

# WALTHAMSTIOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## Sex and Relationship Education Policy

WMS 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.

This policy is underpinned by the stated school aim that WMS, 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.

### Aims of the Sex and Relationship Education Policy ('SRE')

#### **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.

#### **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.

### **What does the School want SRE to do for the pupils?**

SRE will:

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

Through SRE we want to ensure that the children:

- develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings, friendships and relationships
- are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work
- can protect themselves and ask for help and support
- learn about the nature of marriage/stable relationships and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children

### **How does it fit into the school curriculum?**

SRE is not taught in isolation. It is rooted in the SEAL programme, the PSHCE 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**

The Principal and Head of are responsible for the SRE scheme of work and the monitoring of its delivery.

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

The four areas of study in PSHCE 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

Discrete lessons are allocated for those parts of the SRE syllabus that cannot be delivered via

Science, PSHCE, Assemblies, Circle Time and other subjects. These are taught in the Lower School by the form teacher. All form tutors are familiar with this policy and the syllabus and will be prepared to support pupils and answer direct questions as appropriate.

The School is committed to using the best teaching materials and to providing appropriate training and support for staff.

### 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.

- **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.
  - the ground rules should be referred to if a question is too personal
  - if a teacher does not know the answer to a question they should acknowledge this and research it later.
  - 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.
  - if a teacher is concerned that a child is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the WMS Safeguarding and 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.

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 make available 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:

- WMS has in place a Safeguarding and 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/carers, 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 Principal and Head of School research current resources and provide a range of appropriate materials. Resources can be made available for parents to view prior to use with the children. Please ask the Head of School if you would like further information.

### **REFERENCES**

This policy has been informed by:

The Christopher Winter Project for SRE Education 2016

DfE Government Response: Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in Schools (July 2015)

House of Commons Library 'Overview of the legislation and guidance currently in place regarding sex and relationship education in schools' (January 2014)

DfE Draft Guidance to Schools on Sex and Relationships Education (2010)

DfE 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (July 2000)

See also: Confidentiality Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Promoting British Values Policy

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