SRE FAQs for teachers

What is SRE?

‘It is 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 - this would be inappropriate teaching’. (DfEE Guidance 0116/2000)

Where does it fit into the school curriculum?

Schools vary in the way in which they deliver SRE in the classroom. Some SRE topics may be covered in science but it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that SRE also forms part of the Personal, Social and Health Education programme of study. Good SRE is not confined to learning ‘the facts of life’ but is about exploring emotions, raising self esteem and considering our relationships with others. Many schools now understand the importance of having well trained staff who feel comfortable with the teaching and learning style required for the successful delivery of the subject, to this end there may be a specialist team of staff and discrete PSHE lessons on the timetable.

Do we have to teach it?

It is necessary for schools to support the work of the parents in this area of development. In science some factual aspects of SRE have to be taught. However this is not sufficient if the learning outcomes set out by QCA are to be met: www.QCA.org.uk
Parents do have the right to withdraw children from SRE lessons. Packs of materials to be used at home. More information can be obtained the DfES. (Parents are not able to withdraw their children from science lessons).

What rights do parents have?

Parents may withdraw their child (ren) from discrete SRE lessons (NOT science). Parents must be involved in writing the school policy. They should be informed of the content of the SRE curriculum, thereby providing them with an opportunity to support the work covered in school.
What support is there available for putting together a good SRE policy?

- Teachers can contact the Healthy Schools team.
- Or log onto: http://eal.cornwall.gov.uk/school-support/s/pshe/sexualhealthpshe/menu.asp

This is on the Cornwall County Council website and provides model policy writing documents for schools of varying types.

Do I have to monitor and evaluate SRE?

Yes. It is important that monitoring occurs as for any subject. Staff need to be confident about their knowledge of the subject. They need to set clear learning outcomes for their lessons. Pupils should have opportunities to evaluate the lesson content and teachers will need to carry out some forms of assessment. Pupils should be involved in some aspects of the planning of SRE. Line managers should be monitoring staff teaching SRE.

How can I do this?

It is important that the member of staff responsible for co-ordinating SRE is given time to carry out performance management tasks including monitoring teaching and learning styles, the use of materials and evaluating the programme and intended learning outcomes. The use of peer assessment, self-assessment and teacher assessment can be used in order to ascertain the effectiveness of teaching and used as a tool for reviewing the SRE programme. Co-ordinators should also arrange to meet with a student working party when planning the curriculum.

Are there any external agencies that can assist in the delivery of SRE?

School nurses in particular have a role to play in the delivery of SRE, especially, but not exclusively in the primary school. In the secondary school other health professionals may be invited in to complement - NOT replace the teacher input. E.g.: Brook Advisory Service, Cornwall Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre, drama groups etc.
The Health Promotion Library based at Pool is an excellent source for books, videos, posters, leaflets etc

**What is the correct protocol when having these visitors in the classroom?**

Your school should have a visitor policy.
In the area of SRE it is important that any external agencies work within the guidelines of the SRE policy.
   a. You should be able to justify the use of the visitor i.e. is he/she adding value to the lesson content?
   b. You should never leave a visitor in sole charge of a class.
   c. Pupils should be given the opportunity to evaluate the content and method of the presentation.
   d. Visitors too may require feedback from staff and pupils.

**Can you recommend some tried and tested classroom resources?**

This is where the Health Promotion Library and support service can be extremely valuable. It is easy to join and enables you to access resources such as books, videos and leaflets and equipment, which could help to enhance your work in the classroom.

Attend your local PSHE conferences for further support.

**Is there anyone who can deliver staff INSET on SRE?**

There are staff working at Cornwall Healthy Schools who are able to deliver staff training for primary and secondary SRE. Please contact us.

**How does SRE fit into the framework for the Healthy Schools Standard?**

In the new Healthy Schools framework schools must fulfil criteria for four areas. The first one is PSHE including SRE and drugs education.

Please refer to the Cornwall Healthy Schools website for further details.

http://www.healthpromcornwall.org/Healthy_Schools/CHSS/Criteria_intro.asp

**I have issues with the delivery of some topics, where do I stand?**
If you are in a school where SRE is delivered through the tutor programme and you are uncomfortable about delivering any aspect of the programme you should refer to your line manager and PSHE co-ordinator. It is vitally important that pupils are given the correct opportunities to express themselves during these lessons. It might be the case that the school will have to re-think how SRE is to be delivered. OFSTED has reported that not surprisingly, teachers who have been trained/wish to teach PSHE (inc. SRE) are meeting learning outcomes better than non-specialist form tutors. See the report on:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications

**Will OFSTED be interested in SRE in my school?**

Refer to question 13. The simple answer is ‘Yes’. With the new OFSTED criteria making use of the Every Child Matters document PSHE obviously has a major part to play in developing a good school ethos and caring for the emotional and physical well being of our children.

**A Y9 pupil has approached me (her form tutor) to ask for advice about contraception. What should I do?**

Every school should have a confidentiality policy with which all members of staff should be familiar.
The general rule is that teachers cannot promise confidentiality.
Teachers are unable to give contraceptive advice, which differs, from discussing how contraception works and the issues surrounding different types of contraception.
A pupil wanting this sort of advice should be referred to a school nurse or Connexions PA

2. **A 15 year old pupil has come to see me (child protection officer). She wants advice on getting the morning after pill. What should I do?**

The advice is the same as above but you must check your own school’s confidentiality policy. A health professional can help a child without necessarily needing parental consent.

3. **How can I find out the most up to date laws about sex and relationships?**
A very good website which is constantly updated is:

http://www.avert.org

Some primary schools seem to do a lot of PSHE and SRE. Others do very little. At KS3 where should I start?

In an ideal world we would have a rolling programme which ALL primary, secondary and post 16 providers would follow. As it is there are a few primary schools that do little beyond the science curriculum and where children do not learn about puberty or the development of a foetus to the birth of a baby.

The new Healthy Schools Audit should alleviate this to some extent. Many primary and secondary schools have to take a fresh look at their SRE policies and curriculum in order to meet the requirements of the new HS standard.

Many more schools are now reviewing their transition practices and should be considering talking about what is happening in schools in the field of PSHE including SRE.

It is obviously important to remember that children assimilate information in different ways and at different times, often due to the relevance of the topic to their own situation. Therefore we do have to repeat information but usually with a new emphasis. Remember our aim is to enable our young people to make healthy choices throughout their lives.

A lot of the boys in my SRE classes act very immatures and appear to be homophobic. How can I tackle this issue?

This is common and is often a sort of fear reaction which boys have. The problem is of course that sitting in the classroom will be at least one child who may feel anxious and threatened because of the reactions of his/her friends.

Teachers need to point this out to a class and it can help to adopt the circle time rules of not making fun of /respect for others.

Discussing sexuality in the classroom is an unavoidable challenge for teachers. Staff must be prepared to ensure that they as the adult can provide a safe environment for pupils who may feel vulnerable.

A useful website is:

http://www.gayyouthuk.org.uk/
**What is Accreditation in PSHE all about?**

This is an opportunity for teachers of PSHE can scrutinize their own practice. A portfolio of evidence is gathered as part of the process and support is provided at all stages. The process takes about one year to complete. It is envisaged that in future all schools will have at least one member of staff with this award.

The following website gives full details: