

# Are you getting it right?

A toolkit for consulting young people on  
sex and relationships education

Anna Martinez and Lesley de Meza



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# Introduction

This toolkit provides a selection of activities to help secondary schools involve young people when reviewing and auditing their sex and relationships education (SRE). It is designed for school senior management teams, PSHE coordinators and staff, including peer educators, involved in the delivery and review of SRE policy and curriculum. It is also of interest to local teenage pregnancy and healthy schools coordinators who have a role in helping schools to improve the SRE they are providing.

## Why audit and review SRE?

SRE should be audited and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of the young people it is aimed at. The Sex Education Forum believes that all children and young people are entitled to good quality SRE that meets their needs.<sup>1</sup> Good quality SRE helps young people to develop positive relationships, avoid negative outcomes, such as unplanned pregnancy, and enjoy good sexual health throughout their lives. All schools have a statutory duty to promote their pupils' well-being. Good quality SRE, taught within PSHE education, has an important part to play in fulfilling this duty. For a step-by-step guide to auditing and reviewing SRE policy and curriculum, see page 7.

It is a particularly good time to review SRE as secondary schools have a new national curriculum. The PSHE framework has been replaced by Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, which is delivered through two new programmes of study – 'Economic Well-being and Financial Capability' and 'Personal Well-being' – within which SRE will fall. For more information see <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>

## Is SRE meeting the needs of young people?

Nationally, young people say that there is still a big gap between the SRE they need and what is being provided by their schools. In one survey of 20,000 young people:

- 40 per cent of respondents rated the quality of their sex and relationships education as either poor or very poor
- half had never been taught about teenage pregnancy and wouldn't know where to find their local sexual health clinic
- nearly three-quarters reported not having received any information about personal relationships at school.<sup>2</sup>

Another survey<sup>3</sup> revealed that:

- sex education lessons came too late, especially for those 13- to 16-year-olds who were already sexually active
- half of all respondents did not feel contraception was covered well in school
- 75 per cent did not think that how to resist pressure to have sex was well covered in school
- many respondents also wanted more information on sexual feelings/emotions, STIs and abortion.

Young people say they want the opportunity, within open dialogue, to learn about the emotional implications of relationships as well as the biology of

sex and sexual health promotion in school SRE lessons.<sup>4</sup> This accords with the findings of a new Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) report: ‘Young people report that many parents and educators are not very good at talking to them about sensitive issues, such as sexuality.’<sup>5</sup>

The activities included in this toolkit have been designed to give you an opportunity to consider the extent to which these national messages apply in your school. **Do the gaps identified by young people nationally resonate with your experience, or is your school already getting it right?**

## Why consult young people?

Every Child Matters (ECM)<sup>6</sup> expects all children’s services, including school, to involve children and young people to have a say in developing policies and practice in school. Ofsted’s<sup>7</sup> schools inspection framework now requires inspectors and schools to systematically seek the views of young people.

The National Healthy Schools Programme states that a school must have: ‘Mechanisms in place to ensure all children/young people’s views are reflected in curriculum planning, teaching and learning...’ (Standard 1.11). The ‘minimum evidence required’ is that:

- ‘The school has well-established mechanisms such as school council, year, or class councils, circle time or structured and collated consultation sessions that allow both consultation and feedback.
- The school can demonstrate what has changed in aspects of curriculum planning, teaching and learning and the school environment as a result of children/young people’s views.’<sup>8</sup>

The discussion about how SRE should be taught, and what should be covered, provides schools with an opportunity to engage in an honest and informative conversation with their pupils. This toolkit has been designed to give young people the opportunity to express their ideas, identify specific issues and present their aspirations for future learning about SRE to their schools. For further activities, see Blake and Muttock (2005) *Assessment, Evaluation and Sex and Relationships Education: A practical toolkit for education, health and community settings*.

## How to use this toolkit

Included in this toolkit are a number of activities that can be used at Key Stages 3 and 4. Many of the activities highlight what is expected to be taught and learnt, as outlined in the *Sex and Relationship Guidance* (DFEE 2000).<sup>9</sup> Feedback from the activities will enable positive recommendations for change to be made to senior managers to inform future SRE curriculum development. This can also be presented to the school governing body, which has a statutory responsibility for SRE policy development and review. Feedback could also be used as part of the consultation process with parents to let them know what their children want to learn about, and how.

Each activity is prefaced with ‘Notes for the facilitator’ and a list of ‘Materials required’. Copyable resources are included. You may not want to

use all of the activities in this resource to audit your SRE; however, several of these activities are considered essential:

- Before starting the consultation process, provide pupils with an explanation about why you are doing these activities, summarising why pupil involvement is important, why SRE needs to be reviewed and updated and what national statistics reveal about young people's views on SRE. For a sample statement see page 9. You may want to refer to your school's pupil participation policy.
- Before undertaking any work, it is essential to work with the pupils to build a group agreement or a set of ground rules. **Activity 1** in this pack describes how to do this.
- It is important to remind pupils what they have already studied within the SRE curriculum. **Activity 2**, is included to enable you to do this.
- **Activity 7** is an essential exercise to allow pupils to review, reflect and summarise the views they have explored and shared during the consultation process.

## Auditing and reviewing SRE policy and curriculum

Before reviewing the SRE curriculum, it is advisable to consider whether the school's SRE policy also needs to be reviewed and updated. Both policy and curriculum can be reviewed at the same time. There are four main stages in this process and the questions below will help in working through each stage.

### Step 1: Identify how the development of SRE fits in with other priorities, local issues and trends

- Has this review got the explicit support of the governing body and senior management team?
- How does it relate to local health priorities, e.g. teenage pregnancy, sexual health and well-being?
- How does it relate to other issues, e.g. alcohol use, sexual bullying, racism or homophobia?
- How does it relate to the school's priorities and development plan?
- How does it fit within National Healthy Schools Programme Standards for PSHE work and the statutory duty to promote well-being?
- How does it contribute to ECM outcomes?

### Step 2: Review existing policy and curriculum

- What is the school's existing policy on SRE? Does it meet national requirements and guidance on PSHE education and SRE? Does it take into account the differing needs of children and young people?
- How does it fit within the context of the personal and social development opportunities offered within the school?
- What is the school's existing SRE curriculum? How is it taught and what does it cover? When, where and by whom is it delivered? Does it have clear learning outcomes that address sex; sexuality; relationships; sexual health, including faith and secular perspectives; the development of social skills; and exploration of values? How is the young people's learning and progress monitored and assessed?
- Are multi-agency partnerships established and how do these different partners contribute and add value to SRE?
- How does the whole school ethos and values support a safe learning environment for SRE?
- What feedback have you received from young people and their families?

### Step 3: Identify what the 'stakeholders' want from SRE

For pupils:

- How will their needs be assessed?
- How will they be involved in the audit and review of SRE? (Use the activities in this toolkit to help with this.)

For parents and carers:

- How will they be consulted and involved in the review process?

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For staff involved in SRE:

- Do staff feel confident about their knowledge of, and skills regarding, all aspects of SRE? What aspects are staff less confident about?
- How many staff members are trained to deliver SRE and what did the training comprise?
- What are the staff's professional development needs? How will these needs be met?

For governors:

- Have governors been offered training and support? How can they be supported to feel confident and equipped to take overall responsibility for SRE?
- Are governors involved in the review process?
- Do governors understand the content, methodology and values framework of best practice in SRE? (See Frances and Power (2003) *Developing Sex and Relationships Education in Schools: Guidance and training activities pack for school governors.*)

For all partners:

- What do these different partners need and want from SRE?
- What do they think of the existing programme?
- How do they think existing provision could be improved?
- How will all the views be balanced – especially if any conflicting views arise?

### Step 4: Update and develop SRE policy and curriculum

- Who will take responsibility for updating and developing the SRE policy, including the values framework? How will it be implemented? Will they be supported in this process by senior school managers?
- Who will design the SRE curriculum? How will it be taught, what will it cover and how will it be assessed and evaluated?
- Who will deliver the curriculum and what resources are available? Are there other schools in the area that we can work with/learn from?
- What are the professional development needs of staff and how will they be met?
- When will the policy and curriculum next be reviewed?
- Who will ensure that the SRE policy and curriculum is available to parents and carers, and how will this be done?

## Reasons for doing activities

Before starting the consultation process, discuss with young people why you are doing these activities. Here is a sample explanation you can use.

*The government in this country has clearly stated that the views of young people (your views) should be sought on:*

- *what you want to learn about*
- *how you want to learn*
- *what support and advice you want and need.*

*Nationally, young people say that there is still a big gap between the sex and relationships education (SRE) they need and what is being provided by schools. [You may want to include some of the statistics from p.4 of this toolkit here.] You (young people) have an important role in working with the school to decide how sex and relationships education should be taught and what should be covered.*

*Your involvement in the development of SRE could help you to develop citizenship skills, and your skills of communication, participation and responsible action. Your participation will also help to ensure that SRE reflects some of your real needs and concerns. Your participation will also help make sure that the SRE in your school is the SRE that you and your peers need and want.*

# Activity 1

## Group agreement

### Purpose

To agree a set of standards according to which the pupils and the facilitator will be able to work together safely.

### Outcomes

- To have produced a mutually agreed set of standards that facilitate cooperative and participative learning in a learning climate of trust, support and honesty.
- To have clarified the boundaries of confidentiality in the classroom.

### *Materials needed*

For the facilitator:

- board/flipchart
- 1 large sheet of paper.

For pupils:

- paper
- pens.



### Activity

- Settle the class in and explain that the first part of the session will involve them talking to one another and finding a way to work safely and productively with each other.
- Tell them you want them to work together in small groups to come up with a group agreement, which should outline the rights and responsibilities they think they should share in the classroom. They should jot their ideas down on paper so that they can feed back to the whole class when requested to do so:
  - Example: *'I have the right to be listened to when I speak, therefore I have the responsibility to listen to other people when they are talking.'*
- Allow up to five minutes for the groups to work on their ideas.
- Take feedback – one or two ideas from each group – from one group at a time.
- As a group offers an idea, make sure that it is repeated in order to give everyone a chance to understand it.
- Check that the whole class wants the idea to be part of the group agreement. If they do, write it up on the board or flipchart. Check if any of the other groups has a similar idea.
- Once all the groups' ideas have been considered, you should have a list that forms a group agreement. It is important that the class recognises that the group agreement includes both the educator and pupils and that both are bound by it, and that it can be used to draw attention to behaviour and can be added to or amended from time to time.
- Head the large piece of paper 'Class/form XX group agreement' and ask for volunteers to write the agreed statements onto the paper. When this has been completed, the group agreement should be displayed prominently in the classroom. Use it as a way of helping pupils to listen to and respect others, and to learn how to question, challenge and disagree in a constructive manner.
- At this point – if it has not yet been raised – you need to address the issue of confidentiality in the classroom. Explain to the class that the following activities are designed to encourage them to share their views and experiences of SRE and that at the end of the session feedback will be collected and shared with others. All feedback will be anonymous so no comments can be attributed to an individual. **However**, if the facilitator believes that a pupil might be in danger or is likely to be harmed by someone, then the facilitator has to pass that information to the person who has responsibility for safeguarding children (child protection) in the school. This will only happen with the pupil's knowledge and they will be supported through this process.

# Activity 2

## Taking stock

### Purpose

To provide pupils with an opportunity to remember what they have learnt in SRE and begin to discuss how SRE might be improved.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this activity you will have a list of:

- SRE topics that pupils remember having learnt
- what was covered in SRE
- the teaching styles and resources used to deliver SRE
- suggestions for improvements in SRE.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

You may need to remind the class of issues covered. It will therefore be useful to prepare, in advance, a list of topics that have been covered and the methods used.

Once the activity has been undertaken, it should be noted if the group cannot recall anything of their SRE learning, as this is significant. It may be indicative of several factors, e.g. timing (i.e. inappropriate SRE topics for that age range); appropriateness of the method of delivery; lack of time for review and reflection, leading to lack of retention of learning.

Prepare for this activity by dividing the board or flipchart into three sections under which the responses to the brainstorming questions (see Activity) may be listed.

#### *Materials needed*

- board or flipchart and pens
- large sheets of papers and pens for small group work.



### Activity

Begin by explaining to the class that this activity is a warm-up exercise, based on the SRE that has been delivered in your school, in order to start the review process.

Brainstorm with the whole class. Pose each of the following questions separately, writing answers under the appropriate section as you take the feedback:

1. What SRE do you remember learning? What did it cover?
2. How was it taught and what teaching styles and resources were used?
3. What were the gaps? What else do you think you need to learn about?

Check with the class that they understand everything in the feedback to these questions.

Next, divide the class into groups of four and give each group paper and pens. Ask the groups to discuss the following question and note down their responses so that they will be able to feed back to the whole class:

4. What would you do to improve SRE?

Allow the groups up to 10 minutes to talk about this question, and then hold a discussion based on the feedback from each group.

# Activity 3

## Diamond 9

### Purpose

To provide pupils with the opportunity to prioritise what they think are important topic areas within SRE.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this activity pupils will have:

- been able to reflect on and review SRE topics for their key stage as stipulated in the guidance
- prioritised the topic areas they wish to study.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

This activity works well as a vehicle for small group discussion and helps develop negotiation skills.

Begin the lesson with a broad discussion of sex and relationships education and why 'relationships' have been included in this subject. The language level of some of the statements (see below) may appear high for pupils with lower levels of literacy; however, use this as an opportunity to explain the meanings of the words, such as 'exploitation' or 'prejudice' and to explore their understanding of these words.<sup>1</sup>

If working with a particularly articulate group, you may wish to extend the activity by allowing them to devise their own set of SRE Diamond 9 cards.

#### *Materials needed*

- board/flipchart
- set of nine statements per pair of pupils (statements for Key Stages 3 and 4 below). A blank card is included if the pupils feel that there is a topic missing which they would like to prioritise.

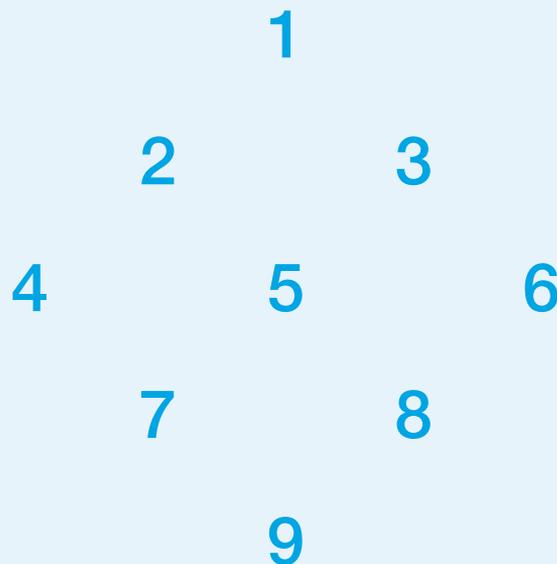
Alternatively, make large versions of the statements so that those pupils who enjoy working kinaesthetically could manipulate the statements rather like a giant jigsaw puzzle. When they have agreed their priority, they should order the statements in the shape of a giant diamond.

<sup>1</sup> Exploitation – taking selfish or unfair advantage of a person or situation, usually for personal gain.  
Prejudice – make a narrow judgement about something without the facts.



### Activity

- Explain to the pupils that it's important to find out what they think they should be learning about in SRE. Their answers will help the people who plan the SRE lessons to make them as relevant as possible.
- Write the following question up on the board or flipchart: 'In sex and relationships education, it is important for us to learn ...'
- Ask the pupils to work in pairs and give each pair a set of the nine statements. They then have to prioritise these into a specific order (shaped like a diamond – see below) with their number one priority at the top, two and three on the next row, below them four, five and six, and under those seven and eight, with the least important priority being number nine on its own at the bottom.



- When the pupils have finished this activity in their pairs, ask each pair to join with another pair. They should work together to agree an order of priorities that they all feel happy with.
- Ask each group of four to feed back their top three priorities. Write these on the board/flipchart. Discuss why the group thought these were the most important priorities.
- Ask the pupils to review the list of top three priorities on the board/flipchart and reflect on them in relation to the SRE provided in the school. If they were designing a SRE programme for their year group, what would they include?

### Extension activity

If you are working with a particularly articulate group, you may wish to extend the activity by allowing pupils to work in small groups and devise their own set of SRE Diamond 9 (or Diamond 4) topic cards. When each group has devised a set, they should swap them with another group and set about the task of prioritising, using the same method described above.

# Key Stage 3 statements We need to learn...



The importance of making responsible choices for a healthy lifestyle.

How to deal with the physical and emotional changes that take place at puberty and how to manage these changes in a positive way.

What influences health?  
(Including the media.)

About the biology of sex and human reproduction, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

About understanding risk in both positive and negative terms, and how to develop the confidence to try new ideas and face challenges safely.

To understand that relationships affect everything we do in our lives and that relationship skills have to be learnt and practised.

About the emotions associated with loss and change (e.g. death, divorce, separation and/or new family members) and how to deal positively with the strength of feelings we may experience in different situations.

About the role and importance of marriage, the value of family life and the role and feelings of parents and carers.

To appreciate similarities and differences between people (race, religion, culture, ability or disability, gender, age or sexual orientation) and understand that all forms of prejudice and discrimination must be challenged at every level in our lives.

# Key Stage 4 statements We need to learn...



About the health risks of early sexual activity and pregnancy, and about the safer choices we can make.

About how different forms of contraception work and where to get advice.

To develop the confidence to try new ideas and face challenges safely.

To understand that relationships affect everything we do in our lives and that relationship skills have to be learnt and practised.

To be aware of exploitation in relationships.

About the roles and responsibilities of a parent, and the qualities of good parenting and its value to family life.

About the impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on families and how to adapt to changing circumstances.

How to resist pressure to have sex or unsafe sex, e.g. pressure from peers, partners, the media, etc.

To understand that all forms of prejudice and discrimination must be challenged at every level in our lives.

# Activity 4

## SRE questionnaires

### Purpose

To provide pupils with the opportunity to explore SRE in terms of content, method of delivery and who delivers it through three separate questionnaires.

#### Outcomes

Once the questionnaires have been completed, pupils will have:

- considered and listed which topics they think need to be covered in SRE, in order of importance to their learning
- produced a prioritised list of SRE themes
- expressed their preferred activities/methods of learning
- expressed who they want to deliver SRE and the skills and qualities needed.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

You can use all three questionnaires or choose the one that enables you and your pupils to explore the most relevant areas of your school's SRE.

#### Questionnaire 1: What topics?

This questionnaire could be used in two ways:

1. To act as a reminder to pupils of the contents of their SRE programme. They could use it to answer these questions:
  - Was this covered?
  - What was missing?
  - Is there anything else that needs to be covered?
2. To get pupils to order the themes in order of importance, or to score each one out of five, to get a sense of each theme's **relative** importance.

#### Questionnaire 2: Which activities?

This questionnaire will enable pupils to express their preferential activities/methods of learning.

#### Questionnaire 3: Who should facilitate?

This will enable pupils to express their views on the best person to deliver SRE and the skills needed to be a good educator.

Try using a questionnaire at the end of a lesson in which you have spent some time talking about what pupils could be learning in SRE.

#### *Materials needed*

- copies of appropriate questionnaires in sufficient numbers to allow all class members to participate
- pens/pencils.

## What topics?

What should people my age learn about in sex and relationships education (SRE) lessons?

My age is: ..... My year group is: .....

*Tick in the boxes, where appropriate*

**Gender:** Male  Female

✓		✓		✓	
	<b>Pregnancy choices including abortion, adoption and parenthood</b>		<b>Effect of alcohol and other drugs on sexual behaviours</b>		<b>Assertiveness skills</b>
	<b>Being a parent</b>		<b>Contraception</b>		<b>Different types of relationships:</b> family/ friendships/intimate
	<b>Drugs and sex</b>		<b>Emotions: different types and dealing with them</b>		<b>Friendships:</b> making, falling out, keeping friends
	<b>Human reproduction (Biology)</b>		<b>Laws about sex</b>		<b>Managing risk</b>
	<b>Marriage/stable relationships</b>		<b>Pleasure</b>		<b>Puberty</b> (emotional and physical changes)
	<b>Reasons for delaying (early) sexual activity</b>		<b>Safer sex</b> (including alternatives to penetration)		<b>Sexual development and sexuality</b>
	<b>Sexual orientation</b>		<b>Strategies for making choices</b>		<b>Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV</b>
	<b>Where to go for confidential help</b>		<b>Peer pressure</b>		<b>Responsibility for self and others</b>
	<i>Please add anything else you would like to see included in the spare boxes.</i>				

## Which activities?

What kind of learning activities should be used in SRE?

Please tick ✓ where appropriate and add some of your own ideas if you like.

<b>Brainstorming</b>		<b>Case studies/scenarios</b>	
<b>Continuum</b>		<b>Debate</b>	
<b>Discussion</b>		<b>DVD/film</b>	
<b>Quizzes</b>		<b>Problem pages</b>	
<b>Role-play</b>		<b>Storytelling</b> (using models or pictures)	
<b>Testing products</b> (e.g. experiments with condoms)		<b>Theatre groups</b>	
<b>TV programmes</b>		<b>Using textbooks</b>	
<b>Visiting experts/ speakers</b>		<b>Worksheets</b>	
<i>Please note any other suggestions in the spare boxes.</i>			

If you could make an SRE noticeboard, what sources of advice and help would you include (e.g. Childline telephone number)?

- .....
- .....
- .....

# Who should facilitate?

Who do you think should facilitate sex and relationships education (SRE) and what skills and knowledge do they need?

Below is a list of different types of people (or groups) who may be involved in delivering learning about sex and relationships in the classroom.

Who do you think are the best people to help you learn about SRE? Please think carefully about the people listed below and put them in order of preference, with 1 being the best choice and 6 being the least helpful person to deliver SRE.

For example: if you think school nurses are best at helping you learn about SRE tick ✓ box 1 (**1 is best; 6 is least helpful**). You should only put one tick ✓ on each row.

Type of person	1 Brilliant	2 Helpful	3 Not bad	4 OK	5 Better than nothing	6 No thanks
Form tutor/class teacher						
The school's regular school nurse						
Specialist/expert from an outside agency, e.g. sexual health worker						
Specially trained educators						
Specially trained youth workers						
Trained peer educators (people who may be slightly older than you but are still at school)						
Somebody else – please state						

What skills and knowledge do you think a SRE facilitator needs?

- .....
- .....
- .....

# Activity 5

## Moral and values framework

This activity is aimed at Key Stage 4.

### Purpose

This activity provides pupils with the opportunity to think about what should be included within a school's moral and values framework.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this activity pupils will have:

- discussed and developed their understanding of a 'moral and values framework'
- reviewed and reflected on their own attitudes and those of others
- provided a list of relevant points to be taken forward for the development of SRE in the school.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

Schools need to ensure that their moral and values framework is well known to pupils (and their parents) and that it is adhered to consistently.

These morals and values will often refer to personal morality, the effects of actions and choices, and the nature of relationships – concepts that are very relevant to SRE.

Explain to the group that SRE policies are required to have a moral and values framework that is distinctive to each school. This exercise will require the group to explore a range of statements about morals and values. At the end of the exercise, you can tell the group what the DFEE's (now DCSF) *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* (2000) outlines as important values to be included within SRE.

Most schools work hard to implement a code of conduct that promotes certain values and have rules around uniform, punctuality, etc. As a result many pupils become used to being told what to do. Even when we want them to decide for themselves, many young people expect adults to decide for them. Set against that background, discussions in SRE lessons about which values schools should be promoting become very interesting.

*Materials*

- statement sheet
- signs written on A4 paper and placed at different points in the room:

**AGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**UNSURE**

*Activity*

- Tell the group that you are going to read out the series of statements. Explain that the purpose of this exercise is not to agree the rights or wrongs of each statement, but rather to discover the range of opinions on the subject.
- The question in each case is: 'Should this idea be part of our school's SRE moral and values framework?'
- Tell them you would like them to go and stand next to the sign in the room that comes closest to reflecting their opinion. Tell them they may be asked to give reasons for their position.
- Read out each statement in turn and encourage discussion among pupils with these questions:
  - Where do we get our ideas from?
  - How important is it to explain why we hold a point of view?
  - How important is it to listen to the opinions of others?
  - Is it all right to change your mind?
- Finally, bring the group back together in a circle and ask whether the range of opinions expressed surprised them.

- Split the group into smaller discussion groups of four to five pupils. Ask each group to come up with one statement that they think could be included in their school's moral and values framework and write each of these on a piece of paper. They do **not** have to put their names to it.
- Collect the statements and tell the pupils that these will be passed to the group that is reviewing the SRE policy and curriculum.
- At the end you might want to conclude the discussion by reading how government would respond to the statements (based on current SRE guidance).

## The statements

Which of the following statements do you think should be part of our school's SRE moral and values framework?

1. Schools should teach you the importance of values such as respect, love and care.
2. Homosexuality can be discussed as part of school lessons.
3. You don't have to be married to have a strong and supportive relationship.
4. SRE should teach you to make choices, not tell you what to do.
5. Schools should only teach Christian values.
6. Schools should tell young people not to have sex.

## Values outlined in SRE guidance

This is how the government would respond to these statements.

1. Schools should teach you the importance of values such as respect, love and care.

Agree.

SRE should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral and cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at schools and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

2. Homosexuality can be discussed as part of school lessons.

Agree.

The Guidance states that ‘teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support’ [DFEE Guidance 1.30].

3. You don’t have to be married to have a strong and supportive relationship.

Agree.

The government recognises that there are ‘strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage’. We should not discriminate against children because their parents are not married. [DFEE Guidance Intro, Para.4]

4. SRE should teach you to make choices, not tell you what to do.

Agree.

SRE should help you to develop the skills necessary ‘to make choices based on an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice’ and to ‘develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made’ [DFEE Intro, Para.9].

5. Schools should only teach Christian values.

Disagree.

There is no assumption that only Christian values should be taught. The Guidance actually makes several statements about the importance of full consultation with the school community, e.g. parents, pupils, faith leaders, etc., to ensure a whole range of religious and secular values are considered when developing SRE. Nevertheless, the Guidance does state that ‘schools of a particular religious ethos may choose to reflect that (ethos) in their Sex and Relationship Education Policy’ [DFEE – Guidance 1.7]. A Catholic school, for example, may choose to express a point of view about contraception.

6. Schools should tell young people not to have sex.

Disagree.

However, it is expected that schools would ‘give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure’. Schools also have to explain to young people how the law applies to sexual relationships [DFEE Guidance 1.18]. The age of consent, for example, is 16 for every young person.

# Activity 6

## Assessing needs

### Purpose

To provide pupils with the opportunity to think about what young people need to learn about in sex and relationship education.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this activity pupils will have:

- thought about what sex and relationships education should include
- identified what they think young people need and want to learn about
- explored the difference between 'sex education' and the broader 'sex and relationships education'.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

In 2000 the government changed the title of this subject from 'sex education' to 'sex and relationships education'. However, despite guidance from DCSF, QCA and Ofsted, some schools continue to deliver sex education from a purely biological ('parts and plumbing') perspective.

Research has shown that young people want to learn about more than just the biology. They want the opportunity to discuss topics like relationships, risk, pregnancy choices, pressure to have sex, emotions and sexuality.

#### *Materials needed*

- flipchart stand with paper or writing board
- large sheets of paper
- felt pens
- Blu-tak or drawing pins
- lined paper or individual notebooks
- biros, pens or pencils.

### Before you begin

Divide the board/flipchart in two. Mark one side 'Learning about sex' and the other 'Learning about relationships'.

When working in groups, ensure that each person in the group is given a specific role, e.g. scribe; timekeeper; person who keeps the group on task; person to feed back; person to ensure that group agreement/ground rules are adhered to, etc.



### Activity

- Tell the group that this activity starts with a brainstorm and you want them to put up their hands to tell you their responses, one at a time. You will write up each response exactly as it comes, without comment. Explain to the pupils that you just want to gather as many ideas as quickly as possible.
- Begin by asking the group ‘What is sex education?’ And write their responses in the appropriate section on the board/flipchart.
- Next, ask the question: ‘What do we want from relationships – all kinds of relationships?’ and hold a discussion. Bring the discussion round to the question: ‘Why do we sometimes find it difficult to talk about these things?’
- Now ask the question: ‘What do we want to learn about relationships?’ Again, write the pupils’ responses in the appropriate section on the board/flipchart.
- You are now in a position to consider, with the group, the brainstorming session. Explain that when schools put policies together, they should have young people’s feedback and that the brainstorming session they have just participated in was a way of providing this feedback on SRE.
- Divide the class into smaller working groups of approximately four to five pupils. Give each group a large sheet of paper and marker pen(s) and give **one** of the following questions to each group:
  - What is it about **sex** that we need to know?
  - What is it about **relationships** that we want to learn?
- They should write the question as a heading on the paper, discuss it and note down their responses. Allow five to ten minutes for this. Then ask the pupils to display their work around the room.
- Depending on how lively your groups are, they can either look at other pupils’ responses from where they are sitting, or walk around and view other pupils’ responses.
- Bring the group back together as a whole and discuss the responses to each of the questions. Ask the pupils if there are some responses that they particularly agree or disagree with, and why.
- Now tell them that their final responsibility will be to exercise a vote by choosing the response they agree with most strongly and the one they disagree with most strongly. They have only **one** vote for each. Ask them to move silently around the room and place an appropriate tick or cross against their two choices, then return to their seats.
- You should now add up the ticks and crosses. For each question, announce which responses received the most positive and which the most negative votes.
- Explain that all the feedback will be given to the group that is reviewing SRE in the school. Thank them for their participation.

# Activity 7

## The letter

### Purpose

To provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect and summarise the views that they have shared during the consultation process.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this activity pupils will have:

- been provided with the time and opportunity to think about the SRE consultation experience and to summarise their views and opinions on SRE
- written a letter to the appropriate 'official' summarising how they would like SRE to be improved.

#### *Materials needed*

- paper and pens.

#### *Notes for the facilitator*

This activity could also be used as part of a citizenship lesson. They may also want to make a film about this consultation process and the review of their SRE.



### Activity

Explain to the group that this final activity provides them with a further opportunity to reflect on their participation in SRE consultation activities and to review how they want sex and relationships education to be improved.

Remind them of the Every Child Matters agenda,<sup>7</sup> which calls for children and young people to have a say in developing policies that affect them and recognises the importance of children and young people having a voice.

Ask them to write a letter, working in pairs, expressing their thoughts and feelings about the teaching and learning of sex and relationships education in schools.

They can choose to send the letter to one or all of the following:

- a relevant government minister
- their local MP (House of Commons, Westminster, SW1A 0AA)
- the United Kingdom (UK) Youth Parliament (UKYP, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE)
- chair of board of governors/headteacher
- local councillor
- the Children's Commissioner for England and Wales (Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, 11 Million, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG)

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## About the Sex Education Forum

The Sex Education Forum (SEF) is a trusted and established body whose mission is to ensure that **all** children and young people receive their entitlement to good quality sex and relationships education (SRE). Established in 1987, the SEF is a unique collaboration of 50 organisations and has gained a reputation as the **national authority** on SRE.

The SEF promotes best practice through a range of publications, email networks and seminars. The SEF is committed to ensuring that young people's voices are heard, and that their needs and views play a significant role in planning and shaping SRE and sexual health services.

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