



SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

The School recognises 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.

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

The policy follows the DfEE guidelines published in July 2000.

It is also underpinned by the stated school aim that Thomas's, while welcoming children of all faiths, nevertheless adheres to the principles of Christian belief, which govern the behaviour of one person towards another. Each individual is encouraged to behave in a natural, happy and responsible way and to be mindful of the needs of others.

The policy was written following consultation with Principals, Heads, staff, the PTA and the parent body. Parents are informed that the policy, the syllabus and the teaching resources are available for them to see. An outline syllabus is distributed to parents annually via the Curriculum Handbooks.

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, while much of it is learnt 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 them 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 to them. A structured programme in school increases the probability of this being achieved. Also, although children want to be able to discuss sex and relationships with their parents, 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?

SRE will

- i. provide information which is easy to understand and relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children
- ii. include the development of communication and social skills
- iii. encourage the exploration and clarification of values and the development of positive attitudes

Through SRE we want to ensure that the children

- iv. develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings, friendships and relationships
- v. are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work
- vi. can protect themselves and ask for help and support
- vii. are prepared for puberty
- viii. learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children

and in the Upper School

- 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 and within a loving, responsible relationship
- understand the reasons for protected sex and avoiding casual sex
- understand sexual orientation whilst not promoting it
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- communicate effectively
- 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 PSHE and Citizenship programme and 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.

Organisation and Planning

1. The Head, the Head of Middle School (where applicable) and the Head of Lower School are responsible for the SRE scheme of work. The Head of Lower School, the Head of Middle School and the Head of PSHE or PSHE subject leader are responsible for monitoring its delivery.
2. The compulsory part of SRE is taught through Science lessons. Where any of this information or these topics are introduced through the SRE syllabus earlier than the year designated by the Science syllabus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the lessons.

The Science National Curriculum requires that in the Lower School 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 humans...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. PSHE and Citizenship links provide teaching opportunities for many of the elements of SRE. In PSHE the four areas of study are
 - Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
 - Preparing to play an active role as citizens
 - Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
 - Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

Through Citizenship studies pupils develop

- Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens
- Skills of enquiry and communication

- Skills of participation and responsible action
4. PSHE, SRE and Citizenship are integrated into many areas of the curriculum and school life. (See PSHE & Citizenship Policy)
 5. Discrete lessons are allocated for those parts of the SRE syllabus that cannot be delivered via Science, PSHE, assemblies, Circle Time and other subjects.
These are taught in the Lower School by the form teacher, in the Middle School either by the form teacher or by a volunteer colleague and in the Upper School by volunteer teachers plus supplementary specialist visitors from outside agencies.
All form tutors are familiar with this policy and the syllabus and will be prepared to support pupils and answer direct questions as appropriate.
 6. The School is committed to using the best teaching materials and to providing appropriate training and support for staff. The Head of PSHE and Subject Leaders are responsible for monitoring training needs and 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 full classes, with 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. (see examples in syllabus)
- **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 depersonalised, safe environment.
- **Dealing with questions.** Teachers must be supported and prepared for the unexpected. e.g. a) the ground rules should be referred to if 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.
d) if a teacher is concerned that a child is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's Child Protection 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 must be used 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 the teachers will not influence the teaching of SRE. Teachers will work within the guidelines of this policy and the scheme of work.

The school will provide support for parents through sharing with them the school's SRE programme contents and by working with the PTA to invite external speakers to contribute to the parent education programme.

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 and will provide an information pack for parents.

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 Child Protection 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 or carers. 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.

Resources

The Head of PSHE and Subject Leaders research current resources and provide a range of appropriate materials.

Resources will be made available for parents to view prior to use with the children.

This policy will be reviewed annually.		
Reviewed: September 2006	By:	Jill Kelham Vice Principal
Next Review: September 2007	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal

Jk/pshe/sre/policy/may05

Appendix 1



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

This policy is included in the Staff Handbook and in the PSHCE and Sex and Relationships Education syllabus.

Parents are made aware of the key points through the Curriculum Guides and may request a full copy of the policy at any time.

Children are made aware of the contents of the policy, in terms appropriate to their age, each year at the beginning of the SRE teaching programme.

Aim

The aim of the policy is to maintain the best interests of the child.

Key issues

- Teachers will listen sympathetically to anything the child tells them in confidence. However...
- No member of staff can offer unconditional confidentiality to pupils. Pupils must be made aware of this.
- If it is considered necessary to breach confidentiality in the best interests of the child, the pupil will be informed first and given appropriate support.
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents.
- The School's Child Protection Policy will be followed if there is any possibility of abuse.

If a pupil tells a teacher that he or she is sexually active or is thinking of becoming so, this should be regarded as a child protection issue. In such cases:

- the teacher should consult the designated teacher
- the designated teacher, in discussion with the child, must see that the Head and the parents are informed
- the designated teacher should follow the Child Protection Policy and ensure that help and support are available for the child and the family.

Ground rules

The School aims to provide a secure and safe environment in which children feel that they can express themselves confidently and freely. The children must trust the teachers to safeguard their interests. The teachers must understand that effective SRE can lead to disclosures that need sensitive handling and, in some cases, may be a child protection matter.

In lessons where personal issues are discussed ground rules, established at the beginning of the lesson, are essential. These can include:

- no intimate personal questions are to be asked of pupil, teacher or visiting speaker

- no disclosure of intimate personal details in the class room setting
- no gossiping about personal matters by pupils or teachers outside the PSHCE or SRE lessons
- if the teacher feels a question is inappropriate for the setting he/she will attend to it later on an individual basis

Personal disclosures

- Personal disclosures should be discouraged during PSHCE or SRE lessons; case studies or distancing techniques may be used to examine situations and choices.
- All staff must be prepared to listen to pupils' disclosures sympathetically and without making judgements.
- If a disclosure from a pupil takes place at an inappropriate time or place, the teacher should arrange to see the pupil individually before the end of the school day.
- The teacher must tell the pupil that he/she cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. He/she will tell the pupil before discussing the case with the designated teacher, the Head or the parents.
- In all but the most exceptional circumstances parents will be informed and the pupil will be encouraged to talk to the parents.
- The teacher may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague without mentioning the child's name.
- The teacher must consult the designated teacher and the Head if there is any suggestion of a child protection issue.

Monitoring

The designated teacher and the Head will monitor the number and type of disclosures requiring breach of confidentiality in order to assess the implications for the School's PSHCE and SRE programme.

This policy will be reviewed annually.			
Policy Reviewed:	February 2008	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal.
To be reviewed:	February 2009	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal