

SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

Date of Policy: **April 2017**

Date of Review: **April 2019**

INTRODUCTION

Sex and relationship education (SRE) contributes to promoting pupil self esteem, emotional wellbeing and helps them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships based on respect for others. Research shows that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education encourages young people to delay early sexual activity. At Thomas Gainsborough School it is delivered as part of a planned programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Religious Education (RE). Effective SRE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.

DEFINITION:

The DfES, in SRE Guidance 2000, defines SRE as:

“ Lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for 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.”

Its three main elements are:-

- **Attitudes and values:** which involve the importance of conscience and moral consideration, the value of respect and love; exploring and understanding moral dilemmas and thinking critically about decision making.
- **Personal and social skills:** learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively; developing self-respect and empathy; making choices with an understanding of difference and absence of prejudice; appreciating the consequences of choices, managing conflict and recognising and avoiding exploitation and abuse.
- **Knowledge and understanding:** human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health advice, and support services, the reasons for, and benefits of, delaying sexual activity and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

AIMS:

The aim of SRE is to:

- Contribute to the systematic programme of learning experiences which promotes students' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development;
- Help prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of SRE is to help young people through their physical, emotional and moral development.

At Thomas Gainsborough School, SRE is concerned with human relationships in the widest sense:

- the qualities and values of family life;
- learning about oneself and others as a member of the male or female sex;
- gaining knowledge about human reproduction and contraception;
- gaining information about the nature of sexually transmitted infections;
- gaining information about the consequences of pregnancy;
- being made aware of the responsibilities of one's actions and their consequences as related to sexual activity.

SRE should allow students to understand some of the cultural norms in society today in sexual relationships and in family life. It should challenge issues of stereotyping and work towards countering prejudice.

The underlying principle of the SRE policy is to give students the reasons for and strength to say 'no'.

The SRE policy conforms to legal requirements (1993 Education Act and DfES circular 5/94 'Sex Education in School').

In addition, the SRE policy reinforces, builds upon and supports, the other policies of Thomas Gainsborough School, such as: the school ethos and values, PSHE policy; Equal Opportunities policy; School Behaviour policy, Teaching and Learning policy, Safeguarding, Drugs and SEN/D policies.

MORALS AND VALUES:

The SRE programme reflects the school ethos with regard to meeting the needs of all students – who are going through adolescence with all of the physical, social and mental pressures which such a time encompasses.

SRE at Thomas Gainsborough School prepares young people for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgments and behaviour;
- be aware of their sexuality and understand human sexuality;
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- understand the reasons for having protected sex;
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want;
- communicate effectively;
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves, and their partner, from unintended/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV;
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others;
- avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex;
- access confidential sexual health advice, support and if necessary treatment;
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

In line with school policy to ensure equality of learning opportunity, SRE is offered to all students, irrespective of gender and learning ability. Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from SRE.

ORGANISATION OF SRE:

SRE is taught as a discrete subject but clearly some aspects of it (e.g. contraception) must be dealt with in an explicit (i.e. detailed and open) way so that factual content is covered 'completely'. Elements of the programme will be covered in a range of curriculum subjects (e.g. population control as part of Geography; biological facts in Science; moral and emotional issues in RE) as well as in Assemblies and PSHE Enrichment Days. Consequently, many staff may be involved in the delivery of some elements of SRE.

We involve the wider community including School Nurses, other health professionals, and other appropriate accredited organisations such as Stonewall.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching staff receive support from the SMSC Co-ordinator and follow the Teaching and Learning policy guidelines.

Training provision

When the PSHE programme is being devised, staff will be asked about their willingness and ability to teach SRE. The School Nurse and other health professionals contribute to our CPD programme; the SMSC Co-ordinator and Learning Mentors attend relevant courses. All staff have had Safeguarding training.

Methodology and approach, including explicitness and handling of controversial topics

Teaching will take place in teaching groups by, as far as is possible, teachers who know the group well, although as stated above, a 'specialist' may be used if appropriate. Material will be handled sensitively and will be age appropriate. Questions will be answered honestly bearing in mind the understanding and maturity of the student and in accordance with the policy. Staff are aware of the difficult situation they can place themselves in if discussing controversial, personal or sensitive topics with students.

Specific classroom arrangements

The teaching of SRE will be to mixed classes; the size of the class may be varied to suit the topic and/or nature of the students. Single gender groups may be used if deemed appropriate and relevant.

Procedures for reviewing the effectiveness of the programme

The programme is monitored and reviewed annually by the SMSC co-ordinator in liaison with health professionals, staff, SLT and students.

SPECIFIC ISSUE STATEMENTS:

Confidentiality

Staff and students will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidential and that certain disclosures will lead to the involvement of the Safeguarding Team.

Health professionals in the Drop-In conform to their guidelines, i.e. they may provide contraceptive advice and treatment to young people under 16 if, in their clinical judgement, and they believe it is in the young person's best medical interests.

Contraceptive 'advice'

Contraception is included in the themes of health, family life and relationships. This topic must be taught very sensitively; it must be one of information giving rather than advising students. For students who are 16 years and older the situation is still complex and teachers are advised to take care to teach the topic rather than give advice.

If a teacher is approached by a student below the age of 16 about contraceptive advice or other aspects of sexual behaviour or health, that teacher must encourage the student to seek advice from his/her parents/carer, health professional in the school health Drop-In or a medical practitioner. Under the Children's Act the well being of a student is paramount and if a teacher has grounds for concern for the well-being of a student then the Safeguarding Team must be informed.

Child sexual abuse procedure

If a teacher has grounds for concern for the well being of a student then the Safeguarding Team must be informed immediately.

Child withdrawal procedures

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts, of the school's sex education programme, other than those elements which are in the National Curriculum via Science.

Parents/Carers will be informed, in writing in the school newsletter, before SRE is started for their child and parents/carers must then inform the school, in writing, if they do not wish their child to take part in the SRE programme; if this happens, the child will not attend the SRE lessons.

Parents/Carers do not have to give reasons for their decision.

Procedures for the involvement of health professionals or visitors

The content of any lesson given by, or supported by, a health professional or visitor will be under the guidance of the SMSC co-ordinator to ensure it is suitable for the students and conforms to the school's SRE policy.

WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS:

Thomas Gainsborough School recognises that some of our community have religious or cultural beliefs, especially regarding SRE. Parents/Carers are invited to consult with the school regarding any aspect of the SRE policy, its content, resources and teaching.

