

# Health, Relationships and Sex Education Policy



**The Stour Academy Trust**  
*Together on a journey to excellence*

**Reviewed July 2019**

## Our Vision

As the sponsor school of The Stour Academy Trust, we actively promote collaboration in order to continue the growth and development of God's children, including those beyond our border. We are driven by our commitment to the children's well-being and education, enabling all of our children to flourish and become life-long learners.

Put simply: we work together and share the best of ourselves to help everyone around us grow and develop.

## **Introduction**

Our Christian vision drives us to be a school committed to excellence and wanting to ensure that all pupils, staff, families and stakeholders are all given the chance to flourish and achieve the best that they can. The message that Jesus gave in the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand' (Matthew 14: 13-21) reminds us that every member of our school community deserves to receive equal provision through God's love. Our school knows its role for the whole local community whilst being considerate of our Church of England foundation and the teachings of the Anglican Church in regards to relationships and sex.

## **Legal Requirements**

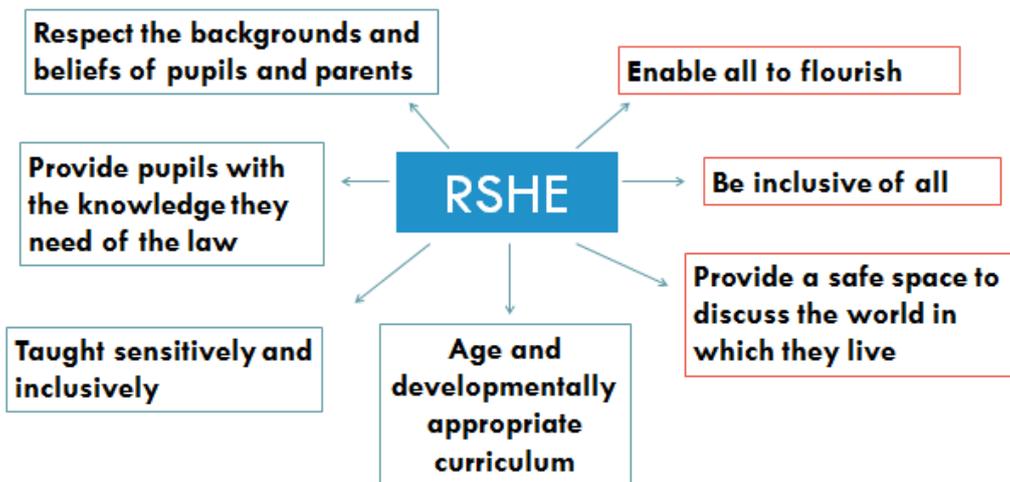
The Education Reform Act 1988 requires the school curriculum to '*promote the moral, spiritual, physical and mental development of all pupils and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of 'adult life'...Combat ignorance and, therefore, increase understanding and promote the ability to make informed decisions.*'

The 1996 Education Act combined all previous legislation on Sex Education and requires Governors of all Maintained Schools to consider the provision of Sex Education and to ensure that where it is provided the school has an associated Policy. Governing Bodies should agree that policy, the content of the programme and the resources used.

The DfE recognise that children and young people today are 'growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline.' Therefore, they need to learn how to create and sustain safe and healthy relationships and how to manage their personal, academic and social lives in a positive way.

Health and Relationships Education will be compulsory in all primary schools in England. Pupils are offered a balanced programme that is age and developmentally appropriate. It is taught in a sensitive and respectful manner and differentiated accordingly. With regards to Sex Education, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the lessons provided, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as required by the National Curriculum for Science.

## Christian Context



We are committed to being a welcoming and inclusive community where all feel included, can learn and flourish, living out Jesus' promise of life in all its fullness (John 10:10) regardless of their family arrangements, beliefs or sexual or gender orientation. The delivery of RSE in our church school encompasses the teachings of the Church of England, including the Christian understanding of marriage as the context for sexual relationships and the importance of trust, loyalty, fidelity and choice, as well as the understanding of abstinence and celibacy as positive life choices, whilst being sensitive to the community it serves.

Children and young people need to be taught about the world in which they live, to ensure they are able to articulate their own feelings and choices, whilst being considerate and understanding of the views, beliefs and life choices of others.

Children and young people are entitled to learn about relationships and sex education in a positive and safe environment, where they can develop the vocabulary, knowledge and skills to help understand themselves and others.

Children and young people need to be equipped with language and tools to develop healthy resilient relationships, in age-appropriate ways. This is especially vital in an internet age where they have far greater exposure to information than before, much of which reaches them from outside the safety of the classroom or family context.

Effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Sensitivity and respect should be shown to all children when teaching about personal relationships and sex education and RSE should be taught in a way that ensures there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home/personal circumstances.

All RSE should be set in a context that is consistent with the school's Trust Deed, Christian ethos and values.

- RSE should be based on inclusive Christian principles and values, emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness.
- RSE should be taught in the light of the belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- RSE should be sensitive to the circumstances of all children and be mindful of the variety of expressions of family life in our culture, yet it should also uphold the Christian values regarding relationships and marriage as recognised by the Church of England (i.e. Marriage is a gift of God in creation and encompasses consent, public witness, permanence and lifelong fidelity)
- Issues regarding human sexuality should be addressed sensitively
- The exploration of reproduction and sexual behaviour within the Science curriculum should stand alongside the exploration of relationships, values and morals and Christian belief

Whilst children are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs and to develop an individual moral code that will guide their actions, this is exercised within an understanding of the right of people to hold their own views within a framework of respect for others.

Sex education must be an integral part of the personal, social and health education curriculum in all Church Schools. Each school must teach within a framework of Christian values and the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God as part of creation. Whilst schools may use sex education to inform children about sexual issues, each must do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions.

### **Definition**

Relationships and Sex Education is a lifelong learning process. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of making and maintaining stable relationships. We recognise that to be human is to experience feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships that may be physical or non-physical. RSE seeks to enable young people to feel positive about themselves, manage relationships and access the infrastructure of support to empower them to investigate all possible options available to them.

Each school's approach to RSE should be sensitive to the age and aptitude of the children, but be straightforward and factual in line with the law and good pedagogy. It should reflect the reality of young people's lives today, especially the persuasive influences of television, video, the internet, social media, peer pressure and young people's literature. Where controversial topics arise, schools and academies are asked to use agreed collective judgement, with due regard to this policy.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

We aim to provide pupils with an age appropriate SRE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. The intention is to ensure that through SRE pupils:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- Are able to correctly name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work
- Are able to protect themselves and ask for help and support
- Are prepared for their development into adulthood
- To know the Christian definition of love in its different forms and contexts

- To acquire information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings.

In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. This curriculum should enable children to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. We seek to achieve this by having three main elements to our programme as outlined in, 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', DfEE ref 0116/2000, p5. We will work towards these aims in partnership with parents.

#### 4. Key learning objectives

- Learn to care about others and to be sensitive to their needs and views
- Learn to accept differences between people, not exploit them
- Learn the value of family life, marriage, and the importance of stable, loving and caring relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all its members
- Learn to respect oneself and others
- Learn to be honest, loyal, trustworthy and faithful in relationships
- Learn to take responsibility for one's actions
- Learn to explore, consider, understand and reflect as part of decision making
- Learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Develop empathy for others
- Learn to manage conflict
- Learn the importance of conscience, Christian values and moral considerations

#### 5. Moral Framework

Pupils will be taught SRE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- Being honest with themselves and others
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for bringing up children
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation

#### **Equal Opportunities: Inclusion and differentiated learning:**

SRE will be delivered in line with the school's equal opportunities policy within an atmosphere of mutual respect. Resources selected to support the programme will be free from cultural bias wherever possible and will avoid gender stereotyping. SRE will be available to all pupils regardless of gender, culture or disability. We ensure HRSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequence of discrimination, teasing, bullying, and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), and use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

### **Day to day application of policy:**

Health, Relationships and Sex Education as part of the PHSE curriculum can be approached in a variety of ways. In circle time we teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach about the parts of the body, how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. A main part of our teaching is to encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

In science lessons in both key stages, teachers inform children about puberty and how a baby is born. For this aspect of the school's teaching, we follow the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

We liaise with the Local Health Authority about suitable teaching materials to use with our children in these lessons and on occasion the school nurse may come in to talk to the children. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children and within the ethos of each school. A mixture of single sex and mixed grouping is used as appropriate.

While sex education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all our work. In particular, we teach sex education in the belief that:

- sex education is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process;
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect.

### **The Role of Parents**

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children. Parents and carers have the most significant influence on their child's development, growth, maturity and the ability to form healthy relationships. Health and Relationships education is a statutory requirement for Primary Schools and parents cannot withdraw their children from this aspect. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the elements of sex education that are taught through PSHE (though not from those elements taught through Science). Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their children from this aspect of SRE should discuss this with the Headteacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not want their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of the parents in this regard. However, we believe that the safe environment of the classroom is the best place for such a curriculum to be delivered, therefore before a child is withdrawn, we would welcome a discussion with parents to ensure there are no detrimental effects to the child.

We appreciate the sensitivity and concerns some parents may feel towards HRSE and, therefore, we invite parents to see the materials we use in the school. We believe that for the children to achieve the desired objectives, a positive and united relationship must continue to

exist between home and school and we would encourage discussion about this area of the curriculum at home.

In promoting this objective we:

- Inform parents/carers about the school's HRSE policy and practice;
- Answer any questions that parents/carers may have about HRSE of their child;
- Take seriously any issues that parents/ carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for HRSE in the school;
- Encourage parents/carers to be involved in reviewing the School's Policy and making modifications as necessary;
- Inform parents/carers about the key messages that parents/carers give to children at home.

### **Managing Questions and Sensitive Issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE, however teachers promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They are aware that views around RSE are varied, therefore lessons are delivered without bias. Lessons are presented using a variety of views and beliefs enabling children to make their own informed opinions whilst respecting those of others. Teachers use their skill and discretion when answering questions according to the age and maturity of the pupil(s). They refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned.

### **Confidentiality**

The teacher delivers health, relationships and sex education lessons throughout the school year as part of a programme of PSHE. These lessons are conducted in a sensitive manner and in complete confidence. See Confidentiality policy.

However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If teachers have concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the Headteacher. The Head will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals.

(See also Child Protection Policy)

### **The Role of the Headteacher**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Headteacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and that they work within this framework.

The Headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to the Board of Directors, when requested, on its effectiveness.

### **Useful Documents and Resources**

Key references can be found below. These have been taken from “Valuing All God’s Children, Guidance for Church of England Schools in Challenging Homophobic Bullying” May 2014 pages 60-62

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1988293/valuing%20all%20god's%20children%20web%20final.pdf>

[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_school/education\\_for\\_all/quick\\_links/education\\_resources/primary\\_school\\_resources/default.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/quick_links/education_resources/primary_school_resources/default.asp)

*Key Stage 1: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples (www.salisbury.anglican.org). This includes lessons about how wonderful our bodies are and "My family - those who care for me" . These are inclusive materials that affirm all children and help to raise self-esteem.*

*Key Stage 2: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples (www.salisbury.anglican.org). This includes a lesson on Christian marriage that might be taught in PSHE or RE. It also includes a lesson called 'Firm Foundations' which allows pupils to focus on the question of "What makes people compatible?" This is explored with reference to long-term committed relationships and friendships. There is the possibility that children can raise for themselves the issue of gay relationships - but the focus for this lesson is compatibility and how we make sensible choices. The summary activity asks which behaviours make for life giving relationships and what makes life-limiting or destructive relationships. It is an inclusive activity that allows pupils to begin to form safe guidelines for healthy behaviours within loving and nurturing, non-exploitative relationships.*