



Soham Village College

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

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Introduction

Soham Village College believes that sex and relationships education makes an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing and preparation for adult life in society.

The students in our school come from diverse backgrounds, expressing a spectrum of beliefs and values. Together with our governing body, we have considered and developed a familiarity with the beliefs and attitudes which our range of families have about issues such as sex and relationship education, abortion, contraception, homosexuality and sex outside marriage. We recognise that we need to educate and support young people to manage 'real world' interactions as well as those that happen in the online virtual environment. We are committed to responding to national trends and emerging issues such as those around mental wellbeing, consent, gender identity, online pornography, sexting, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. These issues have a high profile within DfE guidelines in such documents as *Keeping Safe in Education (2000)* and form the motivation behind the anticipated statutory changes proposed under the revised Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum (*for implementation September 2019*).

The stage of development and the experiences of any group of young people of the same age will be diverse and varied. This fact has clear implications for curriculum content, teaching approaches, and the creation of an appropriate learning environment based on the need to develop in young people respect for each other's differences.

The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

Aim of SRE education

The aim of this policy is to communicate to staff, governors, parents/guardians, visitors and students the manner in which SRE will be delivered and supported at Soham Village College, in accordance with the *Secretary of State's 2000 guidance on SRE* and the anticipated changes proposed under the revised Relationships and Sex Education curriculum

What is effective Sex and Relationships Education?

It is part of lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. Promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society. As well as preparing them at school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In our view, effective sex and relationships education incorporates:

Attitudes and values

Pupils are helped to examine their own and other people's attitudes and values, particularly related to sexual matters, and to respect the rights of others to their own opinions. SRE can help pupils to develop a good self-image and high self-esteem, responsibility and the ability to make informed decisions.

Personal and social skills

SRE encourages the acquisition of skills so that pupils' relationships with others may be positive, fulfilling and respectful. It helps them explore how to be themselves in terms of beliefs, culture and traditions and to respect others. It provides opportunities to develop communication skills and assertiveness within a range of different situations, emboldening the students to recognise opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Knowledge and understanding

SRE provides information on puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships, gender issues, conception and birth processes, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, prejudice and stereotyping and sex and the law. Thus giving an understanding of the nature and diversity of relationships and sexuality. It can provide an objective and balanced view of sexual matters, correcting any misinformation pupils may have gained. It can give them the information and understanding they need, in accordance with the pupil's background and beliefs.

What is the moral and values framework of Sex and Relationships Education?

SRE is taught within and confirms the moral and values framework of the whole school. This draws on the statement of values by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community contained within the National Curriculum.

- We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.
- We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and to the good of the community.
- We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular, we value families as a source of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.

It is expected of teachers that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not influence their teaching of SRE. They will address pupils' questions with due regard to the beliefs and values of the child's family. The teaching of SRE respects and refers to the beliefs of the child's home background. SRE is also part of the school's provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. It encourages each student to develop confidence and a clear awareness of their own beliefs and values and to develop mutual understanding and respect between students for their diverse beliefs and values.

How is Sex and Relationships Education organised?

SRE is not an isolated subject: it permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, the pastoral system and is informed by the role models given by teachers. Opportunities should be used as they occur for answering pupils' questions and exploring issues as they arise.

All subjects, but particularly Science, Religious education, English and Drama provide a focus for exploring some elements of SRE, alongside PSHE sessions within tutor time, fortnightly PSHE lessons delivered at KS3 and whole school drop down days (three per year).

The PSHE Co-ordinator alongside the pastoral team and heads of faculties jointly co-ordinate Sex Education and are jointly responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme.

How does Sex and Relationships Education relate to equal opportunities?

The school's policy for equal opportunities also underpins the teaching of SRE. Sex and relationship education can act as a basis for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It necessarily involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-esteem and self-worth in a learning environment that recognises and respects difference. We work to ensure that our sex and relationship education is relevant and accessible to all our pupils and that it is appropriate for all levels of understanding and maturity. Catering for all pupils and is respectful of how pupils choose to identify themselves, their sexual orientation and gender identity (emerging). This means that sex and relationships education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may evolve and adapt over time.

How is Sex and Relationships Education taught?

The school recognises the need to begin with pupils' own experiences, beliefs and values and, therefore, places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure atmosphere where they can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about sex and relationships. In order to do this, teachers:

- Establish ground rules with pupils
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect
- Require no open personal disclosures in a class setting
- Use distancing techniques
- Provide for anonymity by using a question box (this also gives the teacher time to consult with colleagues on how to answer unexpected questions from pupils)
- Encourage reflection within lessons, across a year of teaching and through revisiting topics throughout KS3 and KS4

The school also draws on a range of teaching methods in order to encourage exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, using active learning methods which involve pupils and help them to personalise information. This also increases the likelihood of the learning being relevant and effective. The school includes activities where pupils' can practise and develop confidence in using communication, negotiation and decision making skills. Pupils are consulted about issues they wish to explore, how they wish to work together, how well lessons are going and what changes need to be made.

The school recognises that some aspects of SRE are a whole school concern and that some aspects can be covered by subject teachers across the curriculum. However, there are aspects which need to be taught separately in PSHE, including those specifically relating to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Not all teachers are best suited to teach some of these. Therefore, some SRE topics may be delivered by a panel of teachers who are particularly trained and confident in teaching this subject. In addition, the school draws on the expertise of the School Nurse, faith communities and a representative spectrum of national specialist agencies. Pupils are given a choice about their participation in learning activities related to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Resources are chosen from agencies which represent diverse beliefs, which are appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and religious and cultural background.

All teachers are given training on handling controversial topics and are made clear about confidentiality boundaries and know where/who to refer pupils for confidential advice and support.

Right of withdrawal

Sex and relationships education is part of all students' education and it is hoped that all will participate. However, the school acknowledges that, under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationships education programme except for that part which occurs in the National Science Curriculum. Parents need to be aware, however, that sex and relationships education can occur at any time if it arises naturally from class discussion. They also need to consider whether they want their child withdrawn from all sex and relationships education or just that part which deals explicitly with sexual intercourse and related issues. Discussions on feelings, values and relationships may well not be of concern. Parents wishing to exercise the right of withdrawal should write to the Headteacher.

Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluating

The policy and teaching programme will be reviewed every 3 years, based on the outcome of monitoring and evaluation. Governors and senior staff will take a key role in monitoring the progress of the policy. A working group made up of governors, teachers, parents, and pupils will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy as a working document. Evaluation could include:

- Assessments of knowledge and understanding of information and issues addressed in SRE
- Pupils' responses to teaching content and methods
- Teachers' responses to teaching content and methods
- Evidence of pupils' increased self-responsibility and respectful attitudes to opposite sex monitored by senior pastoral staff
- Decrease in recorded instances of expressions of homophobia, bullying, sexist graffiti, casual use of derogatory language, particularly with sexual or gender meanings, monitored by senior pastoral staff

Useful policies and references

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Soham Village College, Sept. 2017)

Behaviour Policy (Soham Village College, Feb. 2017)

ICT e-Safety Policy Documentation (Soham Village College, Sept. 2017)

Sex and relationships education guidance (DfE, July 2000)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, updated Sept 2018)

www.Youthoria.org

<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/>

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/> <http://www.brook.org.uk/>

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>