

Sex & Relationships Education Policy

Introduction:

At Willow House School, we aim always to provide a caring environment where every child can thrive and is supported to achieve their unique potential as a child. We are proud of our Sex & Relationships Education (SRE) Programme & see it as an important way of helping children to make sense of growing up as well as some of the bigger questions in life.

We believe that our Sex & Relationships programme promotes pupils' self-esteem, emotional development and resourcefulness and helps children to form and maintain satisfying relationships. This begins a lifelong process of relationships and feelings, acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex and sexuality. It should help young people to learn to respect themselves and others and to move with confidence from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood.

Sex & Relationship education is learning about physical, moral, social and spiritual development and therefore helps pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives.

Main Elements of SRE:

At Willow House School there are three main elements to our Sex & Relationships Education Programme:

1. **Attitudes and Values** – These are based within the context of our school and includes learning about love, respect and care in stable loving relationships as well as the value of family life and marriage within different family makeups for the nurture of children.
2. **Personal and Social Skills** – This includes: learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively; making choices and understanding differences and without prejudice. It includes being aware of and recognising the dangers of child sexual exploitation and taking sensible and firm action to avoid this, i.e. following online safety rules, avoiding social media and chat rooms (especially when underage) and reporting intrusive responses both online and to an adult.
3. **Knowledge and Understanding** – This includes: learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages as well as understanding human sexuality and reproduction. This includes, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

Whilst some elements of the programme may be taught throughout the year as part of the Science curriculum, most of it will be taught as a unit as part of our Personal, Social, Health & Emotional (PSHE) curriculum. As part of this work, we cover the various 'life processes' for both animals & humans but will have a particular focus on relationships, healthy living & growing up.

At Willow House School we believe that Effective Sex & Relationships Education should be:

- an integral part of the PSHE and Science curriculum & is delivered as part of that curriculum.
- provided early: before puberty, before feelings of sexual attraction and before young people develop sexual relationships.
- taught together within class groups, although children may be separated as and when appropriate.
- the entitlement of each child in school.
- covered with great sensitivity & provides an opportunity for children to reflect, ask questions and to discuss their views on this vital aspect of life & learning.
- offering positive and open views of sex and sexuality and supports sexual self-acceptance.

We believe that our Sex & Relationships Education should be empowering for all pupils, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, faith, ability and disability. It must also promote gender as well as LGBT equality; challenge all discrimination as well as ensure that our children understand that there are a variety of relationships & family patterns in the modern world (which is subsequently taught in the equality unit of our PSHE).

Responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of the Proprietors and Directors to ensure that SRE is taught within the parameters of the PHSE and Science curriculum and that it is an entitlement of every child
- Proprietors/Directors will ensure that that staff and carers are informed about the content and delivery of the curriculum through the SOW.
- Carers/Social Workers are informed of their right to withdraw their child from part or the entire SRE programme.
- The SOW provides an overview of the SRE programme and is available to all carers/spcial workers as a paper copy on request. They also have the opportunity to look at the resources used if they wish.
- The Headteacher monitors and evaluates SRE teaching and learning, and reviews and updates SRE policy and resources regularly.

Sensitive Issues:

From time to time, sensitive issues will be raised by pupils. It is important that all individuals concerned with the delivery of SRE in school are aware of the agreed values framework (see attitudes and values above). Carers/Social Workers and others should be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of a teacher should not influence the teaching of SRE. The issues concerned may include contraception, abortion, safe sex, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual identity or orientation, homophobic bullying and different families. It is important to acknowledge that pupils may hear these terms through different sources such as the media, and need to feel able to ask for further information. The response from the member of staff will be appropriate to the child's age and maturity, and thought will be given to whether the response is appropriate in a class, small group or individual situation. The detailed lesson planning will clearly state the content that will be covered. Questions will always be treated with respect and with a caring response. Staff and other adults will always be sensitive to underlying problems which may be worrying a child. The main guidelines in this situation are:

- be sensitive;
- is the context appropriate?
- is the question relevant to the content of the lesson?
- is the group ready in terms of maturity?

In such instances, teachers may answer a question with the response *"We are not learning about this in Year... You will learn more about this in Year.. (if known)*. If staff have a concern, then carers/social workers may be contacted.

Confidentiality:

Staff should be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. They should be familiar with the procedures set out in the DfE document:

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2024) as stated in regular Safeguarding Training.

Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

In certain circumstances, a child may wish to confide in a trusted member of staff. They should be made aware before any disclosure that information may have to be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). If there is a concern about the child's safety, then teachers and the DSL should follow the guidelines in the Safeguarding Policies.

Right of Withdrawal:

Carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of SRE sessions, except those elements taught as part of the National Curriculum Science. Any carer/ social worker wishing to discuss this aspect of the curriculum in more detail should contact the Lead teacher or Headteacher for more information.

Related Policies/Documents

- Science Policy
- PSHE Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: June 2019

Date last reviewed: September 2024

Next review (or before): September 2025

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided. I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Executive Heateacher.

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