



Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme Toolkits Sex and Relationships Education

1A The Rationale for Teaching SRE in Primary School

Why Teach SRE?

(From SRE for the 21st Century April 2014)

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. This collection of data is from a variety of sources. It aims to give PSHE leaders, school managers and governors the evidential basis for the approach to SRE which is recommended in the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme and which is enacted in the Cambridgeshire SRE Toolkit.

What Can Effective SRE Achieve?

1. Ensure that children are prepared for puberty
 - 9% of Year 5 and Year 6 children in Cambridgeshire feel they don't know enough about how their body changes as they get older (CHRBS, 2014).
 - The average age for the onset of puberty is 10.75 years in girls (the first sign for girls is breast development), and 11.5 years in boys (the first sign for boys is an increase in

testicular size), (Hindmarsh, 2011).

- The average age for a girl to have her first period is 12.8 years. The average has decreased from 13 years in 1958 (Hindmarsh, 2010).
2. Raise the age young people first try out sexual activity
 - 30% of young men and 26% of young women report having sexual intercourse before their 16th birthday (Brook, 2012)
 - Kirby (2007) examined 48 SRE programmes and found that 40 per cent of these had a significant impact in three aspects of behaviour: delaying the initiation of sex; reducing the number of sexual partners; and increasing condom or contraceptive use. None of the studies hastened the first experience of sex and none of the programmes reviewed by Kirby (2007) resulted in young people having sex more frequently.
 - Young people who cite friends and the media as their main source of information about sex have first sexual intercourse earlier than those who report school sex education as their main source (K Wellings, 2001).
 3. Reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies and abortion
 - Young people who have attended a good quality SRE programme are more likely to use condoms and contraception if they do have sex (Kirby, 2007).
 - In 2013, 4.8 in every 1,000 13-15-year-old young women became pregnant in England and Wales compared with 24.3 under 18 year-old young women. In 1970, the conception rate for 15-19 years olds was 82.4 per 1000 (Brook, 2012)
 - In 2012, there were 19.7 births per 1,000 15-19-year-old young women (ONS). This rate has fallen by a quarter since 2004. However, it does not compare favourably with our European neighbours who have a much lower figure of 12.6 births per 1000 15-19-year-olds.



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4. Help children keep safe

- 12% of Year 5 and Year 6 children said they can rarely or never say 'No' when a friend wants them to do something they don't want to do (CHRBS, 2014).
- Help children feel more confident in talking to trusted adults about their body changes and growing up and where to get help:
 - * In Year 5 and Year 6, 67% of boys and 74% of girls had talked with their parents about how their body changes and growing up (CHRBS, 2014).
 - * In Year 5 and Year 6, 65% of boys and 64% of girls had talked with teachers in school lessons about how their body changes and growing up (CHRBS, 2014).
 - * In Year 5 and Year 6, 13% of boys and girls worry 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' about body changes as they grow up (CHRBS, 2014).

5. Help children critically evaluate messages they get from the media and friends

- In Year 5 and Year 6, 38% of boys and 27% of girls got information about their body and growing up from the TV (CHRBS, 2014).
- In Year 5 and Year 6, 21% of boys and 17% of girls got information about their body and growing up from the internet (CHRBS, 2014).
- In Year 5 and Year 6, 27% of boys and 27% of girls got information about their body and growing up from magazines and books (CHRBS, 2014).
- In Year 5 and Year 6, 17% of children said they have seen pictures online that upset them (CHRBS, 2014).

(CHRBS = Cambridgeshire Health Related Behaviour Survey)