



LOCATION: CURRICULUM HANDBOOK, DOCUMENT 9

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

“This policy should be read as part of a collection of policies that together form the overall Safeguarding Policy and procedure for Abbey Court School.”

Date policy first adopted: September 1996

Date reviewed: November 2023

Reviewed By: Jessica Stedman

Date ratified by Governing Body: November 2023

Date of next review: Autumn 2024

Curriculum Intent for Relationship and Sex Education at Abbey Court School

Personal safety is at the heart of Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). At Abbey Court School, students are discretely taught the core information and skills to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. Through the RSHE curriculum students learn the different types of relationships including those online, and the boundaries which exist. They learn how their bodies and emotions develop and the routines which they will need to complete daily in order to be healthy. RSHE aims to equip students with the skills to make informed choices and that they should always be listened to, particularly in the area of consent. Health Education encompasses students learning about their own physical health and their mental wellbeing. Helping them to know their own emotions, coping strategies and techniques such as mindfulness to maintain a positive sense of ‘self’. Pupils learn skills in assessing and managing risk, how and where they can seek support for a range of situations such as when they are unwell, as well as gaining basic first aid skills. They learn about healthy eating and the importance of exercise and sexual health so that they can maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle throughout their adulthood.

I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is a Government requirement and one that Abbey Court School believes to be of vital importance to our pupils in preparation for adult life. We do this by equipping pupils with the knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their own relationships, health and wellbeing.
- I.2 This Policy is intended for use by all Staff, Parents and Pupils involved with Abbey Court to ensure continuity. This includes teachers, teaching assistants, school nurses, voluntary staff and people from outside agencies including physiotherapists speech and language therapist and educational and clinical psychologists. It helps to provide information for new staff joining the school.

1.3 Dissemination of the Policy.

The School Prospectus has a summary of the full policy and is available via the Headteacher by request. A copy is given to the school nurse and copies are sent to parents via the school Newsletter on a rotational basis.

Policies are kept centrally in the staffroom for reference.

1.4 The Policy has been written with reference to; DFE Circular 5/94 and DFES RSE Guidance 2000.

Sex and Relationships Education (RSE) for the 21st Century (supplementary guidance), PSHE Association

"Developing and Reviewing a School Sex Education Policy" (National Children's Bureau)

"Sex Education Policy Review" (KCSA)

"Health Education" NCC,

"RSE and Parents" DFES

"RSE Fact Sheet (FPA)" 2011

"Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools" OFSTED 2013

The DFE guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (February 2021)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

The Policy is related to the Aims and Objectives of Abbey Court School.

2. SMSC

Abbey Court School makes effective provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) aspects of learning and thus promotes the development of the whole child. Abbey Court School values its work in personal, social, health, Relationships and Sex Education and citizenship. We want pupils to become responsible adults and supportive citizens and seek to create an ethos and climate in the school which will help them to flourish as young people, therefore, we actively promote and evaluate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The four SMSC aspects are connected and the school's provision for one area will often make an impact on another, e.g. when pupils listen to music from different cultures this may also make an impact on their spiritual development. Activities to promote moral development are also likely to have an impact on social development. The school provides opportunities to promote these aspects of pupils' development, within the curriculum. Each subject policy therefore enables staff to be clear about what it means to promote development in these four areas, within each subject. This is further supported through the subject schemes of work and the SMSC Exemplar.

3. RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Abbey Court School is a Rights Respecting School and puts the 54 articles of the UNICEF Children's Charter at the heart of all school policy. This policy reflects that we believe that as a school we must do everything possible to ensure that, through their learning, our pupils grow as healthy as possible, learn at school, receive protection, have their views listened to, and be treated fairly.

4. DEFINITION

4.1 Relationship Education (For primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary pupils) is included as a part of the P.S.H.E. and Citizenship (PSHE & C)

programme and aims to promote the overall physical, social, emotional and cultural well-being of the individual. Within an SLD context, we have to ensure that individuals' needs are met and that the messages that we give are not misunderstood or inaccurate. We thereby promote experiences that are realistic in their aims and scope. We incorporate Drama circles into our PSHE lessons in order to support pupils with their relationship and sex education development. This method helps to educate the pupils and support further their understanding in order to help keep them safe.

- 4.2 Our RSE curriculum ensures that ALL pupils can access RSE and achieve goals in line with parental wishes. Our curriculum is taught within classes by class teachers. Training is provided to staff to support the teaching of RSE.

5. AIMS

- 5.1 The aims of Abbey Court School's Relationships and Sex Education Policy are to ensure that pupils:

- ✚ Gain knowledge and understanding in order to stay safe
- ✚ Develop positive attitudes and values in order to make informed choices
- ✚ Extend personal and social skills

- 5.2 To ensure that the pupils' entitlement to Relationships and Sex Education is being met taking into account the ability, experiences, attitudes, and ethnic backgrounds in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

"Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils at the school and in society and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

(Section 1 (2) Education Reform Act 1988)

- 5.3 To provide a moral framework based upon the values of family life.
(Section 46 Education Act 1986)

- 5.4 To provide pupils with the information guidance and support that is required by ALL adults in order to live an independent life.

- 5.5 Statutory guidance states that in primary schools' pupils should learn about physical and emotional changes experienced during puberty, and how a baby is conceived and born. In secondary schools, lessons should prepare young people for adult life by helping them develop positive relationships and an appreciation of the consequences of their choices: an understanding of human sexuality; knowledge of the importance of safe sexual practices, the concept of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation and abuse; and knowledge of how to access further advice and support.

'High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.' (DfE – Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Draft Statutory Guidance February 2019)

6. OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 For Pupils to be able to recognise their own and other people's emotions and respond appropriately and sympathetically.
- 6.2 For Pupils to have an understanding of the reasons for their own feelings and emotions and be able to deal with them.
- 6.3 For Pupils to develop sexual self-awareness and an understanding of their own sexuality.
- 6.4 For Pupils to be able to respect their own bodies and those of other people.
- 6.5 To prepare Pupils for the changes and experiences that happen in life and have an understanding of the human reproductive process.
- 6.6 To provide pupils with the knowledge necessary for them to be able to protect themselves from abuse, illness, exploitation and risks.
- 6.7 To help pupils understand the need to take care of their personal hygiene and the importance of the way they present themselves (also see the Abbey Court Intimate Care policy)
- 6.8 To promote self-esteem and wellbeing.
- 6.9 To support the parents of pupils in a difficult and sensitive area of the curriculum.

"Some parents of children with special educational needs may find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their children will someday become sexually active." (DES Circ. 5/94)
- 6.10 For pupils to develop skills in decision-making and problem-solving.
- 6.11 For Pupils to be aware of who to ask and where added support and guidance can be obtained.
- 6.12 For Pupils to recognise the importance and value of forming positive loving relationships.

7. CURRICULUM PLANNING

- 7.1 The P.S.H.E. & C Coordinator is also the Relationships and Sex Education Coordinator and is responsible for the planning of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme for the whole school.
- 7.2 It is the requirement and a highly valued ethos within the school to deliver Relationships education (Primary) and Relationships and Sex Education (secondary) to pupils to support their personal development, and understanding of how to keep themselves safe, make informed decisions and build their self-efficacy.

The DfE outlines that Relationships Education and Sex and Relationships Education will teach pupils;

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online; and
- factual knowledge, at secondary school, around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

7.3 The Key aspects in the programme are revisited in a spiral curriculum through coverage plan and schemes of work.

7.4 The Programme is delivered at Key Stage 1 and 2 as part of the Personal, Social and Health, Economic and Citizenship Education curriculum and the National Curriculum Science programme.

At Key Stages 3, 4, and F.E. it is delivered as a distinct Relationships and Sex Education programme within the Personal, Social and Health, Economic and Citizenship Education curriculum and the National Curriculum Science programme.

The programme is planned in year group Schemes of Work that are delivered for two terms in each academic year. Class teachers are responsible for the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education.

Schemes of work developed by the subject leader relating to the requirements of the subject are in place from Key Stage 1 through to Key stage 5.

National guidance from the DFE (Relationships and Sex Education Guidance, published in 2019) advises schools on the themes that should be covered. RSE should support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. Formal RSE will also be taught through compulsory science lessons (see table).

National Curriculum Science.

Key Stage 1

Animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce

- Children should recognise and name the main external parts of the human body.

- That humans can produce offspring, and these grow into adults
- Children should recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity.

Key Stage 2

Life processes common to humans include nutrition, growth and reproduction

- The main stages of the human lifecycle.

Key Stage 3

- Fertilization in humans is the fusion of a male and female cell
- Students should know the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- The human reproductive cycle, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- How the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect human health.

Key Stage 4

- Hormonal control in humans, including the effects of sex hormones
- Medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility
- How sex is determined in humans.

The 2019 DfE guidance sets out the expectation that pupils at Primary will receive Relationships education and secondary-age pupils will receive Relationships and Sex Education.

At primary, this will constitute students learning about families and the people who care for them, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

At secondary, topics focus on the characteristics of families and parenthood, respectful relationships including friendships, online relationships and the media, being safe, Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

8. STYLES OF TEACHING

The main core of the programme is delivered to whole classes, but the programme enables the flexibility to include working in small groups, departments, single-sex groups, across Key Stages or to individuals according to the developmental needs and experiences of the pupil.

Different approaches to teaching Relationships and Sex Education is used and these vary according to the age, and ability of the group and the content of the lesson (e.g. Teacher led, group discussions, use of video, pictures, games, role play, stories.) Further information is contained in the Abbey Court Curriculum Policy.

9. STYLES OF LEARNING

- 9.1 Pupils are encouraged to take part in group discussions giving an opinion or an example in a safe space if they want to.
- 9.2 Pupils are encouraged to listen to information being given by the teacher/speaker or from a video and to talk about what they have seen or heard.
- 9.3 Pupils' own experiences are used in discussion wherever possible as a starting point to develop skills, which can be related to practical real-life situations.

- 9.4 Role-play and Drama are used to allow pupils to express themselves in a more relaxed and less formal way
- 9.5 Published materials and worksheets will be used to support the students learning and recording.

10. ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The Relationships and Sex Education Policy is subject to Abbey Court's Assessment and Recording Policy
- 10.2 At the Foundation Stage pupils develop awareness of themselves and others through Personal and Social Development. At Key stages 1 and 2, Relationship and Health Education is monitored through Science and PSHCE.

At Key Stages 3, 4 and F.E. Relationships and Sex Education is monitored separately as well as through the PSHE and science curriculum.

11. CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

- 11.1 Relationships & Sex Education is an integral part of the PSHCE curriculum, which is reinforced throughout the whole school day. i.e. during lessons, break and lunch times, and during out of school activities. The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum includes developing skills in dealing with emotions, personal hygiene, choice and decision-making, personal safety, and relationships, all of which need reinforcing at appropriate times during the school day or when particular circumstances arise.
- 11.2 Relationships and Sex Education is also linked with study in the following areas:
National Curriculum Science programmes of Life Processes and Humans as organisms.
- 11.3 Cross-curricular links can be developed through Topic work (i.e. Homes, Families) are obvious close links. There are also opportunities for literacy and numeracy and Computing.

12. S.E.N. AND DIFFERENTIATION

- 12.1 Relationships and Sex Education is an essential part of the curriculum in Special Schools as many of our pupils are unable to access information themselves from the media available or have the skills and opportunities to share and gain information from their peers. This poses particular difficulties, which will however be, addressed through careful planning and delivery, e.g. IEP and Annual Review targets.

13. PUPIL WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

- 13.1 Section 17A of the Education Act 1993 states that:

If the Parent of any pupil requests that she/he may be wholly or partly excused from receiving Sex Education at the school, the pupil shall, except in so far as such education is a part of the science curriculum, be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE only. Relationships and health education is compulsory.

13.2 If a Parent wishes to exercise their right to withdraw their child from all or part of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme they must make this known preferably in writing to the Head Teacher. Parents will then be given the opportunity if they so wish to discuss it further with the Head Teacher and/or the P.S.H.E. Coordinator. Issues including the effect on the pupil, i.e. feeling denied or excluded, are discussed, but the school respects the final decision made by the parents. The class teacher has a responsibility to ensure that permission is granted and where it is withdrawn that this is shown on the pupil's IEP.

13.3 At Abbey Court School we respect parent's requests to withdraw their child from Sex Education lessons up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive Sex Education, the school will make arrangements for this to happen (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, September 21). In the event of a parent's request to withdraw, an alternative supervised programme will be delivered (a letter seeking permission from parents for discrete Relationships and Sex Education lessons is included in the appendices).

14. STAFFING RESOURCES

14.1 Relationships and Sex Education is taught primarily by the Class Teacher with the support of the teaching assistants and school nurses and advice from the PSHCE Coordinator and outside agencies.

14.2 The Relationships and Sex Education Programme is part of the planned PSHCE Curriculum. A major influence on the programme is:

“Living Your Life” (Ann Craft), ‘Let’s Do It’ (Rebecca Johns) and Sex Education for Very Special People (Flo Longhorn)
a published scheme of work and guidance specially developed for working with people with learning difficulties.

14.3 A list of resources that can be found in the school is attached at the end of the policy and resources are being continuously developed.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils in Abbey Court School are given appropriate opportunities to access all areas of the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum in line with the school Curriculum Policy. There is an annual bidding process through which additional resources are applied for.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Relationships and Sex Education teaching and learning is subject to the Abbey Court School's Health and Safety Policy. All staff are responsible for becoming familiar with and adhering to this policy requirement.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

16.1 CONFIDENTIALITY

Pupils' privacy and sensitivity is respected at all times and therefore it is important that lessons are planned to ensure there are no interruptions or unplanned visitors present and that pupils have the right to withdraw verbal input from class discussions.

The time and appropriate place will be made available to staff and pupils to discuss particular issues where necessary. This may be instigated by the pupil or by a member of staff.

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. Ground rules should be developed individually with each class or year group.

For example:

- no one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- only the correct names for body parts will be used (by teaching staff); and
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

16.2 CONTRACEPTION

The information given by teachers will be factual and individual advice will not be given to pupils.

16.3 ABORTION

Pupils need to be given a balanced view on abortion taking into account religious and cultural beliefs and values and the legal framework which prevails.

16.4 HIV/AIDS (and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases)

In order to help pupils to protect themselves from HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases, pupils will be given information on modes of transmission, basic hygiene and behaviour which can put an individual at risk.

16.5 PUPIL SEXUAL ABUSE PROCEDURE

Please refer to Abbey Court`s Child Protection Policy.

16.6 Dealing with difficult questions in the RSE classroom

Staff are supported with answering more difficult questions and are prompted to answer these in an age-appropriate way, using facts and the correct language. More guidance on this for Abbey Court staff can be found in the PSHE coverage plan.

17. PROCEDURE FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Any person other than the everyday class staff, who is involved in the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education, must first have the permission of the Head Teacher.

17.2 WORKING WITH PARENTS

Parents are made aware of the content of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme and their right to withdraw their child, on entry to the school. A summary of the Policy will be found in the School Prospectus.

Parents are invited to learn about the RSE curriculum and learning resources used with teachers and PSHE leads during parents' evenings, coffee mornings and within the school newsletter. Parents are invited to contact the school for any further information about RSE content and resources.

18. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

18.1 The Policy is monitored throughout the year by the Relationships and Sex Education Coordinator by examination of class timetables, planning and records as well as liaising with the Key Stage Coordinator, School Governors and the Senior Management team.

18.2 The Policy is reviewed biannually. This review includes discussions with teachers, teaching assistants, School Governors, Parents, Pupils, School Nurses and any other outside agencies that had been involved, to decide if everyone's needs are being met.

RESOURCES

"Living Your Life?" Ann Craft (a Sex Ed. and Personal Dev. prog. for SLD) "Fit for Life Health Ed. Project. Levels 1 2 and 3.

Health Education NCC Curriculum guidelines

"Talking Points" set 2 "Life" Photographic teaching materials

"Bodies" FPA Teaching materials

"My Body" a set of games and puzzles

'Body' jigsaws

The Human Body, BBC Video and CD-ROM

"You, Your Body and Sex" Video (Secondary)

"Jason's Private World" Video (Secondary)

"Kylie's Private World" Video (Secondary)

"Living and Growing Unit 3" Video and resource book (Secondary)

"Living and Growing Unit 2" Video and resource book (Primary)

"Living and Growing Unit 1" Video and resource book (Primary)

3D Condom model (Secondary)

"Boy to Man" Video (Secondary)

"Girl to Woman" Video (Secondary)

"Just around the corner; boys" Video (Secondary)

"Just around the corner; girls" Video (Secondary)

"Body Board" Teaching Resource (Secondary)

"Body Board Sex Ed. Pack" (Secondary)

"Body Board Emotions Pack" (Secondary)

Breast care Display (Secondary)
Stages of Labour Display (Secondary)
Girl to Woman display (Secondary)
Boy to Man display (Secondary)
Kylie and Jason DVD (1 x Primary, 2 x Secondary)
Relationships and Sex Education for People with Autism, Mesibov. ((Primary)
Families Resource box & poster pack (Primary)
Busy Bodies DVD
'What's happening to me?' DVD
All about me a first look at babies
The protection pack – scenario stories and image cards (Secondary)
'Desmond and Daisy' Anatomically correct dolls (Secondary)
'The Sex Factor Handbook' – Stories to support with the teaching of the RSE curriculum.

The school nurse has access to other resources including contraceptive devices (For educational use).

APPENDIX RSE and Parents Leaflet

Letter to Parents regarding discrete Sex Education sessions.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

In 2019 the government published changes to the requirements of Relationships Education at Primary and Relationships and Sex Education at secondary.

The school prospectus explains the place of Relationships and Sex Education in Abbey Court School as follows:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Relationships and Sex Education is taught throughout the age range at Abbey Court as part of the PSHE & C programme to ensure progression. At Abbey Court we see this as an essential part of the curriculum for our pupils in order to adequately prepare them for the physical and emotional changes that they will experience as well as in preparation for adulthood. Parents/carers are informed of the content of this aspect of PSHE & C and are entitled to withdraw their child from some or all sex education elements of the sessions if they have particular concerns. Where specific and individualised learning becomes necessary for a pupil this will only be with the consent of the parents/carers.

What is Relationships and Sex Education?

- A life-long process
- Learning to sustain healthy personal relationships
- Part of **P**ersonal, **S**ocial and **H**ealth **E**ducation and Science.
- Development of values, attitudes, understanding and skills

Why is Teaching RSE so important?

- To prepare our pupils for adult, independent life.
- To understand, recognise and form healthy friendships and relationships.
- To support children and young people to navigate puberty and young adulthood in a safe, healthy and responsible way.
- Due to the vulnerability that our learners have in the community.
- To support the pupils to safeguard themselves in the future.

At secondary, it is expected that the Relationships and Sex Education sessions we will be providing will be planned to cover the issues in some depth. Importantly, the sessions will need to be flexible and responsive in order to meet the needs of the pupils based on the questions that they might ask. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

The sessions will be planned and taught by a teacher who will be supported by Teaching Assistants with additional help from the school nurse as necessary. Appropriate resources will be used including drawings; photographs; videos and where appropriate props such as models and contraceptive devices. The lessons will be delivered to a small group of students that may be single or mixed-gender. All coverage of the curriculum will be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner for the needs of students.

Any or all of the following issues may be addressed depending on the needs of the group and initiated through the questions that they ask. Where possible it is important to be able to answer questions from pupils as they arise regarding:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Boy / Girl – Gender identifications | Man / Woman – Gender identification |
| Identification of male body parts | Identification of female body parts |
| Puberty | Menstruation |
| Sexual intercourse | Conception |
| Pregnancy | Birth |
| Ageing process | Emotions |
| Self-esteem | Self-presentation |
| Personal hygiene | Interpersonal social skills |
| Assertiveness | Appropriate behaviour |
| Personal attraction | Respect for others |
| Sexual relationships | Sexual health |
| Masturbation | Wet dreams |
| Toilets | Contraception |
| Pornography | Consent |
| LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) | |

There is a coverage plan in place for Relationships and Sex Education, which can be provided upon request and is available on the school website. I hope that you will see these sessions as valuable.

RSE is a vital area of the curriculum for our pupils to learn in order to help keep them safe. Although parents have a right to withdraw, we would hope that you would support us in delivering this to your child. Please speak to us if you have any questions or concerns.

I would be grateful if you would return this letter with your signature to indicate your consent to your son/daughter participating in Sex Education element of PSHE sessions.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jessica Stedman
 (Subject Leader for Relationships and Sex Education)

.....

I _____ give permission for my child
 _____ to participate in Relationship and Sex Education
 sessions in school.

Signed: _____

What should you do?

TALK:

- To your children. Ask them about lessons at school. Say what your views and values on sex and relationships are. Answer their questions.
- To your school, especially if you have concerns. Initially talk to your child's tutor or class teacher. They might well suggest you discuss the matter with the head teacher, or senior teacher, if concerns remain.
- To other parents, especially from your community and those with similar beliefs to yourself.

LISTEN:

- To your children, their questions and wishes.
- To your child's teacher and / or head teacher. Clearly understand the school's values, policy and approach to SRE.
- To the opinions of other parents and how they manage this with their children.

Some useful values statements to think about when talking with your child:

- Have sex with someone you really care about and who will share responsibility for contraception and safer sex.
- It would be better to wait to have sex until you are old enough to take responsibility.
- Families have different beliefs about sex, sometimes these are guided by the religion that they follow.
- Sex should never be used to exploit someone.

You may choose to approach a range of organisations that exist to offer advice and support regarding sex and relationships. A list can be obtained from the Sex Education Forum at:

National Children's Bureau
8 Wakely Street
London EC1V 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6000
E-mail: sexedforum@ncb.org.uk

For more copies of this leaflet please call DfES publications on 0845 602 2260 quoting reference code DfES 0706/2001

Who is this leaflet for?

It is written for parents and carers. Particularly those who may have worries about sex and relationship education (SRE) at school and those who want to find out more.

What is sex and relationship education (SRE)?

It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life; stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

Why does sex and relationship education (SRE) matter?

Our children learn about sex and relationships from the very youngest age, even if we don't talk with them. Some of the things they learn are incorrect, confusing and frightening. In a world where sex is used to sell things from food to fast cars, and celebrities' lives become everyone's business, we should talk to our children to help them make sense of it all.

As well as this, in the UK we have the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe. We also have high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Effective SRE does not encourage early sexual experimentation - but it does enable young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and to understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity until they are ready.

Parents and sex and relationship education (SRE):

As a parent / carer, you are the key person for your child's learning about sex and relationships. Schools should always work in partnership with parents / carers. You need to know that the school's SRE programme will complement your role and support you as sex educator of your child. For example, governing bodies and schools should consult with parents / carers when developing or updating the school's SRE policy. They should ensure your views are heard and that taught SRE is culturally appropriate and inclusive of all children.

department for
education and skills



The content of school sex and relationship education:

National guidance from the DfES (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, published in July 2000) advises schools on the themes that should be covered. SRE should support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development.

Formal SRE will be taught through compulsory science lessons (see table) and during other, specific lessons, often called PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). Informally, your child will learn about SRE through the values and ethos of the school and through contact with other children.

National Curriculum Science.

Key Stage 1

- Animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their sense and reproduce
- Children should recognise and name the main external parts of the human body.
- That humans can produce offspring and these grow into adults
- Children should recognise similarities and differences between themselves and other and treat others with sensitivity.

Key Stage 3

- Fertilization in humans is the fusion of a male and female cell
- Students should know the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- The human reproductive cycle, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- How the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect human health.

Key Stage 2

- Life processes common to humans include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- The main stages of the human lifecycle.

Key Stage 4

- Hormonal control in humans, including the effects of sex hormones
- Medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility
- How sex is determined in humans.

What do young people say:

- They want to learn about sex and relationships from their parents / carers.
- They want more than just the biological facts. They want to talk about feelings and morals.
- They want adults to answer their questions.
- Just over half found it easy to talk to a parent about sex.*

What do other parents say:

- They have anxieties about sex and relationships and their children.
- 84% say there would be fewer teenage pregnancies if more parents talked to their children about sex.*
- 87% feel too many teenagers are pressurised into having sex.*
- Many find TV programmes or a book a helpful way to raise the subject.*
- One in three mums and two in three dads have not told their children 'a lot or anything' about sex and relationships.*

*Source: research by BRMB on behalf of the Department of Health. December 2000

Young people who have good sex and relationship education at home and at school, start sex later and are less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy or to get a sexually transmitted infection.

Your rights as a parent.

You should be consulted by your child's school about its SRE policy and informed about what is taught in the SRE lesson. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all, SRE lessons, but not statutory science lessons. Where schools work within the SRE guidelines and consult effectively with parents/carers, you should feel re-assured about the content of the lessons.

However, should you be considering such a step, talk it through with your child and then with either the head teacher or another senior teacher at the school. If you decide this step is necessary, then the school should provide information about the lessons being missed and ideas for other sources of support for you to fulfil the task of educating your child.