**Valley Primary School**

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**Sex and Relationships Policy**

**Updated: September 2017**

**Review Date: September 2019**

**Introduction**

**What is Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)?**

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 in the real and online world.

**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 both in the real and virtual world.
* 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**.**

**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.

**Delivering High Quality Sex and Relationships Education**

At Valley Primary School Academy Trust, we believe high quality SRE is achieved when:

* there is a partnership between home and school
* we ensure children and young people’s views are actively sought to influence lesson planning and teaching
* education starts early and is relevant to pupils at each stage in their development and maturity
* it 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
* it includes the acquisition of knowledge, the development of life skills and respectful attitudes and values
* sufficient time is given 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
* it helps pupils understand on and offline safety, consent, violence and exploitation
* it is both medically and factually correct and treats sex as a normal and pleasurable fact of life
* it is inclusive of difference: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, or other life experience
* it uses active learning methods, and is rigorously planned, assessed and evaluated
* lessons help 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
* it 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.
* it promotes equality in relationships, recognises and challenges gender inequality and reflects girls’ and boys’ different experiences and needs.

We believe that delivering a high quality, progressive programme of SRE will:

* develop a positive ethos and environment for learning
* contribute to the safeguarding of pupils; promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school
* offer pupils 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
* help 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
* assist in reducing early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence and bullying.

**Over-arching Aims**

Taking account of the age, maturity and needs of the pupils, Sex and Relationships Education aims to:

* provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled;
* help children to develop feelings of self-respect, self-esteem, self –confidence and empathy;
* provide pupils with the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others;
* prepare pupils for puberty and encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions;
* give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development;
* develop in pupils an understanding of the importance of health and hygiene;
* develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media;
* develop pupils’ respect and care for their bodies;
* empower pupils to report abuse in all its forms including peer-on-peer abuse
* answer pupils’ questions honestly and sensitively – referring the children to parents and other agencies where appropriate
* signpost individuals and families to further help and support when necessary.

**Context**

At Valley, we teach Sex and Relationships Education in the context of the school’s Core Values and with reference to the Fundamental British Values of Democracy, The Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and those without faith. Whilst Sex and Relationships Education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach Sex and Relationships Education with the beliefs that:

* SRE should be taught in the context of loving relationships and family life;
* SRE is part of a wider personal, social, spiritual and moral education process;
* pupils should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
* pupils should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
* it is important to build positive relationships with others which are built on trust and mutual respect;
* pupils need to learn the importance of self-control.

**The Delivery of Sex and Relationships Education at Valley**

Many of the SRE lessons are taught discretely but some aspects of the curriculum are delivered in other subject areas. Some of the biological content and the study of life cycles is taught through the science curriculum with the emphasis on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles being reinforced in PE lessons.

Since SRE focuses on self-esteem and building positive, mutually-respectful relationships, many of the themes overlap with the Personal Health Social Citizenship Education (PHSCE) curriculum.

Linked with R.E, children reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendship. They learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved.

At times, it is deemed appropriate to deliver SRE lessons to boys and girls separately for example when educating the girls about the menstrual cycle or discussing erections and wet dreams with the boys. Even though some sessions are taught in single sex groupings, **ALL** pupils learn about the gender-specific issues associated with puberty and growing up.

The curriculum for SRE at Valley Primary School maps out lesson objectives for each year group. These themes progress as pupils move through the school.

**Nursery to Year 2**

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| *At this age, pupils are interested in the changing nature of friendships, the emotional and physical changes of growing up, similarities and differences between boy and girls, coping with strong emotions and how babies are made. How to look after our bodies and how to be safe and healthy are also important.*  *Questions to help you understand what pupils want to learn about are listed in the themes below:*  **Relationships**   * How do my relationships change as I grow up? * Why do friends change? * How can I be a good friend? * Why can it be fun to have friends who are different from me? * What are some of the bad ways people can behave towards one another? * How do I know when I am being bullied? * What do I do if I am being bullied? * How can I make up with my friend when we have fallen out? * Why are some parents married and some not? | |
| Relationships | Who is in my family?  How are other families similar or different to mine?  What does my family do for me?  What do I like about my friend?  What does my friend like about me?  What can other people do to make me feel good?  Who do I look after?  Why shouldn’t I tease other people? |
| My Body | Why are girls’ and boys’ bodies different?  What do we call the different parts of girls’ and boys’ bodies? |
| Life Cycles | Where do babies come from?  How much have I changed since I was a baby?  How are other children similar or different to me? |
| Keeping Safe & Looking After Myself | Which parts of my body are private?  When is it OK to let someone touch me?  How can I say ‘no’ if I don’t want someone to touch me?  Who should I tell if someone wants to touch my private parts? |
| People Who Help Me | Who can I ask if I need to know something?  Who can I go to if I am worried about something? |

**Years 3 & 4**

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| *At this age, pupils are interested in knowing about love and the different kind of families. They will be curious about puberty and sexual feelings and changing body image. They will want more details about conception, how babies develop and are born and why families are important for having babies. The will also want to know about who they can talk to if they are worried about something and need further advice and support.*  *Questions to help you understand what pupils want to learn about are listed in the themes below:*  **Relationships**   * What are the important relationships in my life now? * What is love? How do we show love to one another? * Can people of the same sex love one another? Is that OK? * What are the different kinds of families and partnerships? * What do the words ‘lesbian’ and ‘gay’ mean? * Why does calling someone ‘gay’ count as bullying? * What should I do if someone is being bullied or abused? * Are boys and girls expected to behave differently in relationships? Why? * Can some relationships be harmful? * Why are families important for having babies and bringing them up? | |
| My Body | How has my body changed since I was a baby?  Why is my body changing?  How do I keep my body healthy?  How do I keep my body clean?  What are periods and why do they happen? (girls only)  Why are some children growing quicker than others?  Why are some girls in my class taller than the boys?  Why are we all different? Is it OK to be different?  What are the similarities between boys and girls?  Should boys and girls behave differently? |
| Feelings | What makes me feel good?  What makes me feel bad?  How do I know how people are feeling?  Why are my feelings changing as I get older?  How do I feel about growing up and changing?  How can I cope with strong feelings? |
| Life Cycles & Human Reproduction | Why does having a baby need a male and a female?  What are eggs and sperm?  How do different animals have babies?  How do different animals look after their babies before and after birth?  What happens to your body when you get older? |
| Keeping Safe & Looking After Myself | How can I look after my body?  What are the good habits for looking after my growing body?  What do I do if someone wants me to do something dangerous, wrong or makes me feel uncomfortable?  When is it good and bad to keep secrets?  How can girls manage periods?  What does good touch / bad touch look like? |
| People Who Help Me | Who can I talk to if I am feeling anxious or unhappy?  Where can I find information about growing up?  Can all the information I read about growing up be trusted?  How can I find relevant information safely when using the Internet? |

**Years 5 & 6**

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| *At this age, most pupils will be entering puberty and will be interested in hormones and how they will be affected by them. Other areas of interest will include the menstrual cycle, wet dreams, erections, fertility, pregnancy and how it can be avoided and safer sex. They may also be wondering if their physical development is ‘normal’. They will want to know about the difference between sexual attraction and love and whether it’s normal to be attracted or in love with someone of the same gender. Pupils will be asking questions about relationships, when is it the right time to have sex, how to avoid pressure and where they can get more information if they need it.*  *Questions to help you understand what pupils want to learn about are listed in the themes below:*  **Relationships**   * What makes a relationship happy or unhappy? * When does a relationship become abusive? * Why do relationships change during adolescence? * How can I cope with changing relationships with my family and friends? * Why do some people get married or have civil partnerships? * What can I do about family or friendship break-up? * What are the best qualities I should look for in a partner? * Should everyone have a boyfriend or girlfriend at my age? How do I cope with pressure from my peers? * At what age is it legal to have sex? At what age is it legal to get married or have a civil partnership? * How do I know when I am ready to have sex / be intimate with my boyfriend / girlfriend? * Do males and females have different expectations in relationships? * What does it mean to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender? * What is the difference between transvestite and trans-sexual? * What is acceptable touching behaviour amongst my peers? | |
| My Body | What is puberty?  Does everyone go through it? At what age?  What body changes do boys and girls go through during puberty?  Why are some girls ‘tomboys’ and some boys a bit ‘girly’  Is my body normal? What is a ‘normal’ body?  What is the menstrual cycle and why does it happen?  How will my body change as I get older? |
| Feelings & Attitudes | What kind of feelings come with puberty?  What are sexual feelings?  What are wet dreams?  How can I cope with these different feelings and mood swings?  How can I say ‘no’ to someone without hurting their feelings?  What should I do if my family or friends don’t see things the way I do?  What do families and my friends from other cultures and religions think about growing up?  Can I believe everything that I see on the TV about perfect bodies / relationships / girls and boys? |
| Life Cycles & Human Reproduction | What is sex?  What is sexual intercourse?  How many sperm does a man produce?  How many eggs does a woman have?  How do sperm reach the eggs to make a baby?  Does conception always occur or can it be prevented?  How do families with same-sex parents have babies?  How does the baby develop?  How is the baby born?  What does the new baby need to keep it happy and healthy? |
| Keeping Safe & Looking After Myself | How can I look after my body now that I am going through puberty?  How can girls manage periods?  How can people keep themselves safe during sexual activity?  What is FGM and am I at risk?  How do I keep myself safe in the digital world? How will I know if I am being groomed?  What pictures of myself should I share and not share on social media? |
| People Who Help Me | Who can I talk to for help and advice?  Where can I find information about puberty and growing up?  How can I find reliable information about these things safely on the Internet? |

**Answering Difficult Questions**

When delivering SRE lessons, grounds rules are set with the pupils which are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions. If a child asks an explicit or difficult question, staff will use their professional judgement in deciding the best way to answer it. This may be through individual work or discussion with the child. If the staff member is concerned, the Class Teacher will discuss the matter with the parents, refer the matter to the Headteacher or follow other appropriate procedures. All Key Stage 2 classes have an ‘SRE Question box’ in their classroom during the times when SRE lessons are being delivered, so that they can ask questions anonymously or, if named, questions will be answered individually.

**Staff Training**

In order to deliver high quality Sex and Relationships education, it is recognised that staff need access to relevant training and support. At Valley, advice and support is sought from the local Health Trust as well as refresher training being delivered by nationally recognised organisations such as Big Talk Education and The PHSCE Foundation. We also recognise that some of our parents work in the healthcare system and are able to offer support and guidance to staff or even assist in the delivery of the SRE curriculum throughout the school.

The school’s PHSCE Leader oversees the SRE Policy and keeps abreast of developments within this curriculum area to ensure the school meets its statutory obligations.

Even after receiving training, we acknowledge that some teachers still might feel uncomfortable in delivering the Sex and Relationships curriculum at Valley. Lessons will be delivered by staff members who are confident and happy to teach this area of the curriculum.

**Pornography**

Pornography is discussed with pupils in Years 3 to 6 as part of their sex and relationships education. This may come about from discussions that have been generated by the pupils themselves or from a teacher-led discussion relating to appropriate and inappropriate images. In Years 5 and 6, as part of the school’s duty to educate pupils on keeping themselves safe online, a more in-depth discussion will be held regarding pornographic imagery and the negative effect this can have on forging positive relationships. At no point will pupils view pornographic material as part of the sex and relationships curriculum at Valley Primary School.

**Language and Terminology**

SRE has a vital role to play in helping children develop a vocabulary they can use to communicate comfortably, respectfully and accurately about the human body, growing up, sex and relationships. This is only possible if adults teaching SRE are able to model use of this type of vocabulary. Teachers may plan to use vocabulary lists for each lesson or unit of SRE and may also share the list with parents in advance of teaching. At Valley, when teaching SRE lessons, staff will use medially correct terms for genitalia and sexual parts of the body.

The use of respectful language which challenges sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice will also be established in SRE in order to benefit the whole school community.

**Safeguarding**

Valley Primary School Academy Trust has a separate Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The delivery of the SRE curriculum might bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should follow procedures set out in the school’s Safeguarding Policy for reporting their concerns. Again, the school’s safeguarding procedures will be followed if a pupil makes reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity or if a member of staff has concerns that a pupil is a victim of abuse.

Valley Primary School Academy Trust believes that SRE education should meet the needs of all pupils regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate question questions and offer support. Any incidents of bullying relating to sexual identity or sexual orientation are taken seriously and dealt with in line the school’s behaviour and bullying policies.

During SRE lessons, older pupils are reminded that it is not always appropriate to discuss the content of lessons with their younger siblings.

**Pupils with Additional Needs**

It is up to the school to make sure that the needs of all pupils are met. This may mean more explicit teaching to ensure that children with additional education needs are properly included in SRE. This may mean additional support within lessons, small group or individual lessons and an adapting of resources to enable access. Parents may need to be consulted individually with regard to children with AEN, especially if the pupil has a very low mental and or emotional age.

At Valley, staff are aware that some pupils, irrespective of whether they have additional needs, may not have reached a stage of maturity where they feel ready to fully participate in SRE lessons. It is perfectly acceptable for pupils to withdraw themselves from these lessons and, in these incidences, pupils will be reassured by members of staff and a meeting will be held with parents to inform them of their child’s decision and to discuss future provision.

**Equal Opportunities**

Valley Primary School serves an ethnically diverse community and the school appreciates that families will have very different views relating to sex and relationships and the ways in which pupils are educated about this.

The school is committed to the provision of SRE to all of its pupils. In consultation with the parent body, our scheme of work for SRE aims to respond to the diversity of children’s cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

Valley Primary School does not emphasise one specific viewpoint relating to sex, sexuality and relationships and all SRE lessons are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have a different opinion.

**The Role of Parents**

Parents and carers are the key people for their child’s learning about sex and relationships and Valley Primary School will always work in partnership with home. Parents and carers should understand that the school’s SRE programme will complement their role and support them in the education of their child regarding sex and relationships. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation by:

* informing parents about the school’s Sex and Relationships policy and practice including the resources used in its teaching;
* answer any questions that parents may have about the Sex and Relationships education at Valley;
* taking seriously any issue that parents raise with teacher or Governors about this policy and the arrangements for sex and relationships education at the school;
* Consult the parent body in the drafting, monitoring and reviewing of the school’s SRE policy.

Parents will always be informed when SRE lessons are to be delivered and will also be invited in to discuss the content of the curriculum and view the resources used. Parents as well as pupils are reminded that it is not always appropriate for older pupils to discuss the content of their SRE lessons with younger siblings.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the SRE curriculum at Valley but are strongly encouraged to attend the Parent Information sessions before making any final decision.

If the decision is taken to withdraw your child from SRE, this needs to be confirmed in writing to the Headteacher clearly stating which aspects of the SRE curriculum you wish your child to be withdrawn from.

Parents are NOT entitled to withdraw their child from the statutory aspects of the Science curriculum.

While parents have the right to withdraw their child from the discrete SRE lessons at Valley, they are reminded that, from time to time, certain themes will form a natural part of classroom conversations within the wider curriculum.

When parents decide to withdraw their child from SRE lessons at Valley, they are warmly encouraged to undertake their own sex and relationships teaching at home and staff are more than happy to offer advice to parents regarding this.

At Valley, we acknowledge that many of our parents have English as an Additional Language and we will always look to support these families as best we can. Additional meetings may be held to help explain the content of the SRE curriculum on offer at the school, and, where possible, translators may be used to communicate key information.

**Resources**

In the delivery of SRE at Valley, staff will use a range of teaching methods such as case studies, scenarios, visual images and photo cards, scientific models, stories, games and video clips. The Busy Bodies resource is used to deliver the main content of SRE in Years 4 and 6.

A series of short videos entitled ‘Alright Charlie’ is delivered in Year 6 to educate pupils about the online grooming.

The resources chosen support inclusion and are mainly selected from the suggested lists produced by the PHSCE Association or the Sex Education Forum.

**External Speakers and Agencies**

We encourage other valued members of the community, including colleagues from Bromley Healthcare, to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to sex and relationships education. Visiting speakers are only used to enhance rather than replace teacher-led sex and relationships education. The necessary checks will be undertaken to ensure that external speakers belong to reputable organisations and that the visitors’ values are in line with the school’s ethos and values. The content of their presentations will be discussed and agreed on with members of school staff. Valley members of staff will always be present during the presentations of external speakers.

Bromley Women’s Aid attend visit Valley on an annual basis to talk to pupils in Years 5 and 6 about Domestic Violence.

**Monitoring and Review**

The PHSCE Lead, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, monitor the Sex and Relationships Policy on an annual basis and recommends modifications where necessary.

Teacher observations and assessment along with pupil and parent voice will be used to inform the successful implementation of the SRE policy.

The PHSCE Lead will keep up to date with current good practice in the area of Sex and relationships education to ensure that the school’s policy reflects current thinking and legislation.