

A Framework for a Sex and Relationship Education Policy

The outline on this page identifies the various elements of a SRE policy. The left hand column lists all the elements which should be found in the SRE policy. Opposite each named element, in the right hand column, is an amplification of the heading, a series of bullet points which will help schools to construct their policy. Each of the elements is then further exemplified in the pages that follow. Schools may sometimes be able to quote directly from this exemplification but should customise most of it to suit their own particular circumstances.

Preamble / Introduction	How this policy sits with / alongside others in the school, may include Diocesan statement where appropriate
Mission Statement	Some extract / quote from the MS on which to hang this SRE policy, e.g., "... the needs of the whole child ..."
Aims of the School	Similarly quote appropriate aims
Definition of SRE	Own vision ensuring that DfEE guidance is covered
Rationale	Christian beliefs about God and about the human person Claims about Catholic education – whole child Exhortation by The Church The demands of the real world In partnership with the whole community The legal position Out of conviction not response to crisis
Aims & objectives	Formation, whole and wholesome, right relationships as sexual beings, development of conscience Self-knowledge & self esteem Full and accurate biological information Knowledge, understanding and evaluation re 'fully human, fully alive'
Roles & responsibilities	Teachers Governors
Parents	Right to withdraw children from sex and relationship education programme, except Nat. Curric. But Cardinal Hume's exhortation about the risks involved here
Provision / Programme	Organisation Curriculum
Relationship to other policies / initiatives	Pupil safety Equal opportunities / Pastoral Care / Citizenship National Healthy School Standard
Guidelines	Children's questions Sensitive issues Confidentiality
Monitoring, review & evaluation	

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Introduction

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions with regard to sex and relationship education. We set out our rationale for and approach to sex and relationship education in the school. It is characterised by a whole person, whole school, developmental approach thus setting it firmly within our distinctively Christian vision of education.

The Mission and Aims of the School

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that sex and relationship education is an integral part of this education. Furthermore our School Aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves to "positive and prudent" sex and relationship education" ('Declaration on Christian Education', Vatican II).

Defining Sex and Relationship Education

SRE is learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding of themselves as sexual beings, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others. It means developing pupils' abilities to make conscientious decisions about sexuality and behaviour. Good SRE enables pupils to recognise and understand the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It has three main elements: "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding" (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE).

Rationale

We recognise our pupils as unique persons, created in the image of God, loved by God and intended to have life to the full. We willingly share, with parents, the responsibility to provide "positive and prudent" sex and relationship education for our pupils. We accept this responsibility in order to ensure that the information pupils receive is accurate. Our intention is to take control of the provision of this aspect of education. We share the Bishops' desire to provide a "whole person ... whole school ... developmental approach" to this curriculum ('Laying The Foundations', Bishops of England and Wales Low Week statement, 1987), to allow the Gospel message to be heard. Our aim is to keep our pupils safe and protect them from exploitation. Above all we will provide this sex and relationship education out of conviction not as a response to some crisis.

Aims and Objectives

To promote the appreciation and development of attitudes and values which are truly gospel inspired, e.g., love, truth, justice, freedom, integrity and reconciliation;

To provide, appropriate to age and ability, full and accurate knowledge and understanding about sexuality and relationships;

To enable pupils to develop personal and social skills: to be confident in right relationships, to keep them safe from harm and to protect them from exploitation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

Draw up the sex and relationship education policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;

Ensure that the policy is available to parents;

Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;

Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of SRE within PSHE.

Teachers

Advise governors on content and organisation of sex and relationship education;
Develop suitable procedures for dealing with parental requests for withdrawal;
Contribute to reviewing existing provision;
Use professional skills in developing the curriculum;
Draw on help and guidance from relevant sources, e.g., health professionals, marriage and family life workers;
Teach sex and relationship education curriculum as detailed in the schemes of work;
Participate in monitoring and evaluating sex and relationship education.

Parents

Parents have the right to be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the sex and relationship education programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the sex and relationship education programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex and relationship education excepting those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. However, we would remind parents of the words of the late Cardinal Hume. He expressed some concerns about withdrawing children from sex education lessons. He wondered whether such action might damage the parent-child relationship in terms of confidence and trust, whether it could really inhibit the passing on of information within peer groups and “might well remove one possible means of correcting, or putting in perspective, the uncontrolled information circulating within peer groups.” (Cardinal Hume in a speech given at Bradford, reported in Briefing ...). We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Parents will be able to examine the programme their children are following and provide additional preparation and information as they wish.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher / the head of year ...

Provision / Programme

Responsibility

Responsibility for the sex and relationship education programme rests with the governors. The headteacher carries delegated responsibility and is supported in the oversight of the programme by the curriculum deputy, a PSHE co-ordinator, a SRE co-ordinator, the pastoral deputy and staff and the senior member of staff with responsibility for child protection. All staff carry some responsibility for the sex and relationship education programme.

Organisation

The three aspects of sex and relationship education, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific sex and relationship curriculum.

Programme

see Annex \$ ‘Sex and relationship education in the Primary / Secondary school’

Staffing

All staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the sex and relationship education programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

Responsibility for the specific sex and relationship education programme lies with the relevant curriculum staff. This will normally include science, religious education, physical education, SRE and PSHE.

Teaching strategies will include

establishing ground rules	film & video
distancing techniques	groupwork
discussion	role-play
project learning	trigger drawings
reflection	case studies
experiential	checklists
active	values clarification
brainstorming	
dealing with questions: defer, delay, refer to others, e.g., parent, pastoral staff, counsellor, health professional,	

see also 'Teaching and Learning Styles' in "Exploring Life Choices: Education for Personal and Relationships in Catholic Schools", Dempsey, Fallon, Hall & Uden.

Relationship to other policies / initiatives

This sex and relationship education policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework and thus contribute to the school's National Healthy School Standard. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is cross-referenced to the child protection policy.

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

Guidelines

The governors recognise that sex and relationship education can be a sensitive issue for all concerned and are concerned that teachers' training and support needs are properly provided for. The governors therefore require the school to provide such training and support to all those involved in the sex and relationship education programme. This training will cover legislative requirements, Church teaching, the demands of this policy and the development of appropriate skills to deliver the sex and relationship education programme.

Children and young people will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which sex and relationship education takes place. Effective sex and relationship education will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they should follow the school's child protection policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Children's questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which sex and relationship education can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of sex and relationship education. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors have in mind such issues as friendship, relationships, good and bad touching, partnerships, marriage, breakdown, wife-battering, divorce, pre- and extra-marital sex, contraception, abortion, in-vitro fertilisation, date rape, etc. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the sex and relationship education programme. The governors' programme will deal with these issues sensitively, in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias, at a level appropriate to the needs and experience of pupils. Account will be taken of different viewpoints. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Pupils will be made aware of both Church teaching and the law as they relate to the issues.

Confidentiality and Advice

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the sex and relationship education programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of sex and relationships, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. They will be able to inform pupils that they can obtain further advice from health professionals, e.g., the school nurse, school counsellor, their GP, or the local young person's advice service.

Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

Where a teacher becomes aware that a pupil under 16 is having or is contemplating having sexual intercourse it is important that steps are taken to ensure that:

- ◆ wherever possible the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent/s or carer/s;
- ◆ any child protection issues are addressed, and the designated senior member of staff is informed;
- ◆ that the child has been adequately counselled.

In the exceptional cases where the school will find itself handling such information without parental knowledge the headteacher and governor will keep appropriate records and monitor the frequency of such cases. This monitoring will form part of the headteacher's and

governors' on-going monitoring and evaluation of the sex and relationship education policy.

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct when dealing in one-to-one situations with pupils on a health related matter, including advice on contraception. In classroom situations they should follow the school's confidentiality policy, seeking always to prevent inappropriate disclosures using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The sex and relationship education co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme should be reviewed and evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.