

# Statement of Policy for Sex and Relationship Education

## Engayne Primary School

### 1. Context and rationale

Effective Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in primary schools can help children build happier, healthier relationships now and in their adult lives – and can also contribute to reducing teenage pregnancy...” (National Children’s Bureau, 2006)

“SRE is a lifelong learning process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings” (Sex Education Forum 1999”).

The 1996 Education Act consolidates all relevant previous legislation and states that all schools must provide an up-to-date policy that describes the content and organisation of SRE, provided outside the National Curriculum Science Order.

The DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (2000) supports this legislation and recommends that all schools should have a relationships and sex education programme tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.

Effective SRE is key in supporting children and young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, enabling them to make informed life choices confidently, and furthering their respect for themselves and others as they move through life. This requires a school-wide approach, growing children’s knowledge, skills and attitudes from reception through to year 6.

### 2. What is sex and relationship education?

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is a lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of 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.

- attitudes and values (linked to the school’s promotion of British values)
  - learning the importance of individual conscience and moral considerations
  - learning the values of family life, marriage and stable, loving relationships
  - learning the values of respect, love and care
  - learning the values of diversity and an understanding of difference
  - exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- personal and social skills
  - learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
  - developing self-respect and empathy for others
  - learning to make choices 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
  - developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- knowledge and understanding
  - learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
  - understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
  - learning about contraception and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay

### 3. Aims and Objectives of SRE

- to provide accurate information about, and increase understanding of, SRE issues
- to dispel myths about sex and relationships
- to explore attitudes and values about SRE issues
- to help pupils to reach their own, informed opinions
- to develop a sense of mutual respect and care for others
- to increase pupils' self-esteem
- to develop skills relevant to managing relationships and sexual situations

Examples of these skills, relevant to managing relationships and sexual situations, include:

- communication with others
- risk assessment
- decision making
- assertiveness
- conflict management
- seeking help and using services
- helping others

### 4. SRE at Engayne Primary School

We believe that every pupil attending the school should have the opportunity to develop and realise their true potential. We seek to provide an inclusive learning environment which encourages, guides and supports all pupils.

The SRE teaching programme is tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of children. In the early primary school years, education about relationships will focus on friendship, bullying and the building of self-esteem. In the later primary school years, children will learn about puberty and how a baby is born. All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty, before they experience the onset of physical changes.

#### (a) Where in the curriculum?

SRE is not delivered in isolation. It is firmly rooted within the school's framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and is linked to the following themes:

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of pupils' abilities
- Preparing pupils to play an active role as citizens
- Developing a healthier, safer lifestyle
- Developing good relationships and respecting others

SRE is addressed progressively in each year group, in a manner that is appropriate to the development of pupils at particular ages. It is integrated into the school curriculum, so that it forms part of children's normal learning. This includes:

- Integrating SRE within other subject areas across the curriculum, including science and RE. Notably, the Science Curriculum is used as a key driver for delivery of the SRE programme, within KS1.
- Delivering designated SRE lessons, in Year 5 and Year 6, as part of our PSHE programme

- Providing talks and workshops run in conjunction with the school nurse for children in Year 5 and Year 6

### (b) Science programmes of study

Key aspects of our SRE teaching programme are covered in our programmes of study for science:

Key Stage 1 (age 5-7 years):

Year 1 pupils are taught to:

- Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense

Year 2 pupils are taught to:

- Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- Describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

Key Stage 2 (age 7-11years):

Year 4 pupils are taught to:

- Describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans

Year 5 pupils are taught to:

- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age

Although the SRE elements of the programmes of study for science are set out year-by-year for key stage 1 and 2, please note that schools are only required to teach the relevant programme of study by the end of the key stage. Within each key stage, schools therefore have the flexibility to introduce content earlier or later than set out in the programme of study. In addition, schools can introduce key stage content during an earlier key stage if appropriate. All schools are also required to set out their school curriculum for science on a year-by-year basis and make this information available online, via the school website.

### (c) Designated SRE lessons, in Year 5 and Year 6

Changes

#### Aims:

- To introduce children to the physical and emotional changes which occur during puberty;
- To consider some of the changes over which we have no control and the choices we can make concerning those over which we do have control.

How Babies Are Made

#### Aims

- To explain how babies are made;
- To explore the idea of relationships, including friendships, parent-child and family relationships and adult sexual relationships.

Girl Talk and Boy Talk

*Year 6 only*

Girls and boys are offered the opportunity to discuss sex and relationship issues in single sex groupings. The Girl Talk and Boy Talk sessions, which are facilitated by female teachers (the girls) and male teachers (the boys), have the following aims:

- To explain how babies are made
- To explain puberty from a child's perspective
- To discuss media portrayals of males and females, including stereotyping
- To discuss and question their own knowledge and opinions

In addition, female pupils in Year 6 and their parents/carers are offered the opportunity to be part of a feminine hygiene talk, led by the school nurse or a member of school staff.

## 5. Teaching Approaches

SRE has become a political issue in this country, in recent years. Controversy has included debate about what is taught, when, in how much detail, etc. Most adults have strong views about some SRE issues. It is important for teachers to be clear about their own views but also to appreciate that children have a right to hear about other opinions. If teachers are asked by a child what they think about a particular issue, it is important to give an honest reply. However, it must be explained that this is only one point of view and other people may have different views. Whilst teachers cannot pretend to be objective about controversial issues, they can present balanced views to children. Children must understand that some issues are complex and they will have to reach their own views about them.

It is important that teachers are not too embarrassed by discussion of SRE. It helps if teachers anticipate any issues which they might find difficult to discuss. They can then seek advice about how best to manage any potentially awkward situations which might arise.

Sensitivity about how issues are addressed is paramount. Children, who are easily embarrassed, may particularly benefit from sensitive discussion of more controversial issues because this will help them overcome their embarrassment in future. Also, children, who are known to have been subjected to sexual abuse, will benefit from discussion of SRE issues, based on a caring approach which acknowledges children's rights. The Head Teacher will inform teachers of any potential issues relating to individual children, on a case by case basis, while still maintaining utmost confidentiality.

## 6. Creating the right atmosphere

Some initial embarrassment from children is not necessarily a bad thing. The key is to make sure that children who may feel embarrassed are not put on the spot and are helped to feel more comfortable. Teachers will use a variety of techniques to help children feel able to talk openly. Examples might include:

- Small group work - especially for issues which may be embarrassing to some children
- Single sex groupings for part of the lesson, where appropriate
- A question box where children can anonymously place questions for discussion without being clearly identified
- Using a range of participative learning methods that facilitate pupil thinking and involvement
- Involving pupils in decision making about their own learning. Encourage children to think about what they need to learn, how they can best learn and to evaluate what they have learned
- Negotiating ground rules. This can be done by asking children how they should and should not behave if everyone is to feel comfortable and be involved. Some suggested ground rules are:

- Listen to what people say
- Don't be nasty to each other
- No talking when someone else is talking
- Be kind to each other and give support
- If all you can say is something unpleasant, don't say anything
- If people don't want to talk they don't have to
- Don't laugh at the comments made by others

Discussion can follow about whether any other rules need adding. In particular, rules about not asking people personal questions and not talking about other people behind their backs may be useful.

## 7. Family life/home life

As part of sex and relationship education, pupils should be taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up children. Pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships, as key building blocks of community and society.

However, there are strong and mutually supportive relationships, outside marriage, and care needs to be taken to ensure there is no stigmatisation of children, based on their home circumstances. It is important not to have a narrow view of what family life may entail and to understand the broad range of experiences that pupils may have of family life. What constitutes a happy and caring life can vary greatly and has more to do with the quality of relationships than family structures.

## 8. Gender Issues

It is important that the needs for boys are considered, as well as for girls, in terms of which topics are addressed as part of our SRE teaching and learning.

At Engayne we believe the importance of teaching SRE lessons in mixed groups. However, it is important to use single sex groupings for some sessions.

Girls may feel more comfortable and able to talk more openly about more personal issues, without boys always being involved. Single sex groupings may also encourage boys to feel more able to talk with other boys.

Using single sex groupings for parts of sessions may also be useful where there are pupils who have strictly religious parents/carers who do not want their daughters talking to boys about certain issues and vice versa.

At Engayne Primary School, there is the opportunity for Year 5 girls accompanied by their parents/carers to be able to discuss issues relating to puberty and feminine hygiene. This session is led by the school nurse or a member of school staff and the children's anonymity is respected. The nurse will also be available to talk to Year 6 children on an individual basis, if desired. Again, children's anonymity is respected.

In Year 6, senior staff lead single sex SRE lessons, dealing with changes during puberty and relationships. Parents are offered the opportunity to talk to staff about the content of such sessions. The children are encouraged to make a note of any issues they would like to discuss. Anonymity is respected and a box for questions is displayed for children to use as necessary. Questions raised by the children will be answered in simple, age appropriate terms. This includes questions regarding contraception which, in the past, were referred back to parents. A letter is sent to parents, informing them of the content of these lessons. The letter provides parents with the

option to withdraw their children from any aspects of the SRE lessons, which they would prefer for them not to participate in.

## 9. Sexuality

Government guidance states that:

*'Pupils need also to be given accurate information for the purpose of enabling them to understand difference and of preventing or removing prejudice and to respect themselves and others.'*

*'It is up to schools to make sure that the needs of all pupils are met in their programmes. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that it is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.....Teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer questions and offer support.'*

*(DfEE, Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, 2000)*

It is important to encourage tolerance and understanding and not demean or encourage prejudice against people whose sexuality is different to their own. Primary aged children may already be aware of and have ideas about sexuality, sometimes based on inaccurate information and stereotypes. SRE should include discussion of sexuality in a sensitive manner and should include positive representations of homosexual, bisexual and transgender people.

Discussion of relationships should not be solely about heterosexual relationships. The word 'partner' can be used, rather than assuming all girls want to have boyfriends, all boys want to have girlfriends or that everyone wishes to get married and/or have children.

## 10. Sexism, homophobia and transphobia

Challenging sexism, homophobia and transphobia is part of Engayne's School approach to equal opportunities and combating bullying. In relation to this, Government guidance (Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Circular 10/99) stresses the unacceptability of, and emotional stress and harm caused by, bullying in whatever form, be it racial, related to a pupil's appearance, related to sexual orientation or for any other reason.

Many children make sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments. When they do this, it is important to deal with the issue, rather than avoid it. At Engayne, we handle this in a sensitive way, especially as some children may not fully understand what they are saying or the consequences this could have. Guidance should be sought from the Head teacher on how to approach and deal with such sensitive issues. Parents/carers may need to be involved, if such comments persist.

The use of the word 'gay' has become a common insult amongst children and young adults. Generally, this is not in the context of referring to a person's sexuality but in the context an insult or adjective i.e. 'that is so gay'. This should be strongly discouraged. We all need to challenge this if we hear it.

Texts and stories which give opportunities for discussion and reflection on such topics are used in school for assemblies and curriculum work.

## 11. Religious and Cultural beliefs

It is important that teachers are aware of cultural and religious differences, in relation to SRE

Where children are of a particular religious or cultural background, this will be taken into account in planning and delivery. However, it is a mistake to assume that all members of particular religious or cultural groups necessarily hold the same beliefs about SRE issues.

It is important to talk to both children and parents/carers to find out about their beliefs, what they want from SRE, what constraints there may be and how best to work with them. For some groups, a key issue may be mixed male/female groupings. For others, it may be about which issues are explored in SRE and how.

At Engayne, we involve parents/carers in pre-arranged meetings within year groups to explain exactly what we are teaching, why and how. It is important to be sensitive to religious and cultural beliefs, without jumping to conclusions.

## 12. Confidentiality and disclosure

At Engayne Primary School, we have clear procedures for safeguarding children (specified in the school's Child Protection Policy).

School procedures should be followed in terms of confidentiality and disclosure of information. All disclosures should be referred to the Head teacher, who is Engayne's Nominated Child Protection Co-ordinator, or one of two senior leaders, who will act in the Head teacher's absence.

## 13. Evaluation

Evaluation of SRE is very important, in order to assess what has been learnt and how future work can be more effective. At Engayne Primary, we will monitor, evaluate and review SRE through:

- Questionnaires to measure attitudes or what pupils feel they have learnt;
- Individual and group recall of what has been learnt;
- Problem solving activities, such as pupils responding to real life situations, using case studies.

Some of these techniques can be used before and after work has taken place, in order to measure what changes have occurred.

## 14. Parent/Carer objection or withdrawal of children

Some individual parents/carers or occasionally groups, may object to SRE work in school. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from SRE (this does not include situations in which sex and relationship related topics arise naturally in other subject areas).

If parents/carers request this, it may be appropriate to discuss the issues and try to reassure them. Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their children but they should be aware of the implications of removing their children, especially how it will make their child feel and how it may affect relationships with other children.

## 15. Year Group Parent/Carer and Governor Meetings

Year group meetings will be provided for parents/carers and Governors to attend. Information will be provided on details of the SRE programme for individual year groups. This will take the form of a video and talk/discussion led by the school nurse. Teaching staff of that year group will be present at such meetings.

## 16. Review of Policy

The SRE Policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Ratified by Governors, March 2008

Reviewed by P Fitzpatrick June 2015 with Parent Council. Agreed with SLT Sept 15.

Reviewed by P Fitzpatrick September 2016