

St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Policy

'Strive to succeed in the presence of God'

Together as a Catholic community, **Everyone** – children, parents, staff and parish, **Achieves** in their own unique way and strives to be **More** like Jesus.

Introduction

The overall responsibility for teaching children about sex and relationships lies with the parents. Following statutory guidance and advice for the Diocese, the Governors have formulated the school policy for Sex and Relationships Education.

"The whole of childhood is a movement of gradual independence in which children learn how to live effective lives. They have to learn how to identify, acknowledge and manage a range of feelings. They have to learn how to live and work with others. They have to learn how to make appropriate decisions and take responsibility for the decisions they have made. The onset of physical and emotional changes, such that is experienced in pre-adolescence and puberty, now require children to get information from sources, other than their parents (parents have told us this). The reasons given for parental attitudes vary: either parents lack the expertise and the knowledge, others state that they get embarrassed and they are uncomfortable about how to tackle specific issues with their children." (Dominion J, 1991)

Experience has shown that parents welcome schools in providing children with a well planned programme of education where the Personal, Social and Spiritual dimensions of each child can be developed. It is often easier to discuss specific subject matters with the formal structure of lessons in school.

Aims and Objectives of SRE Policy

We believe and support the following educational aims in respect of Sex and Relationships Education. We teach the children "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbour as your self."

We aim to teach:

- The physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults
- The way humans reproduce
- Respect for their own bodies
- The importance of family life.
- Moral questions
- Relationship issues
- Respect for the views of other people.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the Sex and Relationships Education programme in the taught curriculum and the informal curriculum. We deliver the taught curriculum mainly through RE, PSHE and Science, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The school actively co-operates with other agencies. Visitors who support the school will be informed of the values held within this policy.

The Sex and Relationships Education programme reflects the school ethos and encourages the following values:

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Commitment, trust within relationships
- Honesty with self and others
- A development of critical self awareness for themselves and for others
- An exploration of the rights, duties, and responsibilities involved in relationships
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy, and care
- An acknowledgement and understanding of diversity

Equal Opportunities

Through the teachings of our Catholic faith we believe that each person is special and unique in the eyes of God and it should be so in our eyes also. Every member of staff in St. Monica's school is committed therefore to developing and fostering a positive self image in every child from the day they enter St. Monica's school. We value the rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds, cultures and experiences which our children and their families bring to our school and will endeavour to reflect these wherever possible. A wide variety of resources are used including audio-visual resources in line with the equal opportunities statement.

The SRE Curriculum

Elements of SRE are taught throughout Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. These elements are developed when the curriculum gives opportunities for children to learn about relationships, feelings, friendships, their bodies and life cycles. Elements of this curriculum are covered through use of the SEAL (the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) topics in each half term and in assemblies throughout the year.

The main elements are covered in a two year programme called 'All That I Am' which is covered in Years 5 and 6. This programme has been developed by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education, in the Diocese of Birmingham, and is recommended as a resource by the Diocese of Westminster. In each year group programme, there are a series of lessons that teach children about the 'Individual', 'Physical', 'Social', 'Emotional', and 'Spiritual' changes and experiences that they need to be aware of as they grow and develop both physically and emotionally. This programme is additionally supported by a video lesson called 'Growing Up', which is used in Year 6. This video summarises much of what has been taught in 'All That I Am' and is used as a prompt for a questions session that the children have an opportunity to take part in. (Appendix – answering questions from children)

These are in line with PSHE and Citizenship framework and National Curriculum 2000 Science. The 1996 Education Act consolidates all relevant previous legislation. In summary,

- the Sex Education elements contained in the national curriculum Science orders are mandatory for all pupils of primary and secondary age . Sex education in the national Science curriculum covers anatomy, puberty and biological aspects of sexual reproduction. Moral responsibility should be encouraged.

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) requires that young people:

- learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children
- are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

Confidentiality

As a general rule a child's confidentiality will be maintained by the teacher or member of staff concerned. If this person believes that a child is at risk or in danger, she /he is to talk to the designated teacher for child protection who will confer with the Headteacher before any decision is made. The child concerned will be informed that confidentiality is being breached and the reasons why. This follows the school and the Borough's child protection procedures. (See Child Protection Policy.)

Use of Visitors

There are various people who can resource and support school based sex and relationship education. These people may include school nurse and other health professionals. A teacher will always remain in the classroom when a visitor is present.

Working with Parents

Under the Education Act 1996 pupils can be withdrawn by their parents from part of sex education that is outside the compulsory elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum. Parents wanting to exercise this right are invited to see the Headteacher who will explore the concerns of parents and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Following this discussion, if a parent still wishes to withdraw the child we would ask that the request be submitted in writing. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in sex and relationships education until the request for withdrawal has been removed. This will be reviewed with the parents each year.

Appendix

Sex Education Notes for Guidance - Answering questions from children

Questions should only be invited from the children in the context of work they have been involved in – i.e. watching a video, part of a topic.

It is better to ask the children to generate questions as a group and ask them to be written down. The teacher is then able to group the questions under appropriate headings.

Children should be encouraged not to use "slang" or "family" names and terms. The teacher should always use correct biological terminology. This may mean that a teacher has to interpret a question before reading it out and answering it

Where a question is deemed inappropriate either because it is not connected to the subject matter being dealt with or because it goes beyond the scope of the school sex education policy / age / stage of development of the pupils, the teacher must either decide to

- leave those questions to the end and invite children who have not had their questions answered to speak to the teacher on their own,
- explain that they are only answering questions on a particular topic. In either case the most appropriate action would be for the teacher to suggest that the child asks his / her parents.

Where a child asks a question about sex, out of the context of sex education lessons or a related topic the teacher should speak to the child individually to try to ascertain what has prompted the question e.g. "Why did you want to know that?" The teacher can then respond in one of the ways suggested above.