

# Sex and Relationship Education Policy

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## 1. Aims

The aims of sex and relationship education (SRE) at Mulberry are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Our approach to SRE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships.
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views.
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion.
- The right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of.
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters.

We also believe that students have an entitlement to:

- Age and circumstance appropriate SRE.
- Access to help from trusted adults and helping services.

SRE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The academy's approach to SRE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on personal bias. We shall endeavor to have an approach that is educational, rather than one based on propaganda.

## 2. Statutory requirements

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum and as such, are not obliged to teach SRE.

If academies do teach SRE, they are required by their funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

At Mulberry Academy we teach SRE as set out in this policy.

### 2.1 Legal obligations

Schools in England and Wales have a legal responsibility to provide a 'sex education' programme. They also have a responsibility to keep an up to date written statement of the policy they choose to adopt and this must be available to parents.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from 'sex education' lessons which fall outside those aspects covered in the National Curriculum Science. This right no longer applies when children reach 15 years of age.

See section 7 for further details.

### 2.2 The needs of young people and the role of academies

It is the aim of the school and the National curriculum:

1. To provide opportunities for all students to learn and to achieve.
2. To promote student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The DCSF 'Sex and Relationship Guidance' (2000) recommends that 'Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives'. The school has a key role, in partnership with parents/carers, in providing SRE.

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are more likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviors and to have fulfilling relationships.

**'Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education does not make young people more likely to enter into sexual activity. Indeed it can help them learn the reasons for, and the benefits to be gained from, delaying such activity'**.

### **2.3 National and local support and guidance for schools to develop SRE**

Rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infection in the UK are among the highest of all European countries. The Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and SRE for students in both primary and secondary schools is seen, alongside other initiatives, as a key element. Our academy approach to SRE is in line with the Government's strategy and guidance given to schools in DfE 'Sex and Relationship Guidance' 2000.

## **3. Policy development**

This policy has been developed by the Assistant Head KS3 Pastoral / PSHE in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, Local Advisory Body and relevant outside agencies.

## **4. Definition**

SRE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

SRE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

**SRE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.**

### **4.1 Why is SRE education in schools important?**

High quality SRE helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. It is essential for the following reasons:

- Children and young people have a right to good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Children and young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships. Older pupils frequently say that sex and relationships education was 'too little, too late and too biological'. Ofsted reinforced this in their *2013 Not Yet Good Enough* report.
- SRE plays a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risk in relationships.

Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A comprehensive SRE programme can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.

(PSHE Association Sex and Relationships Education –SRE- for the 21st Century / supplementary advice to the SRE Guidance DfEE 0116/2000)

## **5. Delivery of SRE**

SRE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of SRE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

The guidance (DfEE 0116/2000) suggests that SRE should have three main elements as follows:

### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and a range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

### **Attitudes and values**

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

### **Personal and social skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

### **The academy's approach to SRE consists of:**

1. The taught National Curriculum Science Programme of Study.
2. SRE modules within each Key Stage delivered within a planned PSHE programme
3. Pastoral support for students who experience difficulties.
4. Provision of appropriate information through weekly school nurse drop-in sessions.

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

### **Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:**

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work

These skills are taught within the context of family life.

## Aims of the programme

The overall aims of the SRE programme are:

1. To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, SRE issues.
2. To dispel myths.
3. To explore a range of attitudes towards SRE issues and to help students to reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle.
4. To develop respect and care for others.
5. To increase student's self-esteem.
6. To develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations. Examples include communication with and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others.
7. To contribute to a reduction in local and national teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and abortion rates.

## Inclusion

'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationships education. Sex and relationship education should help all students understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives'.

Young people may have varying needs regarding SRE depending on their circumstances and background. The academy strongly believes that all students should have access to SRE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this the academy's approach to SRE will take account of:

**The needs of boys as well as girls** Girls tend to have greater access to SRE than boys, both through the media (particularly teenage magazines) and the home. We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying.

**Ethnic and cultural diversity** Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to SRE. The academy will consult students and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

**Varying home backgrounds** We recognise that our students may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We shall take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

**Sexuality** On average, about 5% of our students will go on to define themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT). Students may also have LGBT parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. All our students will meet and work with LGBT people. Our approach to SRE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral support will take account of the needs of LGBT students. We shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

**Special educational needs** we shall take account of the fact that some students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular SRE needs.

**The teaching programme for Sex and Relationship Education** We intend that all students shall experience a programme of sex and relationships education at a level which is appropriate for their age and physical development, with adaptations for those whose cognitive development is particularly slow.

**Students who use alternative methods of communication** some students have physical, visual or hearing impairments or are unable to use speech and may use signing, symbols and/or

communication switches and aids. The staff will adapt their teaching of sex and relationship education to ensure that these students have equal access.

**Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties** are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content; self-awareness, gender awareness, body recognition, privacy.

**Students with autism** will require individual teaching to meet their specific needs. SRE may be included in a TEACHH programme and Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) is suitable for areas such as toilet training. Explicit teaching and use of pictures and visual aids is essential to avoid confusion.

**Contraceptive advice to older students.** Students will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If students need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Local Advisory Body**

The Local Advisory Body will approve the SRE policy, and hold the Head of School to account for its implementation.

### **6.2 The Head of School**

The Head of School

### **6.3 Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering SRE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to SRE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of SRE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching SRE. Staff who have concerns about teaching SRE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School.

### **6.4 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in SRE and, when discussing issues related to SRE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

A whole school approach will be adapted to SRE that actively involves the whole academy community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding SRE. In particular:

#### **6.1 LAB**

Local Advisory Bodies have responsibilities for academy policies. They will be consulted about the SRE provision and policy and have regular reports at Governor's meetings.

#### **6.2 The Head of School**

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that SRE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of SRE (see section 7).

### **6.3 Senior leadership (SLT)**

SLT will endeavor to support the provision and development of SRE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.

### **6.4 Designated SRE coordinator**

The designated SRE co-ordinator will maintain an overview of SRE provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet student's needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

### **6.5 Staff**

All teachers are involved in the school's SRE provision. Some teach SRE through the PSHE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding sex or relationships issues. Teachers will be consulted about the academy's approach to SRE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

Non-teaching staff may be involved in a supportive role in some SRE lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral support role with students. They will have access to information about the SRE programme and supported in their pastoral role.

### **6.6 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the academy's SRE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish (see section 7.7). The academy will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavor to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers. The academy's approach to SRE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

### **6.7 The school nurse**

The school nurse can play a key role in supporting the teacher in SRE both in terms of advice, input into lessons, provision of pastoral support for students and resources. The school will work in ongoing consultation and partnership with the school nurse.

### **6.8 Outside agencies and speakers**

Outside agencies may be involved in inputting to SRE lessons and as points of referral as support services for students. The academy will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to student needs. We shall work in partnership with them and jointly plan their work within the school. The school will also promote relevant helping agencies that students can access.

### **6.9 Students**

All students have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate SRE and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted about their SRE needs and their views will be central to developing the provision.

## **7. Parents' right to withdraw**

Parents' have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of SRE. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of SRE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where SRE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head of School. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head of School will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

We will work in active partnership with parents/carers, value their views and keep them informed about SRE provision. If a parent/carer has any concerns about the SRE provision we will take time to address their concerns and allay any fears they may have. If any parents/carers decide to withdraw their child we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision.

## **8. Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of PSHE / SRE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The Head of School will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching SRE.

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of SRE is monitored by the leadership team.

The PSHE / SRE programme is regularly evaluated by the PSHE / SRE co-ordinator through learning walks, student surveys etc. The views of students and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.