in which pupils can be given the facts using appropriate materials. It also allows them to develop necessary personal skills and a positive attitude to sexual health and well-being.

Wide ranging research has shown that children want information about changes and situations they will experience before they happen to them. A structured programme in school increases the probability of this being achieved. Also, although children want to be able to discuss sex and relationships with their parents, many parents and children prefer the school to take a lead and provide a springboard for the discussion. A partnership between home and school and open dialogue between parent and child are the ideal.

3. What does the School want SRE to do for the pupils?

SRE will

Bluewater Sex and Relationships Policy

- a. provide information which is easy to understand and relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children
- b. include the development of communication and social skills
- c. encourage the exploration and clarification of values and the development of positive attitudes

Through SRE we want to ensure that the children

- d. develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings, friendships and relationships
- e. are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work
- f. can protect themselves and ask for help and support
- g. are prepared for puberty
- h. learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children

In the Senior School we want pupils to

- i. develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- j. understand the law regarding the age of consent and the arguments for delaying sexual activity to maturity and within a loving, responsible relationship
- k. understand the reasons for protected sex and avoiding casual sex
- l. understand sexual orientation whilst not promoting it
- m. understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- n. have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- o. communicate effectively
- p. have sufficient skills and information to be able to protect themselves

4. How does it fit into the school curriculum?

SRE is not taught in isolation. It is rooted in the PSHE programme and the Science curriculum and it is supported by the whole School's ethos. Discrete lessons each year are allocated to enable specific aspects of the SRE syllabus to be taught and discussed.

Organisation and Planning

1. The Head of Senior School is responsible for the SRE scheme of work and for monitoring its delivery.
2. The majority of SRE is taught through Science lessons. Where any of this information or these topics are introduced through the SRE syllabus earlier than the year designated by the Science syllabus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the lessons.

The Science National Curriculum requires that children are taught:

- that animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans and other animals
- that humans and other animals can produce offspring and that these offspring grow into adults

Bluewater Sex and Relationships Policy

- to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to treat others with sensitivity

In Years 3 to 6 the following concepts are revisited as part of the Science curriculum:

- that the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- about the main stages of the human life cycle

In Years 7 and 8 the following concepts are revisited:

- that fertilization in humans... is the fusion of a male and a female cell
- about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- how the foetus develops in the uterus
- how the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health.

3. PSHE and Citizenship links provide teaching opportunities for many of the elements of SRE.

In PSHE the four areas of study are:

- Developing confidence and responsibility and 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.

Through PSHE studies pupils develop

- Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens
- Skills of enquiry and communication
- Skills of participation and responsible action

4. The School is committed to using the best teaching materials and to providing appropriate training and support for staff. The Head of PSHE and Subject Leaders are responsible for monitoring training needs and for researching and providing appropriate resources.

Teaching strategies

The School is committed to employing active learning methods which involve children's full participation. It is essential that schools can help children develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships.

- Ground rules help to create a safe environment for both teacher and pupil. They should be established with each class before SRE lessons commence. (see examples in syllabus)
- Distancing techniques help to avoid embarrassment and protect privacy. Role play, case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, etc can help children to discuss issues in a depersonalised, safe environment.

Bluewater Sex and Relationships Policy

- Dealing with questions. Teachers must be supported and prepared for the unexpected. e.g.
 - a) the ground rules should be referred to if a question is too personal
 - b) if a teacher does not know the answer to a question they should acknowledge this and research it later
 - c) if a teacher feels that a question is too explicit, is too advanced for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge the question and promise to deal with it on an individual basis. The teacher will inform parents about any issue or question that he/she feels needs to be followed up at home.
 - d) if a teacher is concerned that a child is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's Child Protection policy
 - e) Discussion and reflection should be a part of the SRE lessons. Active learning ensures opportunities for considering beliefs and attitudes and for developing greater understanding.

Watching a video or reading written material must be used only to support or to complement wider structured activities.

Factual information in written form may be useful for the pupils to have for future reference.

Working with Parents

Parents are the key people in:

- Teaching their children about sex and relationships
- Maintaining the culture and ethos of the family
- Helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up
- Preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

Parents need to know that the personal beliefs and attitudes of the teachers will not influence the teaching of SRE. Teachers will work within the guidelines of this policy and the scheme of work.

The school will provide support for parents through sharing with them the school's SRE programme contents and by working with the PTA to invite external speakers to contribute to the parent education programme. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the SRE provided at school except for those parts included in the Science syllabus. The school will make alternative arrangements for pupils in such cases.

Confidentiality

The best interests of the child are our main concern. Children have a right to expect school to be a safe and secure environment. Teachers need to be aware that effective SRE can lead to disclosures from children that may be a child protection issue.

Key points:

- The school has in place a Child Protection policy and a Confidentiality policy.
- Teachers cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will the school handle information without parental knowledge
- Children will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers. If a teacher has to pass information on to parents, the child will be informed first and supported as appropriate.
- Any visitor from an outside agency involved with pupils in SRE will be made aware of the confidentiality rules and whom to approach on the staff with concerns.