

pretty woman

love

I kissed a girl

lose calories having sex

If you're not having sex you'll have no friends

faith

What women want

sexual orientation

shock

teen pregnancy

boyfriend

girlfriend

everyone is doing it

puberty

**We
want
more!**

**WHAT YOUNG
PEOPLE WANT
FROM SEX AND
RELATIONSHIPS
EDUCATION**

**CHARTER
FOR
CHANGE**



working together for quality
sex and relationships education



To achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes,

we need good sex and

relationships education

To **ENJOY AND ACHIEVE** we need to learn:

- how to engage in a meaningful and fulfilling relationship.
- about the enjoyable and the positive things about sex – not just the negatives!
- what other young people have said they want to know about in SRE.
- changing feelings and emotions as we grow-up.
- about all types of relationships, allowing everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or ability, to enjoy their relationships unhindered and free from discrimination.

**We
want to be
healthy**



boyfriend
girlfriend
sexual
orientation

To **STAY SAFE** we need to learn:

- how to stand up for ourselves and be assertive in order to successfully deal with peer pressure.
- the facts about contraception and know where we can get them from, with opportunities to take part in practical demonstrations.
- the risks within the world, like the dangers of the internet, how alcohol and drugs alter our perceptions and affect our decision making.
- the types of support available for comfort and advice, and reassurance that our conversations will be treated confidentially. (If I am at risk of harm, I want to understand what will happen and who will be informed.)
- our rights and responsibilities in relationships such as the law on sex, consent and the consequences of underage sex, and how to deal with violence and rape.
- how to recognise an unsafe relationship, the signs of abuse and know if you or your friends are at risk.
- what an appropriate relationship is between family or other adults.
- other things to do to have fun and show commitment in a relationship other than having sex and how to stop things from going too far.

To **BE HEALTHY** we need to learn:

- about puberty and body changes, and the biological side of sex and reproduction.
- when we are ready for sex, and how to make decisions without being influenced or pressured by anybody or any external forces.
- about pregnancy, and all the options – termination, adoption or becoming a parent, and the emotional consequences of each choice.
- about confidential sexual health services, including in schools, clinics, GPs etc., where they are, and when they are open. Also places to go for help such as rape counselling, STI screening and LGBT support.
- about sexually transmitted infections and HIV...prevention, testing, the signs and symptoms and treatment.
- about a diverse range of relationships and how they are all natural and normal, and how to have safe sex.
- the emotional side of relationships including self confidence and self respect.

**We want
to be
safe**

A hand is shown at the bottom of the frame, gripping a white vertical pole. The pole supports a blue rectangular sign with white text. The background is a light grey gradient with faint, out-of-focus text including 'alco', 'boyfriend girlfriend', and 'sex is and doing'.

To **ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

we need to learn:

- about pregnancy and the financial difficulties faced by young people when having a baby at an early age.
- how to get free contraception, condoms, chlamydia tests and pregnancy tests.
- how in some countries people with HIV face discrimination, and how this can affect what income they can earn.
- how young parents can get support and information about their rights, how to manage their money and avoid being poor.

To **MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION**

we need to learn:

- how we can develop and maintain healthy relationships with everyone including our families.
- how to be able to understand other people's feelings and concerns, and help our friends if they are in trouble.
- how to help schools improve the SRE we are taught.
- how to complain if the services we use are not helpful and make suggestions to make them more young-person friendly.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

To make sure all children and young people receive SRE, we want schools to:

- 1** Make SRE (PSHE) compulsory and give it the same importance as other curriculum subjects.
- 2** Provide all pupils with SRE regardless of gender, ability, sexual orientation or faith and make sure the curriculum is inclusive.
- 3** Have better communication with young people, let them participate in setting the agenda and base SRE on their needs.
- 4** Make sure SRE is given a timetabled slot, is regular and that catch-up lessons are given if any are missed. SRE should be taught at appropriate stages, and start young.
- 5** Have better communication with parents and be more open and confident about their curriculum.
- 6** Let all pupils have SRE regardless of the type of school. Faith schools should not be a barrier to SRE and if they will not teach it there needs to be an alternative place to learn.
- 7** Make sure all staff teaching SRE are trained and have enough funding for SRE resources.
- 8** Teach a broad range of topics, not just about reproduction.
- 9** Ensure SRE is interesting, relevant and practical and is taught in a safe relaxed environment – not using scare tactics.
- 10** Allow teachers to give out free condoms and make sure all pupils are aware of their local sexual health clinics.

Did you know?

We asked young people between ages 16-25 to tell us about their experience of SRE in school. 1709 responded and this is what they said.

SRE is not good enough

'...one random contraceptive session in 12 months, I do not consider this to be adequate...'

Over a third of young people say said their SRE had been bad or very bad. They recognised that SRE did not have the same status as other subjects in school.

SRE is inconsistent

'Being completely unrepresented as a gay person. It was as if I didn't exist.'

Young people identifying as transgender, lesbian or gay had a worse experience of SRE, as did young people with a physical disability. The overall rating of SRE given by young people who had attended some faith schools was worse than average.

More training needed

'The teachers also were embarrassed ... they could have done with some sort of training, so they know how to tackle and explain things better.'

The quality of teaching has a huge impact on the quality of SRE experienced. Young people who said their SRE was bad also felt that their teacher did not know enough.

SRE is too biological

'I understand the science side pretty well but it seems a bit like a pencil – I know it's made from wood and soft graphite that gets broken off, but does that tell me how to write?'

Young people agree that SRE needs to include a broad range of topics. They say that whilst topics such as puberty and the biology of sex are taught, diversity of relationships, emotions relating to sex and the positive aspects of relationships are generally neglected.

SRE starts too late and is not enough

'she managed to cram all the stuff we needed to know... in year 10, which was way too late, should be in year 7 and 6.'

Young people told us that SRE had not started early enough and agreed that SRE should be introduced before the age of 13. They also said that it should not be taught as a one-off session but should be ongoing.

SRE ends too soon

'I don't see how they think that just because we're older it wouldn't be useful, considering I've only ever had one 'sex and relationships' lesson in my whole life, and that was when I was twelve.'

All young people surveyed were over 16, and around three-quarters were currently in education. Of those, four in five said that they were not currently getting any SRE. There was strong support for SRE continuing in post-16 provision, a time when most young people start becoming sexually active.

Better practice needed

'It was a rushed one-hour session with an embarrassed biology teacher. You could tell she didn't want to be there teaching us about it and didn't put us at ease at all. Everyone just took it light-heartedly and played around!'

The young people had a clear idea of what they considered good and bad practice. For example, bad SRE is taught by untrained embarrassed teachers, is not inclusive in terms of sexual orientation, and is rushed and not relevant to young people's lives. Good SRE is taught in a safe learning environment, by a non-judgemental competent educator and there is one-to-one help available after the session.

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Special thanks to UKYP for their work on this project. For more information on UKYP visit www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

This charter was launched as part of SEF's 21st birthday celebrations.

Who is the Sex Education Forum?

The Sex Education Forum (SEF) is a collaboration of diverse organisations representing children, parents, faith, disability, health and education. We believe that all children and young people regardless of gender, faith, sexual orientation or ability are entitled to good quality sex and relationships education (SRE). SRE taught as part of a broader programme of PSHE makes a vital contribution to well-being.

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