

# Sex and Relationships Education Policy

## **The Legal Position**

In accordance with the Learning and Skills Act 2001 through SRE students learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the raising of children. Also pupils are protected from teaching materials that would be considered inappropriate when bearing in mind the age, religion and culture of the pupils.

## **The Right to Withdraw**

Any parent has the right to withdraw their daughter from all or part of the SRE programme delivered in this school except those parts of the programme that are covered by the National Curriculum Science. Parents wishing to exercise this right can indicate this in the letter given to all parents on admission.

## **1. Mission Statement**

We at Coombe Boys' School believe that it is the responsibility of a good school to help pupils develop into responsible and caring adults able to contribute positively to society. Sex and Relationships Education is a key factor in helping young people make affirming and responsible relationships and choices.

### **2. a. What is SRE?**

SRE is the name now used to encompass Sex Education, Birth Education and many aspects of the PSHE curriculum involved with the ways in which individuals relate to each other.

### **b. Why teach SRE?**

#### **The evidence base for Sex and Relationship Education**

In developing the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy the Social Exclusion Unit commissioned a review of the evidence as to what works in SRE. This review provides a research base from which to develop SRE for all children and young people. The conclusions of the review are reflected in both the whole school approach promoted by the NHSS, and in the NHSS minimum criteria for SRE. Conclusions of the overview of effectiveness of interventions and programmes aimed at reducing unintended conceptions in young people clearly indicate that high quality sex and relationship education should:

- empower pupils;
- offer a positive and open view of sex and sexuality, and support sexual self acceptance;
- be well linked to contraceptive services;
- be sustained by working within a theoretical framework;
- meet local needs;
- ensure the entitlement of all children to sex and relationship education and undertake specific work to meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised children and young people;

- be provided early; before puberty, before feelings of sexual attraction and before they develop sexual relationships;
- reinforce value messages;
- focus on risk reduction;
- use active learning and participatory techniques;
- ensure that children and young people have a critical awareness of the messages that are portrayed in the media

### **3. Aims**

Our sex and Relationships programme aims to prepare young people for a future in which they:

- have developed positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- are aware of their sexuality and understand human sexuality
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others, and to have respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationships they want
- communicate effectively
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and where they have one, their partner, from unintended and unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others
- avoid being pressurised into having unwanted or unprotected sex
- get confidential sexual health advice, support and if necessary treatment
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

### **4. Objectives**

**Objectives of our SRE programme are:**

- to generate an atmosphere where questions of a sexual nature can be asked and answered openly without embarrassment and trust and confidentiality are ensured
- to enable pupils to develop knowledge, communication skills and understanding in order to facilitate personal decision-making
- to enable pupils to understand the impact of external factors, such as the media, Internet, peer groups and remain independent decision-makers
- to enable pupils to develop the ability to form positive, non-exploitative relationships
- to enable pupils to be aware of personal, psychological, emotional and physical changes in themselves and others

- to enable pupils to understand the process of human reproduction
- to emphasise the role and the value of family life
- to enable pupils to know what is and what is not legal in matters relating to sexual activity
- to inform pupils of where they can go for further information and advice.

## **5. Values Framework**

Sex and relationships education is always taught with due regard to moral and legal considerations and with the explicit values of family life and supportive relationships. It is taught by experienced staff specifically trained in this aspect of education.

**Among the values promoted are:**

- respect for oneself and other people
- taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- honesty and loyalty in relationships
- the importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members
- sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour
- to recognise and accept the differences of others.'

## **6. How the objectives are achieved.**

In line with recognised good practice for SRE our programme will address the three areas:

### **1. Skills**

If SRE is going to be effective it needs to include opportunities for young people to develop skills, as it can be hard for them to act on the basis of only having information. The kinds of skills young people develop as part of SRE are linked to more general life-skills and will be common to other areas of the PSHE curriculum. For example, being able to communicate, listen, negotiate, ask for and identify sources of help and advice, are useful life-skills and can be applied in terms of sexual relationships. Effective SRE develops young people's skills in:

- negotiation
- making choices based on probable outcomes
- assertion
- listening
- recognising pressures from other people and to how to resist them,
- dealing with and challenging prejudice,
- seeking help from adults - including parents, carers and professionals - through the family, community and health and welfare services.
- differentiating between accurate and inaccurate information,
- discussing a range of moral and social issues and perspectives on sex and sexuality, including different cultural attitudes and sensitive issues like sexuality, abortion and contraception.

## **2. Attitudes and beliefs**

Young people can be exposed to a wide range of attitudes and beliefs in relation to sex and sexuality. These sometimes appear contradictory and confusing. Young people are very interested in the moral and cultural framework that binds sex and sexuality. They often welcome opportunities to talk about issues where people have strong views, At Coombe we are always aware that talking in a balanced way about differences in opinion does not promote one set of views over another, or mean that one agrees with a particular view. Part of exploring and understanding cultural, religious and moral views is finding out that you can agree to disagree.

Effective sex education also provides young people with an opportunity to explore the reasons why people have sex, and to think about how it involves emotions, respect for one self and other people and their feelings, decisions and bodies. Young people should have the chance to explore gender differences and how ethnicity and sexuality can influence people's feelings and options. They should be able to decide for themselves what the positive qualities of relationships are. It is important that they understand how bullying, stereotyping, abuse and exploitation can negatively influence relationships.

## **3. Knowledge and Understanding**

Young people get information about sex and sexuality from a wide range of sources including each other, through the media including advertising, television and magazines, as well as leaflets, books and websites which are intended to be sources of information about sex and sexuality. Providing information through SRE is therefore about finding out what young people already know and adding to their existing knowledge and correcting any misinformation they may have.

Information is also important as the basis on young people can develop well-informed attitudes and views about sex and sexuality.

They need to have information about the physical and emotional effects of relationships and sexual behaviour for themselves and others. In terms of information about relationships they need to know about what kinds of relationships there are, about love and commitment, marriage and partnership and the law relating to sexual behaviour and relationships as well as the range of religious and cultural views on sex, sexuality and sexual diversity. In addition, young people should be provided with information about the range of sources of advice and support that is available in the community and nationally.

## **7. Delivery of SRE**

### **a. SRE Curriculum**

SRE is delivered as part of the PSHE programme in years 7-9 and through discreet days in Years 10 & 11 and as part of the cross-curricular PSHE provision at KS4

Key themes such as

- safety
- growth and change
- the law
- conception and birth
- families
- views of marriage and rites of passage
- people who help us
- sources of information and their accuracy
- peer groups and their effects on individual choice
- sexual health issues
- will be revisited throughout the programme and will be developed in line with the student's developing maturity and understanding.

b. SRE is delivered using a variety of learning approaches and teaching methods which encourage pupils to participate, question and communicate. This includes use of videos, posters, leaflets, books, the internet, brainstorming, small group discussion, art and display work, case studies, role play, guest speakers, line continuums, debates, pupils carrying out their own research etc.

c. Agreed ground rules will be displayed for everyone to see during SRE sessions. Ground rules will also be periodically reviewed to evaluate how well the group is working and changed if necessary.

d. Pupils are never encouraged to discuss their own sexual behaviour or experiences. SRE should usually be carried out in the 'third person'

#### **e. Whole school Ethos**

Many of the areas covered by the SRE programme (see appendix 1 for a full outline) such as respect for individuals and self are demonstrated throughout the school. These form part of the Whole School Ethos, which seeks to present pupils with positive role models through:

Management of behaviour

Marking policy

School environment

Display

#### **f. Cross Curricular Elements**

Whilst SRE forms a part of the Science Curriculum, many themes are explored through a range of subject areas. These are always done in accordance with

the schools SRE policy and provide another way of exploring relationships and sexuality.

The skills element of the SRE curriculum is taught through all subject areas as a normal part of teaching and learning within the school.

Books are available for young people to read in the library illustrating a range of areas of the SRE curriculum and reflecting the relationships of young people today. All such books are carefully screened to ensure their suitability for the age of students and their material.

Provision of a range of appropriate books and leaflets about SRE topics are available in the school library.

Posters are displayed in prominent locations about local helping services and helplines.

Pupils have access to appropriate internet information websites

'One off' talks and workshops are provided as part of the programme run by staff of local support organisations.

Health information 'clinics' on the school site run by the school nurse/local youth workers/young people's services.

#### **g. Differentiated learning**

Staff planning and delivering SRE always consider differentiated learning when choosing activities. Pupils will have different abilities based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, literacy levels and learning difficulties. Differentiated learning can be in terms of:

- outcome - a task for all which the group can achieve at their own level;
- extension of activities - for example, a group which has finished first can be given a further activity to increase their understanding;
- support on the task, for instance an extra member of staff to read out instructions;
- different resources - active learning techniques allow the teacher to manage more than one activity at a time;
- grouping by ability - this may be by ability or by mixed ability.

#### **h. Who delivers?**

SRE is best led by teachers and other identified staff members rather than by visitors. Teachers develop relationships with pupils and are accessible on an ongoing basis to follow up any questions they subsequently have.

### **8. Specific issues statements**

#### **a. Using Outside Speakers**

**‘Visitors should complement but never substitute for or replace planned provision. It is the PSHE co-ordinator’s and teacher’s responsibility to plan the curriculum and lessons’.**

**DfEE ‘Sex and Relationship Education Guidance’, 2000.**

Outside speakers and facilitators can greatly enrich SRE and support the programme.

Inputs and support is sometimes provided by:

- school nurse
- local youth worker
- local doctor
- local clinic and community nurse, health visitors and midwives
- sexual health, HIV/ AIDS and/or STI specialist workers
- parents/carers
- other adults in the local community
- theatre groups.

When working with outside speakers and facilitators a partnership approach is used, though the school remains responsible for the situation. In particular:

- Teachers will clearly explain the ethos and approach of the SRE programme to visitors.
- The input of visitors will be integrated into the programme and jointly planned with teachers.
- The approach used by visitors will complement the philosophy and aims of the school programme.
- In most cases teachers will be present, so that they can follow up the input with pupils at a later stage.
- Visitors should have experience and expertise in SRE and working with young people or should at least be comfortable working with them.
- Visitors should be able to offer something specific and useful that teachers cannot.
- Pupils will be told that visitors are coming in beforehand and spend time preparing for the session e.g. discussing with them what they will be doing, deciding what questions they want to ask them etc.

#### **b. The role of parents**

The most effective SRE acknowledges the different contributions a range of agencies and settings can make. Schools’ programmes which involve parents, notifying them what is being taught and when, can support the initiation of dialogue at home. Parents and schools both need to engage with young people about the messages that they get from the media, and give them opportunities for discussion. Therefore parents will be informed and supported to understand the programme delivered at Coombe and the part parents can play in this.

Different settings provide different contexts and opportunities for SRE. At home, young people can easily have one-to-one discussions with parents or carers which focus on specific issues, questions or concerns. They can have a dialogue about their attitudes and views. Sex education at home also tends to take place over a long time, and involve lots of short interactions between parents and their children. Healthy Schools have an important role to play in helping and supporting parents to talk to their children and we do so by providing workshops, a resource and video library and information and guidance.

#### **c. Confidentiality**

This should be linked to the school's broader policy on confidentiality. Staff should reassure students that their interests will be maintained, encourage them to talk to parents/carers, ensure that students know that teachers cannot guarantee complete confidentiality but that students will know first if it must be broken and should ensure that students are informed of sources of confidential advice.

#### **d. Child protection**

This should be linked to the school's broader policy on child protection. Effective SRE may often bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns. Schools should have a child protection policy that includes procedures on what to do if a member of staff is accused of abuse and a senior member of staff with responsibility for child protection.

#### **e. Disclosures**

If a member of staff learns that an under 16 years old is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity schools should ensure that:

- The young person is encouraged to talk to their parent/carer
- Child protection issues are addressed appropriately
- The young person receives adequate counselling & information
- Only in exceptional circumstances should schools handle information without parental knowledge.
- Head teachers & governors should monitor the frequency of cases where they handle information without parental knowledge.

#### **f. Dealing with Questions**

Clear parameters of what is appropriate & inappropriate will be established within the ground rules and personal questions will not be answered. If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question this will be acknowledged and the teacher or visitor will get back to the student/s with the answer when she has found out more.

If a question is too explicit, is age inappropriate for the student or the whole class or raises concerns about sexual abuse then it should be acknowledged with a promise to attend to it later on an individual basis.

If a question is raised that alerts a member of staff that a student is at risk of sexual abuse, school child protection procedures should be followed.

### **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Evaluation enables us to plan future work more constructively. Four useful questions teachers can ask themselves and the young people are:

Skills - what have they learnt to do?

Information - what do they now know?

Attitudes and values - what do they think, feel, believe?

What do they need to learn next?

This feedback can be gathered via evaluation sheets and is fed back to the PSHE co-ordinator.

### **10. Index of supporting documents & Documents**

eg

Behaviour Policy

Drug Ed. Policy

Anti Bullying Policy

HIV/Aids Policy

Anti Racial Harassment Policy

**Formulation date**

**Review date**

## **Appendix 1**

### **By the end of Key Stage 3**

#### **Pupils will be able to:**

- manage changing relationships
- recognise risk of personal safety in sexual behaviour and be able to make safe decisions
- ask for help and support
- explain the relationship between their self-esteem and how they see themselves
- develop skills of assertiveness in order to resist peer pressure and stereotyping
- see the complexity of moral, social and cultural issues and be able to form a view of their own
- develop good interpersonal skills to sustain existing relationships as they grow and change and to help them make new relationships
- be tolerant of the diversity of personal, social and sexual preference in relationships
- develop empathy with the core values of family life in all its variety of forms
- recognise the need for commitment, trust and love in meaningful relationships which may manifest themselves in a variety of forms, including marriage
- recognise the stages of emotions in relation to loss and change caused by divorce, separation and new family members and how to manage their feelings positively.

#### **Pupils will know and understand:**

- that fertilisation in humans is the fusion of a male and a female cell\*
- 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\*
- how the media influence understanding and attitudes towards sexual health
- how good relationships can promote mental well-being
- the law relating to sexual behaviour of young people
- the sources of advice and support
- about when and where to get help, such as at a genito-urinary medicine clinic.

#### **Pupils will have considered:**

- the benefits of sexual behaviour within a committed relationship
- how they see themselves affects their self-confidence and behaviour
- the importance of respecting difference in relation to gender and sexuality
- how it feels to be different and be discriminated against
- issues such as the costs of early sexual activity
- the unacceptability of prejudice and homophobic bullying
- what rights and responsibility mean in relationships.

### **By the end of Key Stage 4**

#### **Pupils will be able to:**

- recognise the influences and pressures around sexual behaviour and respond appropriately and confidently seek professional health advice

- manage emotions associated with changing relationships with parents and friends
- see both sides of an argument and express and justify a personal opinion
- have the determination to stand up for their beliefs and values
- make informed choices about the pattern of their lifestyle which promote well-being
- have the confidence to assert themselves and challenge offending behaviour
- develop qualities of empathy and sympathy and the ability to respond emotionally to the range and depth of feelings within close relationships
- work co-operatively with a range of people who are different from themselves.

**Pupils will know and understand:**

- the way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of the sex hormones\*some medical uses of hormones including the control and promotion of fertility\*
- the defence mechanisms of the body\*
- how sex is determined in humans\*
- how HIV and other sexually transmitted infections affect the body
- the link between eating disorders and self-image and sexual identity
- the risks of early sexual activity and the link with the use of alcohol
- how the different forms of contraception work and where to get advice
- the role of statutory and voluntary organisations
- the law in relation to sexual activity for young people and adults
- how their own identity is influenced by both their personal values and those of their family and society
- how to respond appropriately within a range of social relationships
- how to access the statutory and voluntary agencies which support relationships in crisis
- the qualities of good parenting and its value to family life
- the benefits of marriage or a stable partnership in bringing up children
- the way different forms of relationship including marriage depend for their success on maturity and commitment.

**Pupils will have considered:**

- their developing sense of sexual identity and feel confident and comfortable with it
- how personal, family and social values influence behaviour
- the arguments around moral issues such as abortion; contraception and the age of consent
- the individual contributions made by partners in a sustained relationship and how these can be of joy or benefit to both the consequences of close relationships including having children and how this will create family ties which impact on their lives and those of others.

## Appendix 2

### The Law and Guidance in relation to SRE

#### Learning and Skills Bill 2000

Clause 117 of the bill updates and amends the Education Act 1996

Local education authorities no longer have any responsibility for sex education in maintained schools; this now rests with the school's governing body and head teacher.

The Secretary of State for Education is now required to issue guidance on the delivery of sex education in schools. The guidance must ensure that when pupils receive sex education in schools they learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the raising of children. Also pupils are to be protected from teaching materials that would be considered inappropriate when bearing in mind the age, religion and culture of the pupils.

The guidance must also include guidance on the use of any materials produced by NHS bodies intended for use in schools for the purposes of sex education.

School governors and head teachers are required to bear this guidance in mind when fulfilling their obligations as outlined in the Education Act 1996.

The Secretary of State reserves the right to revise the guidance given under subsection at any time.

When formulating their statement of policy on sex education, the governors and head teachers of a school are now required to include in this policy a statement on the effect a parent's decision to withdraw their child from the school's sex education programme.

#### **Sex and Relationship Guidance. Ref: DfEE 0116/2000**

This guidance is designed to replace that previously provided under Department of Education Circular 5/94.

The guidance aims to address uncertainty as to what sex and relationship education (SRE) is and how it should be delivered. The document is intended to support head teachers, teachers and governors when defining and delivering sex education in schools.

Advice and guidance on developing a policy for sex and relationships education and how to work with parents and local communities is included along with

information on where the Department sees SRE fitting into a school's wider Personal Social and Health Education framework.

Specific advice is provided on teaching strategies for SRE and particular issues that may arise. Information is given on devising a confidentiality policy and discusses situations where it may not be possible to guarantee confidentiality issues.

Although this document has the status of 'good practice', the recent passing of the Learning and Skills Bill (see above) has meant that the legal requirements of teachers and governors have now changed. When providing sex and relationships education it is required by law that young people are made aware of the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the raising of children. It is also required that young people are protected from 'inappropriate teaching materials'.

A copy of the guidance can be downloaded from the Department for Education and Employment's website at the following address

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sreguidance/>

### **Education Act 1996**

This act was introduced to consolidate the Education Act 1944 and other legislation relating to education. The substance of the law relating sex education was not changed in any way, merely re-affirmed by the new act. Details are given below:

Section 352 states that the curriculum for every grant maintained school should include a basic curriculum that includes provision of sex education for all pupils and also for those students in special schools receiving secondary education. [Section 352 (c-d)]

For the purposes of the Education Act 1996 -as with the Education Act 1993- sex education is defined as specifically including information about AIDS and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. [Section 352 (3a)]

The governing bodies of schools decide (bearing in mind their LEA's policy statement) whether sex education should be part of the school's secular curriculum. They are also required to keep an up-to-date statement of their sex education policy. This should include information on the content of sex education and where in the curriculum it takes place. [Section 371 (a-b)]

Sex education should be provided in such a way that it encourages "...pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and family life." [Section 403 (1)]

Emphasized that schools are required to ensure that their sex education policy is kept up-to-date and available for consultation by parents of pupils at the school. Copies should be made available to parents free of charge if required. [Section 404 (a-b)]

Re-affirmed the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education lessons occurring outside the National Curriculum. [Section 405]

### **Department of Education Circular 5/94 (Not legally binding)**

(Education Act 1993: Sex Education in Schools)

Provides guidance on statutory sex education in schools in light of the changes introduced by the Education Act 1993.

Highlighted need for caution when giving contraceptive advice to pupils under 16 years i.e. below the age of consent (for heterosexuals). "The general rule must be that giving an individual pupil advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be an inappropriate exercise of a teacher's professional responsibilities". [Section 39]

### **Education Act 1993**

Made sex education including education about HIV, AIDS and STDs statutory in maintained secondary schools and special schools.

Established the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education provided outside the National Curriculum. [Section 241]

Amended the Science Orders of the National Curriculum to remove any references to HIV, AIDS, STDs and human behaviour other than the biological aspects.

Required the governing bodies of all maintained school to write and keep up-to-date a statement of the schools policy regarding sex education. The policy should be made available to parents for inspection and copies provided free of charge.

### **Department of Environment Circular 12/88 (not legally binding)**

Clarified the position of schoolteachers and governors with regard to the issue of sexuality within sex education. "Section 28 does not affect the activities of school governors, nor of teachers. It will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom, nor the counselling of pupils concerned about their sexuality." [Section 20]

### **Local Government Act 1988**

Section 28 of the act stated that a local authority was not permitted to "...promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."

The act does not apply to school governors or teachers as clarified in the Department of Environment Circular 12/88(see below).

### **Education Reform Act 1988**

Required maintained schools to implement a curriculum that "...prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life." [Section1(2)]

National Curriculum Science was required to cover human reproduction.

### **Education (No.2) Act 1986**

Required Local Education Authorities to make available to schools a statement of their policy relating to the secular curriculum.

School governors and head teachers were given the authority to decide whether and how sex education would be covered in school. Also required to keep up-to-date a written statement of the schools sex education policy, mentioning where in the curriculum sex education is to be covered.[Section 18]

Established that sex education in grant-maintained schools was the responsibility of school governors and head teachers. Sex education was to be provided in such a way as to "...encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life." [Section 46]