

# SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (SRE) FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Supplementary advice to the Sex and Relationship  
Education Guidance DfEE (0116/2000)



**PSHE**  
Association



# INTRODUCTION

## **In 2000, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, now DfE) published Sex and Relationship Education Guidance.**

Brook ([www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)) the PSHE Association ( [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk) ) and the Sex Education Forum ([www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk)) have worked together to produce advice for schools which supplements that guidance.

This advice should be read alongside the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfEE 0116/2000) which is statutory guidance for schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sex-and-relationship-education>

### **Why have we produced supplementary advice?**

1. The consensus in support of good quality sex and relationships education (SRE) from young people, teachers, parents and carers, teaching unions, the voluntary sector and government is stronger than ever. We want teachers, schools and other practitioners to have access to the most up-to-date references when looking for further information and advice.
2. Ofsted inspections have found that, despite progress across the country, SRE needs improving in one third of schools. They are clear that this lack of quality SRE leaves pupils vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Ofsted, 2013). We believe this supplementary advice will facilitate the improvement that is so urgently needed. Ofsted showed that outstanding schools tend to have high quality SRE as part of an outstanding PSHE education programme. The National Curriculum framework and Ofsted guidance have both changed significantly since 2000. This guidance provides up-to-date advice to help schools fulfil statutory obligations and meet Ofsted criteria:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/not-yet-good-enough-personal-social-health-and-economic-education-schools>
3. Technology is evolving at a tremendous pace. The need to protect children and young people from inappropriate online content, cyber-bullying and exploitation is a growing concern. We want to help practitioners address these issues through the principles of best practice.
4. To ensure SRE is taught in the context of current relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

### **Teachers tell us they want help to update their planning and teaching of SRE. This advice:**

- **provides a definition of high quality SRE, explains why it is important, and looks at its current status in the curriculum**
- **answers 10 of the key questions that teachers are currently asking us about SRE**
- **provides information about organisations that can provide advice and support**

Teaching SRE is vital – done well, it is enriching and enjoyable for teachers and pupils alike. It also helps schools fulfil their duties to protect, safeguard and promote the wellbeing of their pupils. We hope you find this supplementary advice useful.

**Simon Blake OBE, Brook**

**Lucy Emerson and Jane Lees, the Sex Education Forum**

**Joe Hayman, the PSHE Association**

# SECTION 1: CONTEXT

## What is sex and relationships education?

Sex and relationships education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

A comprehensive programme of SRE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

## Why is sex and relationships education in schools important?

High quality SRE helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. It is essential for the following reasons:

- **Children and young people have a right to good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.**
- **Children and young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and young people want to learn about relationships. Older pupils frequently say that sex and relationships education was 'too little, too late and too biological'. Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 *Not Yet Good Enough* report.**
- **SRE plays a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.**
- **Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A comprehensive SRE programme can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.**

The Department of Health set out its ambition for all children and young people to receive high quality sex and relationships education in the *Sexual Health Improvement Framework* (2013), while the Department for Education's paper *The Importance of Teaching* (2010) highlighted that 'Children need high quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices'.

Further information about the evidence base for sex and relationships education can be found in *Does SRE work?* and other Sex Education Forum briefings, at: [www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/evidence](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/evidence)

## What is the status of sex and relationships education in schools?

There are a number of requirements that all schools must adhere to when providing sex and relationships education, alongside the statutory guidance and this supplementary advice. There is no statutory requirement for SRE in independent schools. SRE plays an important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. As section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework (DfE, 2013) states:

‘Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- **promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society**
- **prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.’**

These duties are set out in the 2002 Education Act and the 2010 Academies Act. Whole school (Section 5) Ofsted inspections consider the extent to which a school provides such a curriculum.

In the recent review of the National Curriculum, the government has made it clear that all state schools ‘should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice’. (*National Curriculum in England*, DfE, 2013) and that ‘sex and relationship education (SRE) is an important part of PSHE education’ (*Guidance – PSHE education*, DfE, 2013). In any school that provides SRE, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of SRE (excluding withdrawal from sex education in National Curriculum science) although very few choose to exercise that right.

| ALL STATE-FUNDED SCHOOLS   |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
|                            | MAINTAINED SCHOOLS  | ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS               |
| <b>WHOLE CURRICULUM</b>    | Must be balanced and broadly based, with a statutory duty to promote pupil wellbeing. Schools must publish details of their curriculum, including PSHE and SRE.   |  |
| <b>PSHE</b>                | The Department for Education states that all schools should make provision for PSHE education, drawing on good practice. Schools are free to develop their own PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils. |  |
| <b>SRE</b>                 | It is compulsory for pupils in secondary education to have sex education that includes HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.  |  |
| <b>SRE GUIDANCE</b>        | Any school that provides SRE has a statutory duty to have ‘due regard’ to the Secretary of State’s Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfEE, 2000)   |  |
| <b>NATIONAL CURRICULUM</b> | Statutory sex education in science programmes of study at Key Stages 1 to 3.  |  |
| <b>SRE POLICY</b>          | The Secretary of State’s 2000 guidance states that all schools should have an up-to-date policy for SRE, which must be available for inspection and to parents/carers on request.                                   | SRE policy advisable but not compulsory. |

## **What is high quality sex and relationships education?**

The principles of high quality SRE in all schools – including those with a religious character – are set out below.

### **Sex and relationships education:**

- is a partnership between home and school
- ensures children and young people's views are actively sought to influence lesson planning and teaching
- starts early and is relevant to pupils at each stage in their development and maturity
- is taught by people who are trained and confident in talking about issues such as healthy and unhealthy relationships, equality, pleasure, respect, abuse, sexuality, gender identity, sex and consent
- includes the acquisition of knowledge, the development of life skills and respectful attitudes and values
- has sufficient time to cover a wide range of topics, with a strong emphasis on relationships, consent, rights, responsibilities to others, negotiation and communication skills, and accessing services
- helps pupils understand on and offline safety, consent, violence and exploitation
- is both medically and factually correct and treats sex as a normal and pleasurable fact of life
- is inclusive of difference: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, or other life experience
- uses active learning methods, and is rigorously planned, assessed and evaluated
- helps pupils understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society including some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media
- teaches pupils about the law and their rights to confidentiality even if they are under 16, and is linked to school-based and community health services and organisations.
- promotes equality in relationships, recognises and challenges gender inequality and reflects girls' and boys' different experiences and needs

### **It contributes to:**

- a positive ethos and environment for learning
- safeguarding pupils (Children Act 2004), promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school
- a better understanding of diversity and inclusion, a reduction in gender-based and homophobic prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships
- helping pupils keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice
- reducing early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence and bullying

## What does the evidence from children, young people and research tell us?

- The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL) 2013 confirmed that the age at which people in Britain first have sex is mostly 16 and above, and that this has changed very little over the past decade.
- Teenage pregnancy rates in England and Wales are the lowest they have been for over 40 years.<sup>1</sup>
- More than half (53%) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people are never taught anything about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues at school.<sup>2</sup>
- In a ChildLine survey of 13 to 18-year-olds, 60% said they had been asked for a sexual image or video of themselves.<sup>3</sup>
- More than four in five young people (85%) are never taught anything about the biological or physical aspects of same-sex relationships.<sup>4</sup>
- One in three 16 to 18-year-old girls experience unwanted sexual touching/'groping' at school.<sup>5</sup>
- In a NSPCC study, one in three girls and 16 percent of boys reported that they had experienced sexual violence from a partner<sup>6</sup>

## Why do children, young people and parents think SRE is important?

### Children and young people

- want to learn about issues such as body confidence, love and sexual attraction, how to respond to peer pressure, and how to behave in a relationship
- have a right to feel safe and healthy, and a right to education that helps them learn and achieve<sup>7</sup>
- want parents and carers to talk to them about growing up and sex, and to learn about other people's views and opinions in school<sup>8</sup>
- need help to understand the way their bodies and feelings change as they grow and develop, and to develop skills and confidence<sup>9</sup>

*"I think SRE should be taken seriously as it helps children and young people be safe and understand what is happening to them."*

Boy, 13

*"I trust my parents to talk to me about values. At school what I need in sex and relationships education is to understand about sex and relationships, and to understand what different people think."*

Girl, 16

Continued...

## Parents and carers

- **A 2013 NAHT survey found that 88% of the parents of school-aged pupils want SRE to be taught in all schools.<sup>10</sup>**
- **A YouGov Poll (2013) found that 86% of UK adults believe SRE that addresses sexual consent and respectful relationships should be taught in all secondary schools.<sup>11</sup>**
- **83% of the parents of secondary aged pupils want to see issues around pornography addressed in school SRE (NAHT 2013)**
- **Most parents (84%) want both school and home to have a role in SRE.<sup>12</sup>**

*"I wish there was greater emphasis on consent – saying yes as well as no – and negotiating boundaries."*

Mum on Twitter

*"These are life-skills – they aren't going to get this information anywhere else in the curriculum."*

Mum, SRE workshop, Manchester

*"I thought schools did much more than they do. I went to the school's parents' evening and I was surprised they called it [the programme they described] sex education."*

Dad, working parents SRE workshop

## Policy and curriculum planning

All SRE should be developed with a clear policy framework and a curriculum that is based on the particular needs of children within the school. The following guidance and toolkits will help you develop your policy and curriculum.

The PSHE Association has produced guidance on reviewing your school SRE policy:

[http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources\\_search\\_details.aspx?ResourceId=497](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=497)

And on producing a PSHE policy:

[http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources\\_search\\_details.aspx?ResourceId=520](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=520)

The Sex Education Forum has produced a web-based curriculum design tool for schools, and advice on involving children and young people in curriculum planning:

<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/curriculum-design.aspx>

*Let's get it right:* A toolkit for involving primary school children in reviewing their sex and relationships education:

<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/schools/young-people-involved-in-design-and-development.aspx>

*Are you getting it right?* A toolkit for consulting young people on sex and relationships education:

[http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/2580/sef\\_audit\\_toolkit\\_2008.pdf](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/2580/sef_audit_toolkit_2008.pdf)



## SECTION 2: ADVICE

### Teaching SRE: your questions answered

This section provides answers to 10 of the key questions teachers and others working in schools ask. These cover issues that are not addressed by the Secretary of State's 2000 guidance.

#### How do I ensure SRE is fully integrated into my school's PSHE programme and linked to other subjects?

The school's commitment to promoting the personal and social development, health and wellbeing of its pupils should be evident in its statement of aims and values. This underpins the ethos of the school, and should be reflected in its policies and in the breadth of the curriculum – including the teaching of PSHE and SRE.

High quality SRE should be part of a broader developmental PSHE education programme, as set out, for example, in the PSHE Association's programme of study ([www.pshe-association.org.uk/programmeofstudy](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/programmeofstudy)) and its guidance on developing your school's SRE policy and PSHE policy. This learning should be linked to broader school policies and the curriculum in relevant subjects, as well as the school's pastoral policy.

Science teaches about the biological facts relating to human growth, puberty and reproduction. It may also include teaching about contraception and STIs. PSHE helps pupils to think about the different social contexts, influences and beliefs that affect personal behaviour. PSHE also develops a positive vocabulary and the strategies and skills children and young people need to stay healthy and safe.

It is important to link to the ICT/computing curriculum, which teaches about online safety. It is vital for SRE to teach that the internet and social media are important resources for learning and information, and a great opportunity to build social networks, as well as teaching about the risks and how to stay safe online.

There will also be relevant learning in other subjects, such as citizenship or religious education, about the law and the views of religious and secular groups on different issues.

#### Does sex and relationships education sexualise children?

No. SRE is part of the solution to concerns about sexualisation. The evidence, as summarised here: [http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/494585/sef\\_doessrework\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/494585/sef_doessrework_2010.pdf) shows that comprehensive SRE delays sexual activity for young people, and increases the likelihood of using contraception. The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL, 2013) showed a link between school-based SRE and reductions in teenage pregnancy.

Children are naturally curious about growing up, how their bodies work and how humans reproduce. Their questions need to be answered honestly, using language and explanations appropriate for their age and maturity, thus avoiding unnecessary mystery, confusion, embarrassment and shame.

Sex and relationships education addresses the questions and concerns raised by the biological facts – for example, exploring the feelings a new baby can bring, or the effect of puberty on friendships. It provides balance to sometimes distorted messages about sex and gender roles in the media, and helps protect children by explaining boundaries and safety, and developing the language and understanding needed to recognise abusive behaviour and seek help. It also helps pupils to develop respectful and consensual attitudes and behaviours.



## How do I teach about healthy relationships, sexual consent, exploitation and abuse?

The importance of teaching young people about consent is central to learning about healthy, equal and safe relationships and choices. In November 2013, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) completed an inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) which has raised awareness of the prevalence of this issue and the urgent need to tackle it. The OCC inquiry showed that young people do not always recognise non-consensual sexual situations including rape. The inquiry confirmed the importance of good quality SRE, which addresses gender-based and power inequalities, how these can lead to coercion and sexual violence, and the need for this to be taught in all schools as part of universal prevention. A Sex Education Forum survey of young people in 2013 found that the majority of young people knew basic legal facts about consent to sex but were much less sure about how to deal with the complexity of real-life relationship situations and where and how to get help if they needed it.

Pupils should be taught about all aspects of the law and sexual consent - notably that, in the law on sexual offences, the onus is on getting rather than giving consent. As a principle, SRE should promote equality in relationships and emphasise the importance of seeking and gaining mutual consent through positive and active communication, and go beyond teaching how to say 'no'.

Pupils should be taught how to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is exploitative and controlling. Pupils should understand the impact of a pernicious culture that reinforces stereotyped and gendered expectations for both boys and girls, including blaming victims for the abuse they experience and other cultural norms and negative stereotypes that they experience and observe. Pupils should also develop the skills for negotiating consent and managing the feelings associated with their experiences, and how to seek help and support if they need it. Crucially, learning should open up discussion about real-life situations.

Younger pupils should learn that their body belongs to them and that they can say who has access to it. This is a key element in a school's approach to safeguarding. Learning to respect boundaries – their own and other people's – helps children to understand the need to obtain consent and that everyone has the right to offer or withhold their consent for any activity, sexual or otherwise.

Children need to learn the correct biological/medical names for the genitalia and reproductive organs. Having the right language to describe the private parts of their body – and knowing how to seek help if they are being abused – are vital for safeguarding. Being open and honest about the words for genitalia will support girls at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM). The summer holiday between leaving primary and starting secondary school is a risk period for girls at risk of FGM so this knowledge must come in good time. Further information about FGM can be found at: [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk)

A number of resources have been produced to help teachers develop lessons that will teach young people to recognise the signs of exploitation or abuse, and to seek help if it happens to them or someone they know. Some useful resources are included below:

- As part of the government's commitment to improving the teaching of consent, the PSHE Association has combined good practice examples with its own guidance. This can be found at: [www.pshe-association.org.uk/consent](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/consent)  
This guidance draws heavily on Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance on The Sexual Offences Act 2003: [http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p\\_to\\_r/rape\\_and\\_sexual\\_offences/soa\\_2003\\_and\\_soa\\_1956/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/rape_and_sexual_offences/soa_2003_and_soa_1956/)
- CPS guidance on the Statutory Definition of Consent, and the CPS Sexual Offences Factsheet: [http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/fact\\_sheets/sexual\\_offences/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/fact_sheets/sexual_offences/)
- The Home Office has produced a resource, *This is abuse*, which is available at: <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) has produced a series of resources which are available at: [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) and [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk). Thinkuknow for 14+: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus) Thinkuknow for 11-13s: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11\\_13](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13)

- The Sex Education Forum has produced a briefing addressing healthy relationships and sexual exploitation within PSHE in schools ([http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/3101/pshe\\_ff37.pdf](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/3101/pshe_ff37.pdf)) and an e-magazine to help teachers teach about consent, available free to members: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/sex-educational-supplement.aspx>
- Brook has produced a Traffic Light Tool to help professionals assess whether children and young people's sexual behaviours are healthy or unhealthy: [www.brook.org.uk/traffic-lights](http://www.brook.org.uk/traffic-lights). This information is also available in a pocket-sized booklet: [www.brook.org.uk/shop](http://www.brook.org.uk/shop)
- Brook has also produced a booklet for young people dealing with these issue, *Ask Brook about relationships, safety and risks*, available at: [www.brook.org.uk/shop](http://www.brook.org.uk/shop)

## How do I help address violence in relationships?

Schools must be a safe place for all pupils, and efforts to address violence require a whole school approach. SRE provides an ideal space to address sexual and relationship violence. Pupils should be encouraged to consider the importance of equality and respect within relationships, and to develop positive, non-violent behaviour. SRE lays the foundations for developing empathy and understanding between girls and boys, young men and young women. It gives pupils the chance to challenge gender stereotypes and expectations, and to introduce positive, diverse perspectives on gender roles, hopes and aspirations.

Most schools highlight respect for others as one of their key values – it will be reflected in the school's behaviour policy but should also be reinforced through the curriculum. Learning how to show respect through listening and sharing is all part of sex and relationships education, and starts when children begin school. Pupils can also learn how to challenge one another's ideas and behaviour in non-confrontational ways, recognising the difference between aggressive and assertive responses. They should learn to recognise physical, sexual and emotional violence and how to get help if they need it.

It is important to remember that some children will have witnessed violence in their homes, and may see this as acceptable behaviour. While men and women can be both victims and perpetrators, evidence shows that girls are disproportionately likely to experience pressure, coercion or violence from boys and men.<sup>13</sup> This is a real-life issue that SRE should address, looking at the different experiences and influences on the behaviour of children and young people of different genders, in order to better support those who hold negative attitudes or behave unacceptably to change.

SRE provides a clear message that violence and exploitation are always wrong, that everyone is responsible for their own behaviour and for creating safe school communities, and that no one is ever responsible for the violence or abuse they experience. Teachers should ensure they understand how to link young people into wider support services where necessary. Ending violence against girls and women is an urgent global rights and public health concern, and is treated as a cross-government issue in the United Kingdom.

- The Against Violence and Abuse Project provides further information, advice and guidance: [www.avaproject.org.uk](http://www.avaproject.org.uk)
- Rape Crisis provides help and advice to those affected by rape, sexual violence and child sexual abuse: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)
- Brook has worked with Fink to produce a set of conversation cards that focus on exploitation, violence and consent. These are available at: [www.brook.org.uk/shop](http://www.brook.org.uk/shop)

## Should I teach about the impact of pornography?

Yes. It is helpful to address the issues surrounding pornography and there is widespread support from parents who recognise the need for this. Teaching should emphasise that pornography is not the best way to learn about sex because it does not reflect real life, and can therefore be worrying, confusing and frightening for young people. Some young people may be concerned that their use of pornography is becoming compulsive – teachers should recommend talking about this to a trusted, non-judgmental adult. Pupils

must also learn that some pornography – child abuse images, for example – is illegal for any age.

At secondary level, discussion about pornography can be included in lessons that focus on negotiation and assertiveness skills, the importance of communication in relationships, and analysing the stereotyping in some media images. Teaching can focus on the role of peer influence in young people's lives, the importance of not pressuring or coercing a partner to look at pornography or imitate behaviours in it, and the skills required to resist unwanted pressure.

Reports indicate that young people's interactions with pornography are distinctly gendered and that it can have negative effects on young people's attitudes to each other.<sup>14</sup> SRE should enable all young people to understand pornography's influence on gender expectations of sex. It should build on earlier learning about relationships, body image, consent and gender, which begins in primary school with discussions about the importance of loving and respectful relationships. Pupils should understand that pornography shows a distorted image of sex and relationships, including 'perfect' bodies and exaggerated sexual prowess. SRE provides opportunities to discuss body image and understand how pornographic pictures and videos are routinely edited and 'photoshopped'. Pornographic images must never be shown to pupils, and there is no need for teachers to look at pornography to plan their teaching.

Pornography can depict a lack of communication about choices, sexual consent and contraception, and often shows violent and oppressive behaviours towards women, which can be frightening and confusing, and make young people feel pressured to behave in particular ways.

Useful resources include:

- Sex Education Forum e-magazine on teaching about pornography:  
<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/sex-educational-supplement.aspx>
- *Growing Up Safe*, from Big Talk Education, for primary schools: <http://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/resources-for-primaries.html>
- Planet Porn, from BISH, for secondary schools: <http://bishtraining.com/index.php/planet-porn/>
- Fantasy Versus Reality, from fpa: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/product/fantasy-vs-reality>

## How should I teach about 'sexting'?

Children and young people are growing up in a culture where technology and social media are important and have created more opportunity for sharing personal information. SRE should encourage pupils to think about what they want others to know and see about them – whether on or offline.

Language and technology change fast, but that shouldn't prevent teachers from addressing the core issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. Internet safety is included in the new computing curriculum, but doesn't cover the important relationship aspects, so it is vital to coordinate with colleagues responsible for the computing curriculum to ensure there is no unhelpful duplication or contradictory messages.

'Sexting' and other self-made images and messages of a sexual nature, raise particular issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility. 'Sexting' is a term used by adults, referring to sexual content and images sent by mobile phone (though other digital communication raises similar concerns). Young people may use their own terms, including 'selfies', 'nudes' or 'fanpics'.

Research shows that sexting is of most concern to young people in their early teens. Schools should address privacy and boundaries from a very early age in the context of personal safety and abuse. Specific work about 'sexting' should be addressed in SRE as soon as it is identified as a potential issue. Teaching should cover communication skills, attitudes and values, the law, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to seek help.

Pupils should learn that it is illegal to produce, possess or distribute an indecent image of a person under the age of 18 – even if it's a picture of themselves. These laws have been created to protect children and young people. It is therefore unlikely that the police would prosecute a young person unless they were concerned that images were being used to harass or coerce, or shared with intent to harm. For further information see advice from the Association of Chief Police Officers:

[http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/externaldocs/ACPO\\_Lead\\_position\\_on\\_Self\\_Taken\\_Images.pdf](http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/externaldocs/ACPO_Lead_position_on_Self_Taken_Images.pdf)

- The NSPCC has produced resources to make it easier for children and young people to get help about sexting: <http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/pages/sexting.aspx>
- Big Talk has produced resources to help primary school teachers discuss a range of difficult issues – including sexting and explicit images – with children: <http://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/resources-for-primaries.html>
- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) has developed [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk), which contains a number of resources exploring the risks children and young people face online, including two films that address sexting issues: *Exposed* and *First to a Million*.
- Brook has produced a leaflet for young people called *Ask Brook about relationships, safety and risk*, which addresses on and offline safety and is supported by CEOP: <http://www.brook.org.uk/shop>

### **How do I make sex and relationships education inclusive?**

Schools have a clear duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). Inclusive SRE will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect, enabling schools to meet the requirements, and live the intended spirit, of the Equality Act 2010.

Too often, groups of young people say they feel excluded in SRE lessons. For example, lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils (who make up approximately 10% of any school population) often report that their SRE is solely about heterosexual relationships, or that non heterosexual identities were addressed negatively and that it fails to address sexual health issues linked to the range of sexual behaviours and activities that people encounter whatever their sexual orientation. Young people with physical or learning disabilities often report that SRE does not meet their needs, while boys tell us they feel excluded because SRE seems to be aimed more at girls – and they are often anxious about being shown up as being ignorant about sexual matters.

All children and young people – whatever their experience, background and identity – are entitled to quality sex and relationships education that helps them build confidence and a positive sense of self, and to stay healthy. All classes include pupils with different abilities and disabilities, experiences and backgrounds, gender and sexual identities. To encourage pupils to participate in lessons, teachers should ensure content, approach, and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community, and help each and every pupil to feel valued and included in the classroom.

Teachers should never assume that all intimate relationships are between opposite sexes. All sexual health information should be inclusive and should include LGBT people in case studies, scenarios and role-plays. Boys and girls can explore topics from a different gender's point of view, and a variety of activities – including practical tasks, discussions, group activities and competitions – can provide something for everyone.

- Stonewall has produced a series of packs and information for schools. Details are available at: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

- Brook has produced packs to help those who work with diverse groups of children and young people, including:
  - *Living Your Life*, a resource pack for people who work with children and young people with learning difficulties and special educational needs
  - *Young men, sex and pregnancy*
  - *Learn your LGBT ABC*, a leaflet written and designed by young people

All Brook resources are available at: [www.brook.org.uk/shop](http://www.brook.org.uk/shop)

- The Sex Education Forum has produced a factsheet on SRE for children and young people with learning difficulties: [http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/6153/sre\\_and\\_young\\_children.pdf](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/6153/sre_and_young_children.pdf)

### **What are the best resources for SRE?**

A trained, confident and competent teacher is better than any video, card pack or other teaching material. Ofsted has said repeatedly that teacher training is a vital part of raising standards in SRE because training allows teachers to develop the confidence and skills needed to deliver SRE as part of a planned PSHE curriculum. Good resources such as picture cards, games, puppets and 3D models, where they have been selected to meet particular needs, can enhance learning. Resources – especially those that are freely available on the internet – should be checked to make sure they support inclusion, contain accurate information from authoritative medical sources, and clearly separate opinions, beliefs and facts.

Parents and carers can be invited to see the resources that the school has selected, and shown how they are used. Some resources will have particular cultural sensitivities. Parents often welcome the opportunity to borrow resources to use at home, and some schools produce a book list for parents and put samples on display.

- The Sex Education Forum has produced a guide for choosing and using resources, and lists of SRE resources for primary, secondary and special schools: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/resources-for-sre.aspx>
- The Sex Education Forum publishes a diary of SRE training events offered by a range of national and local organisations at: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/events-and-training-diary.aspx>

### **Should I involve outside visitors in SRE?**

Yes, as long as the visitor is intended to enhance rather than replace teacher-led sex and relationships education, and provides a specific contribution to the programme. Their input will be more effective if it is planned with the teacher who provides the context and follow-up. Teachers should always be present when classes have visitors.

Children and young people often say that visitors enrich their learning because their visits are memorable. Visitors must be carefully selected and their input should contribute to the overall SRE programme, as well as working within the school's values framework and confidentiality policy. It is vital to establish that visitors' values are in line with the school's ethos and values, and that they use facts and evidence to inform their teaching. It is never acceptable for pupils to be provided with inaccurate or misleading information about any issue, including contraception or abortion.

Pupils benefit from having accessible information at school about local support services available - for example, in student diaries. This should include information about local young people's health services, LGBT youth groups and specialist domestic violence, Rape Crisis Centres and support for black and minority ethnicity (BME) women who experience abuse. Having visitors from local services can be invaluable to increase confidence and know-how to access help and support if and when needed.

- Further guidance from the Sex Education Forum is available here: [http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/3458/external\\_visitors\\_and\\_SRE\\_10.pdf](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/media/3458/external_visitors_and_SRE_10.pdf)



## Confidentiality and safeguarding work in the context of SRE lessons

The classroom is never a confidential place to talk, and that remains true in sex and relationships education. Pupils must be reminded that lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues – or to ask others to do so – through the establishment of ground rules or a working agreement. Any visitor to the classroom is bound by the school's policy on confidentiality, regardless of whether they have – or their organisation has – a different policy. It is vital to make sure visitors are aware of this, and to make sure there are enough opportunities for pupils to access confidential support after the lesson if they need it.

If a pupil tells you something personal on a one-to-one basis outside of the classroom, your school's confidentiality policy will help you decide whether you can keep that information confidential, or whether you need to seek help, advice, or refer to someone else. Young people should be kept informed about how any information they have disclosed will be treated by the school, and who will have access to it. They should also be encouraged to involve their parents/carers if appropriate.

Confidentiality policies should be designed to enable you to act in the best interests of young people. If you believe there is a safeguarding or child protection issue, your school policy will state who within the school you should talk to and the routes for dealing with concerns. All schools should actively promote on and offline community, health and counselling services so pupils know where to go for confidential help and advice.

- The Sex Education Forum has produced a factsheet on confidentiality and a set of key questions about providing one-to-one support for pupils: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/schools/one-to-one-help-available.aspx>

## SECTION 3: FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### About Brook

Brook is the leading young people's charity with 50 years' experience of working with young people and professionals. Our work in schools and further education colleges includes education and training, as well as delivery of nurse-based health services. We provide education and training to over 150,000 young people and professionals each year in school and community settings. Our education teams across England can provide training and consultancy for teaching staff, as well as direct delivery in the classroom with children and young people. Visit: <http://www.brook.org.uk/shop> for details of your nearest Brook Education and Training Manager.

Brook also publishes leaflets and teaching resources for SRE, developed from our work in communities around the UK and Channel Islands. Details can be found in our online shop: <http://www.brook.org.uk/shop> or by emailing: [publications@brook.org.uk](mailto:publications@brook.org.uk)

You can follow us on Twitter – [@brookcharity](https://twitter.com/brookcharity) and [@besexpositive](https://twitter.com/besexpositive) – or read our blog at: [simonatbrookcharity.blogspot.com](http://simonatbrookcharity.blogspot.com)

### About the PSHE Association

The PSHE Association is the leading national support body for PSHE teachers. We provide dedicated advice, consultancy and support by phone or email, the latest PSHE news, a library of downloadable resources including model schemes of work, review and quality assurance tools, model policies, guidance on reporting and recording, regular CPD events and our national conference as well as membership of a large, growing and increasingly influential community of over 7,000 professionals working together for high quality PSHE education.

For resources produced by the PSHE Association, visit: [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

### About the Sex Education Forum

The Sex Education Forum is a group of organisations and individuals who believe all children and young people have the right to good quality SRE. Our core members include representatives from health, education, faith, disability and children's organisations, and many of them provide specialist SRE training and resources: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/members/list-of-members.aspx>

Our statement of principles and values explains what we believe is needed for good quality SRE: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/about-us/values-principles.aspx>

We continue to grow and welcome new members. Schools that join as network+ members are kept up to date with SRE news, aware of good practice, and connected with other SRE teachers and professionals. Members receive a fortnightly bulletin, participate in network exchange and web-based discussions, and receive a termly e-magazine that looks in depth at teaching SRE: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/membership.aspx>

The Sex Education Forum website serves as a gateway to helping teachers and other SRE practitioners find resources to support the provision of good quality SRE: <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/schools.aspx>

Email [sexedforum@ncb.org.uk](mailto:sexedforum@ncb.org.uk) for more information, or to subscribe for free updates. The Sex Education Forum is hosted by the National Children's Bureau.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This advice has been written by Simon Blake, Lucy Emmerson, Joe Hayman and Jane Lees and we are responsible for its content. The advice draws on a number of publications which many people have contributed to. We would like to thank them, as well as the children and young people, teachers and other colleagues who contributed to this publication.

## **We are particularly grateful to the following for their input to the draft:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Kieran Aldred - THT                                      | Siôn Humphreys – National Association of Head Teachers |
| Jonathan Baggaley – CEOP                                 | Laura Hurley – Education For Choice                    |
| Elaine Barker – Brook                                    | Baroness Beeban Kidron                                 |
| Jenny Barksfield – PSHE Association                      | Janet Palmer – Ofsted                                  |
| Sue Berelowitz – Deputy Children’s Commissioner          | Clare Robson – Public Health England                   |
| Nick Boddington – PSHE Association                       | Louisa Thomson – ATL                                   |
| Gill Frances OBE – Brook                                 | Luke Tryl – Stonewall                                  |
| Alison Hadley OBE – Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange | Harry Walker – FPA/Brook                               |
| Rebecca Harvey – National Union of Teachers              | Alan Wardle – NSPCC                                    |
| Jules Hillier – Brook                                    | Gemma Wolfes – NSPCC                                   |
| Alice Hoyle – PSHE Association                           | Dr Wanda Wyporska – ATL                                |

## **We would also like to thank the following teachers and professionals who also fed into the advice:**

Mandy Moretta, Shawn Peart, Sonita Pobi, Boo Spurgeon, Mark Standen, Sarah Strudley and Louise Sullivan.

Thanks to Sarah Townsend for deft editing: [www.sarahtownsendeditorial.co.uk](http://www.sarahtownsendeditorial.co.uk)

Thank you to Drew Johnson, Brook for administrative support.

Brook funded the design and production of this advice.

**WEASELDANCE** Design by Ashley Goldstein:  
design & illustration [www.weaseldancedesign.com](http://www.weaseldancedesign.com)

## **Notes**

1. Office for National Statistics (2013) Conceptions in England and Wales 2011
2. Stonewall (2012) The School Report
3. NSPCC (2013) Childline Survey
4. Stonewall (2012) The School Report
5. EAW (2010) YouGov End Violence Against Women Poll
6. NSPCC (2009) *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*
7. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
8. Blake, S and Katrak, Z (2002) Faith, Values and Sex and Relationships Education, published by the National Children’s Bureau
9. Brook (2011) Sex and Relationships Education Fit for the 21st Century
10. NAHT (2013) Research commissioned by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), carried out in April 2013 by Research Now
11. YouGov (2013) Research carried out by YouGov commissioned by the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition and reported by the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition and reported as part of the Words or Deeds report published by the EVAW Coalition in May 2013
12. Durex and others (2011) Durex, NAHT, NCPTA, NGA (2010) Sex and Relationship Education: views from teachers, parents and governors
13. NSPCC (2009) *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*, NSPCC (2011) *Standing on my own two feet: disadvantaged teenagers, intimate partner control and coercive violence*
14. Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2013) *Basically Porn is Everywhere: a Rapid Evidence Assessment on the Effect that Access and Exposure to Pornography has on Children and Young People.*

## SUPPORT FOR THE ADVICE

*"It is vital that we safeguard the health and wellbeing of our young people to help them get on in life. That's why we need all schools teaching sex and relationships education that is absolutely up to date, particularly when teenagers' lives are so dominated by advances in technology".*

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, Deputy Prime Minister

*"I welcome the work of the PSHE Association, Sex Education Forum and Brook on new supplementary advice to complement statutory SRE guidance."*

Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools.

*"We are pleased the government supports this Supplementary Advice on sex and relationships education because current guidance is hopelessly out of date. The material about the risks and realities of life on line is particularly overdue. Guidance is one thing but effective learning is another. The NSPCC wants to see the government track the impact of this material to increase confidence that all our children have a strong understanding of sex and relationships in the modern world."*

Peter Wanless, Chief Executive, NSPCC

*"NAHT welcomes the three organisations' initiative in coordinating the writing of this Supplementary Advice. Our work with schools highlights the urgent need for a relevant and accurate foundation upon which to plan teaching this important aspect of a broad and balanced curriculum."*

Russell Hobby, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers

*"The NUT is pleased to support this Supplementary Advice. Education about sex and relationships is an inescapably important part of what education can offer young people. It is one part of the school curriculum with the power to change lives. Teachers need the tools to provide accessible, relevant and inclusive SRE lessons - this can help young people navigate or interpret what they see online. With appropriate guidance, teachers can make a real difference."*

Christine Blower, General Secretary, the National Union of Teachers

*"The Association of Teachers and Lecturers welcomes this valuable and much-needed supplementary guidance on SRE. We commend it to our members who are teaching SRE, to education staff facing questions to which young people deserve supportive and correct answers and to young people, parents and governors. This guidance underpins some of the most important work that we do with young people to enable them to prepare for life, to protect themselves and to be in control of their lives."*

Dr Mary Bousted, General Secretary, ATL

*"This updated SRE advice, which takes account of new developments such as sexting, is greatly welcomed. Our Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups found education is the only universal lever ensuring all children are safeguarded against the possible impact of pornography on them and their relationships."*

Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner

*"Brook, the PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum have developed superb guidance which outlines the why, what and how of sex and relationships education, highlighting research and best practice examples. We are delighted to see this excellent and timely guidance which will make a real contribution to sex and relationships education, and help to prevent abuse and exploitation."*

Jonathan Baggaley, Head of Education at the National Crime Agency's CEOP command

*"Good quality SRE is vital for helping young people understand contraception and relationships. This Advice will help schools provide good quality SRE which all young people need."*

Chris Wilkinson, President, Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (RCOG)

*"Sex and relationships education is important. We know that, done well, it helps promote children and young people's health and wellbeing and can impact teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates. Public Health England welcomes the publication of this supplementary advice and recommends it to all schools."*

Professor Kevin Fenton, Director of Health and Wellbeing at Public Health England

*"This supplementary advice will help schools deliver the type of sex and relationships education the vast majority of parents desperately want them to."*

Vicki Shotbolt, CEO, Parentzone

*"At GirlGuiding we know that sex and relationships are really important issues for girls and young women and that good SRE in school and the community will help equip them with the skills and confidence to navigate their relationships well."*

Julie Bentley, Chief Executive GirlGuiding UK

*"BASHH supports good quality SRE in schools because we know high quality education is key to helping young people develop healthy relationships and look after their future sexual health."*

British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH)

*"High quality SRE in schools is essential in helping young people delay early pregnancy and make safe and informed choices about their relationships and sexual health. This advice provides a helpful reminder to schools of the principles of good SRE and offers excellent practical advice on ensuring the SRE they provide is relevant to the issues facing young people today."*

Alison Hadley, Director, Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange, University of Bedfordshire.

*"FPA knows how important it is for teachers and other professionals working with young people to have up to date support on sex and relationships education. We're delighted to support this Supplementary Advice which fills some of the most serious gaps in current guidance."*

Audrey Simpson, Acting CEO, FPA

*"This advice is a hugely welcome step forward in ensuring that schools understand the importance of making SRE inclusive of all young people. We hope it will give teachers the much needed confidence to talk about issues relevant to lesbian, gay and bisexual young people."*

Luke Tryl, Stonewall

