



SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY

Rationale and context

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is about physical, moral and emotional development. It aims to ensure that children understand the value of commitment and stability in all relationships, the importance of marriage for family life, and the range of ways in which we may interact with family and friends. It also includes the teaching of sex and sexual health, taught in the context of relationships. It particularly reinforces the first two aims of the Every Child Matters agenda, which is to “be healthy” and “stay safe”.

SRE is rooted in the ethos of Christ Church, reflecting:

- the school's vision statement - particularly the desires to celebrate our Christian ethos and to nurture and develop the self esteem and confidence of children; and
- the school's broader educational aims - particularly the need to prepare children for puberty.

The context in which this aspect of teaching takes place is therefore one of open engagement with the issues, built upon the secure foundations of the Christian faith and the rich traditions of the Anglican Church. SRE forms part of an integrated programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) throughout the school, which in turn is complemented by religious education and by all other aspects of the curriculum, including science.

The Governing Body has responsibility under the 1996 Education Act for the policy of sex education within the school. However, education in this area above all needs a wider framework, and needs to reflect a working partnership between teachers, parents, carers and governors, all of whom have been consulted in the formulation of this policy. This policy is published in that spirit, for the good of the children now and in their future lives.

The aims of SRE

The aims of SRE at Christ Church are:

- To provide each pupil with a consistent and holistic programme of education on sex, relationships and family life, appropriate to that pupil's age and experience
- To develop an appreciation of Christian teaching as a guide to contemporary patterns of relationships and marriage
- To recognise the value of equality of opportunity for all members of the community, irrespective of their sexuality
- To encourage children's awareness of the diversity of family life and of human relationships
- To help children towards an understanding of the nature of interpersonal relationships
- To enable children to mature, build up their confidence and self-esteem
- To promote a positive self image amongst children, encouraging a proper respect for their own bodies and those of others
- To protect children against exploitation by helping them help to understand that they have rights over their own bodies and have control over who can touch them
- To prepare children for physical and emotional changes, and reassure them that these are normal
- To give children an understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy



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- To give children throughout their time at Christ Church a gradual understanding of the human reproductive system
- To answer questions as clearly and objectively as possible, as and when they arise
- To help parents and carers understand the nature of sex education at Christ Church so that they can support the school-based work in a positive and beneficial way for their children.

Why is SRE important?

The National Society (the national body which supports Church of England schools) has stated the following about sex education:

“Sex is not only a given fact of human existence but, in Christian belief, a gift of God as part of creation. It is important that, as they grow up, children come to an understanding of their own bodies, instincts and feelings. In this way they will be prepared for the opportunities, joys and responsibilities of permanent relationships of the opposite sex... the Church school can make a distinctive and unique contribution to sex education by placing it within a Christian context of love, faithfulness and forgiveness. A programme of sex education allows pupils to explore an increasing awareness of their individual and social responsibility before God.”

Christ Church supports this approach. Children begin to learn about sex and relationships from a very young age. Some of the messages they are exposed to are incomplete, incorrect and confusing. It is therefore important to teach all children the correct facts about sex and relationships, and to help them develop a moral framework rooted in Christian teaching for understanding such facts, in order to build their confidence and understanding of a variety of issues. Effective SRE also discourages early experimentation, allowing children to understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

How will SRE be taught?

The teaching of SRE is age-specific, and is integrated across the school curriculum, which embraces the National Curriculum. Significant elements of sex education are included in the (statutory) National Curriculum for science. Other aspects, including the relational context of sex education, are delivered through the (non-statutory) PHSE framework. Topics and themes will be repeated from year to year in increasingly greater depth, taking account of pupils' development. Elements may be approached through guided discussion and cross-curricular opportunities which may involve science or the PSHE programme.

In summary, the following topics will be covered in Years 1-4:

Year 1	Parts of the body; Growing and changing; Matching adult and baby animals
Year 2	Differences between boys and girls; Differences between males and females; Naming body parts
Year 3	Challenging gender stereotypes; Differences: males and females; Family differences
Year 4	Growing and Changing; Body changes and reproduction; Puberty

The more specific sex education (ie teaching on human reproduction) will be carried out in Years 5 and 6. In summary, the following will be covered:

Year 5	What is puberty? Puberty and Hygiene; Menstruation
Year 6	Puberty and Reproduction; Relationships and reproduction; Conception and pregnancy



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While the agreed scheme of work does not have explicitly Christian teaching objectives – not least because much of the scheme will be delivered in science lessons – teachers will be mindful of the Christian objectives of the school's SRE policy (as stated above) when delivering the scheme.

We recognise that alongside the more formal elements of teaching there should be flexibility to address individual concerns related to the child's personal emotional and sexual development as and when they arise. The broad programme will, as appropriate, involve input from a variety of external agencies, including the community nurse and the Local Health Authority.

The school will ensure that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, understand and support the purpose and aims of SRE, and that they are also aware of their professional role and responsibilities as determined by current legislation. Appropriate training will be provided as necessary. Particular attention will be paid to the induction of new staff.

Answering questions on sensitive topics

Teachers should seek to encourage an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality in the SRE classroom, which they themselves must respect also. Sometimes an individual child will ask a personal, explicit or difficult question in the classroom, which a teacher may decide is not appropriate to answer directly there and then. Individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and may address such questions individually later on. Teachers should refer to the PSHE co-ordinator if they are concerned.

If children ask about them, certain sensitive topics may be addressed appropriately, openly and honestly, in accordance with the Christian ethos of the school and the aims of SRE as stated above. If children ask about them, certain sensitive topics may be addressed appropriately, openly and honestly, in accordance with the Christian ethos of the school and the aims of SRE as stated above. Sexual orientation will not be part of the SRE programme at Christ Church, and consistent with the teaching of the Church of England it will not be the schools policy to encourage any sexual experimentation.

Parental involvement

The role of parents and carers is recognised as crucial in the understanding of SRE and we aim to establish a working partnership in order to support the children's learning. The sex education materials will be available to parents and carers of Year 5 and 6 children, together with an overview of our programme. These materials may be used to supplement sex education in school or by parents and carers at home.

We encourage parental input and consultation with regard to all elements of the programme. Parents and carers have the right to remove their children from SRE, except where it forms part of the National Curriculum (ie is part of science teaching), where there is no right of withdrawal as stated in Section 241 of the Education Act 1993. However, we strongly recommend that parents and carers discuss any plans to withdraw children from SRE with relevant members of staff before making a decision.

Parents and carers who have any cause for concern about SRE should discuss their concerns with the Head Teacher as soon as possible. In the unlikely event that the concern cannot be dealt with, the Governors can be contacted.



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Monitoring

Sex and relationship education is monitored and evaluated as part of the school's ongoing self evaluation programme. Teaching staff meet to review the delivery of the programme and assess its effectiveness, making adjustments to the programme of study when appropriate. The Governing Body will monitor implementation of this policy, which will be subject to review every three years, and review resources as appropriate.

SRE and inclusion issues

We will ensure that all children and young people have equal access to a high standard of SRE. The approach needs to be matched to the age and maturity of the pupils; e.g. pupils with diverse learning needs may require additional support. We are aware that pupil's sexual awareness and their attitudes towards sex and relationships may vary, and we will always be sensitive to that range of attitudes.

Implications for staffing

The delivery of SRE will be overseen by the PHSE co-ordinator. While all staff will be required to teach the factual content of SRE, and are encouraged to be involved in the other elements, no member of staff will be forced to contribute. If teachers are uncertain of their ability to cope, or do not wish to contribute for any reason, they must discuss this with the PSHE co-ordinator or Deputy Head Teacher. Staff training will be provided to update and refresh knowledge and understanding of current ways of teaching SRE.

Confidentiality and child protection

Sometimes the teaching of SRE results in children raising individual issues with staff. As a general rule all those teaching SRE will maintain a child's confidentiality. If, however, a teacher believes or suspects that a child is at risk or in danger, she/he will talk to the school's nominated Child Protection Officer who will confer with the Head Teacher before any decision is made.