

HOLMWOOD HOUSE

SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

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

It seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment which, in partnership with parents and the wider community, will enable pupils to learn about moral, physical and emotional development. This wider remit is encompassed in the PSHCE syllabus (available on the website under School Policies) whilst this specific SRE policy deals with those aspects of that syllabus pertaining specifically to aspects of sex and relationships education.

Policy Formation

The policy follows the DfE guidelines published in July 2000 which are currently under government review.

It is also underpinned by the stated school aim that at Holmwood House, we will *encourage care, courtesy and consideration for others in order to prepare them for the outside world through the development of a range of life skills*. Each individual is encouraged to behave in a natural, happy and responsible way and to be mindful of the needs of others.

An outline syllabus is available to parents via the Curriculum Guides on the school's website. The syllabus is included in section 3 below.

The Aims of SRE

1. What is Sex and Relationship Education?

It has three main elements:

- Attitudes and values
- Personal and social skills
- Knowledge and understanding

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

2. Why should it be taught in school?

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

Wide ranging research has shown that children want information about changes and situations they will experience before they happen. A structured programme in school increases the probability of this being achieved. Also, whilst in an ideal situation parents and children can discuss these matters at home comprehensively the reality is that many families find talking about these issues difficult (perhaps unexpectedly so). Many parents and children prefer the school to take a lead and provide a springboard for the discussion. A partnership between home and school and open dialogue between parent and child are the ideal.

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

For all year groups SRE will;

- provide clear information which is easy to understand, relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children
- provide information on both genders to all children, in order to dispel mysteries and encourage empathy (although some lessons will be delivered separately to boys and girls)
- promote the development of enlightened, positive attitudes
- promote the development of confidence in talking, listening and thinking about emotions, friendships and relationships
- encourage the exploration and clarification of values

Over the course of Years 5 and 6 we want to ensure that the children

- are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work
- are prepared for the physical and emotional changes of puberty (girls will be given separate detailed and practical advice on menstruation in Year 6)
- show empathy between peers and across genders regarding issues related to adolescence and growing-up.
- learn about the nature of marriage/stable relationships and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children
- can protect themselves and know where to go for help, support and advice.

....and during Years 7 & 8;

- understand the attributes of a loving, trusting relationship
- have an understanding of sexual intercourse
- understand that the appropriate context for sexual intercourse is as an expression of love and trust between two consenting, responsible adults
- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- understand the law regarding the age of consent and the arguments for delaying sexual activity to maturity
- understand the reasons for protected sex and avoiding casual sex
- understand sexual orientation
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- have sufficient skills and information to be able to protect themselves

4. How does it fit into the school curriculum?

SRE is not taught in isolation. It is rooted in the PSHCE programme, the science curriculum and it is supported by the whole school's ethos.

Discrete lessons each year are allocated to enable specific aspects of the SRE syllabus to be taught and discussed.

Organization and Planning

1. The Head of PHSCE, in consultation with the SLT, is responsible for the SRE syllabus.
2. The compulsory part of SRE is taught through science lessons.

The Science National Curriculum requires that children are taught:

- that animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans and other animals
- that humans and other animals can produce offspring and that these offspring grow into adults
- to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to treat others with sensitivity

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

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

In Years 7 and 8 the following concepts are revisited:

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

3. PSHCE provides teaching opportunities for many of the elements of SRE. In PSHCE the four areas of study are;

- Emotional intelligence including relationship skills, empathy, self-awareness, self-control and personal motivation.
- Well-being including nutrition, life-style, drugs and alcohol, e-safety and personal safety.
- Life cycles including dealing with babies, young children, SRE, old age and bereavement.
- Citizenship including human rights, law and justice, heroes of human rights, monarchy and government in the UK

4. PSHCE is integrated into many areas of the curriculum and school life. (See PSHCE Policy)

5. Discrete lessons are allocated for those parts of the SRE syllabus that cannot be delivered via Science, PSHCE, assemblies, circle time and other subjects. These are taught in the Prep School by the Head of PSHCE.

6. The School is committed to using the most appropriate teaching materials and to providing appropriate training and support for staff. The Head of PSHCE is responsible for researching and providing appropriate resources.

Teaching strategies

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

Most lessons will be taught to mixed classes, with occasional gender groups for certain topics as deemed appropriate.

- Ground rules help to create a safe environment for both teacher and pupil. They should be established with each class before SRE lessons commence.
- Questions will only be addressed to whole groups or the whole class and no children will be picked out to answer a question unless they have volunteered.
- Distancing techniques help to avoid embarrassment and protect privacy. Role play, case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, etc can help children to discuss issues in a de-personalised, safe environment.

- Dealing with questions. Children often ask unexpected question. If this happens, a) the ground rules should be referred to when a question is too personal, b) if a teacher does not know the answer to a question they should acknowledge this and research it later, c) if a teacher feels that a question is too explicit, is too advanced for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge the question and promise to deal with it on an individual basis. The teacher will inform parents about any issue or question that he/she feels needs to be followed up at home and d) if a teacher is concerned that a child is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's Safeguarding policy.
- Discussion and reflection should be a part of the SRE lessons. Active learning ensures opportunities for considering beliefs and attitudes and for developing greater understanding. Watching a video or reading written material can be used but only to support or to complement wider structured activities. Factual information in written form may be useful for the pupils to have for future reference.

Working with Parents

Parents are the key people in:

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

Parents need to know that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of SRE. Teachers will work within the guidelines of this policy and the syllabus. The school is happy to provide support for parents through sharing with them the school's SRE programme contents and by offering parents opportunities to discuss issues.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the SRE provided at school except for those parts included in the science syllabus. The school will make alternative arrangements for pupils in such cases.

Teaching Resources

The PSHCE department uses cartoon images from *Let's talk about where babies come from* and *Let's talk about sex* both by Harris and Emberley (published by Walker Books in 2004 and 2009 respectively). These are deemed to illustrate points needed in a non-threatening and gently humorous way which can help children to deal with embarrassed feelings.

Selected, age appropriate video excerpts are used from, *NHS Choices*, *BBC Learning Zone* (Yrs 6, 7 and 8) and Channel 4's *Embarrassing Teenage Bodies* (for Yr 8 only).

Confidentiality

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

Key points:

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

Policy Reviewed _____ HJM _____

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