



SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There is a broad consensus that Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in primary schools should be firmly rooted within the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. Concerns have been raised, however, by heads, governors, parents and clergy about aspects of some published material for sex education that has been recommended to schools, particularly with regard to the place given to marriage as a context for family life. There is widespread feeling that Christian values and teachings which underpin the foundation and distinctive ethos of church schools should directly inform the policy and practice of SRE.

The following guidance is offered as a contribution to support those developing SRE policy and practice in Church of England schools in the Gloucester Diocese. An expanded policy has been written by Bristol, Salisbury and Exeter Dioceses and can be obtained from the Resource Centre.

Context

“The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh.”

“.....Marriage is given as a foundation of family life in which children are born and nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort and grow to maturity in love.”

Church of England Marriage Service (Common Worship)

Guiding Principles

In a Church of England school, Christian beliefs and values should underpin SRE such that:

- Sex education is taught in the context of marriage and family life;
- Sex education includes learning about physical and emotional development;
- Sex education is part of a wider social, moral and spiritual education process;

Role of Parents

Parents and carers have a primary role in children's SRE. It is therefore important to build positive and supportive relationships with the parents and carers through mutual understanding, trust and consultation. Parents should be made aware of their right to withdraw children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under national curriculum science).

Role of the Local Church and Community

Local health professionals give invaluable support in SRE. In addition the local church community may be an important resource in teaching about Christian marriage.

Role of the Headteacher and Governors

Governing bodies must decide whether sex education should be included in their school's curriculum and if so what it should consist of and how it should be organised. They must keep a written record of their decisions. The headteacher must ensure that both staff and parents are consulted and informed about the school's policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. The governing body should carefully scrutinise teaching material to ensure it is appropriate for the school's distinctive ethos and foundation.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Issues

Due regard should be given to Child Protection Policy in the development and delivery of Sex and Relationships Education.