SCARF Relationships Education: Teacher Guidance

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Introduction

SCARF Relationships Education is a comprehensive sex and relationships education resource that brings together all the key elements of Relationships Education: Relationships, Keeping Safe, Emotional Health, and Puberty and Reproduction. The content of the resource has been informed by the PSHE Association’s Programme of Study and related Learning Opportunities; also by the needs and wants of schools surveyed by Coram Life Education in advance of the resource development (CLE survey of head teachers and leads, March-May 2017) and, crucially, by young people themselves, through feedback captured by the Sex Education Forum (a membership organisation that works with its members and other stakeholders to achieve quality sex and relationships education).

SCARF Relationships Education is designed as a spiral curriculum that helps children to develop the knowledge and understanding, life skills, attitudes and values which they will use in a range of situations now and as they grow older. By ensuring that children receive this spiral curriculum, where the same key themes are taught each year, they can apply their learning to age-relevant scenarios, helping them to make healthy decisions and keep themselves and others safe.

Within the Children and Social Work Act, Relationships and Sex Education (currently known as SRE or RSE) will be a mandatory part of the curriculum for all schools from the academic year 2019/2020. It will be known as Relationships & Sex Education in secondary schools, and Relationships Education in primary schools. This includes the option to extend statutory status to Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education at a later date.

You can read more about the government’s intentions via weblinks at the end of this document.
1. Rationale: SAFEGUARDING, SCHOOL CULTURE, ETHOS, VALUES & RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard children and young people – as set out in the DfE document *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. A school also has a duty to promote the Equality Act 2010, British values, including democracy, tolerance, and the rule of law; provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and address the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Together, these positive and empowering elements should set a school culture that underpins effective PSHE (including Relationships Education) pedagogy and practice. Relationships Education is best when taught as part of a planned PSHE programme; there should be a correlation between the values embedded in a school's culture and ethos, and those taught and discussed through Relationships Education (within PSHE), Citizenship and planned assemblies.

(Note: the 2014 National Curriculum states in section 2.5 that: “All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice.” From spring 2014 schools have been required to publish their PSHE curriculum alongside other subjects (this will usually be on their website) and the DFE have recommended that schools use the Programmes of Study from the PSHE Association, or to develop their own).

This approach will provide support for the entire school community; the underpinning values of equality, respect and inclusion will ensure a secure platform to address all issues relating to safeguarding and child protection. Relationships Education is essential to the effective teaching about relationships, keeping safe, being assertive, rights, responsibilities and health.

Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme which enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships.

Through its Common Inspection Framework Ofsted will make judgements on how well schools are supporting children and young people’s:

- Management of their own feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others
- Understanding of how to keep themselves safe from sexual exploitation, including when using the internet and social media
- Knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, both emotionally and physically
- Personal development, so that they are well prepared to respect others

Faith schools are required to deliver Relationships Education in accordance with the teaching of the Church. Denominational schools are therefore advised to take account of the appropriate Diocesan or faith guidance on Relationships Education. For many pupils, schools is their preferred, and sometimes only, source of Relationships Education (see the Sex Education Forum briefing 2015, page 9), which is why a positive, values-based approach and the development of safeguarding skills play such an important role in the safety, welfare and behaviour of pupils.

2. EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

Effective teaching and learning in this subject should be very similar to that in any other subject: it requires good teaching and universal learning pedagogy; however Relationships Education requires teachers to be aware of effective safeguarding practices, including:

- Creating a safe environment
- Setting and agreeing appropriate ground rules (contract/agreement), and
- Teacher knowledge, skills and confidence in how to deal with sensitive issues, including potential disclosures.

Effective teaching and learning also requires effective assessment for and of learning. Lessons should begin where the pupils are, so that progress is developmental and builds on children’s needs and existing knowledge.

Effective teachers are reflective practitioners and consider:

- What works well, according to children’s needs
- What doesn’t work well
- How to build on sessions to improve them for future use
- Whether resources, groupings, timings are effective, and to what extent.

Relationships Education education addresses subject knowledge, along with the development of specific skills, including assertiveness, resilience, negotiation, addressing bias, conflict resolution, empathy; it explores personal and cultural values and beliefs. All Relationships Education lessons support the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural appreciation and will support the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils. Schools are required to provide a policy which, to be most effective, embeds Relationships Education across the PSHE curriculum.

A. CREATING A SAFE AND SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This is essential to effective Relationships Education. Pupils need to feel safe, comfortable and confident in sharing their ideas and opinions; to reflect on issues and questions along with their own and others’ values and attitudes safely, without fear of negative feedback. A safe, secure environment will also help teachers to feel confident when managing discussions about sensitive issues.

Alongside this, teachers are advised to increase their knowledge and awareness of issues that have a legal element, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), under-age sexual activity and the distribution of youth-produced sexual imagery, so that they can be confident in giving clear messages around these topics. There are useful websites for these specific subjects and issues at the end of this document.

B. GROUP AGREEMENT

Use of a group agreement helps establish acceptable boundaries, promote respect for each other’s views and supports anti-discriminatory practice. For this to be developed there must be a development of shared values, to enable everyone to participate without the fear of being ridiculed or teased. Ensuring there is a group agreement (ground rules or contract) helps to ensure that pupils can take part in discussions and activities. It is important that issues such as confidentiality (see below) and not answering or asking personal questions are included. The SCARF Relationships Education resources include film clips of setting up class agreements.

C. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE ISSUES

Relationships Education will involve discussing sensitive topics, questions and issues. Where possible, consideration should be given on how best to address issues before they arise. The use of a question box or ‘Ask it basket’ are particularly useful in Relationships Education lessons. They allow time to consider appropriate responses to questions and are also empowering for the pupils, providing a safe, useful way of encouraging openness whilst deflecting embarrassment. Even with this in place, it is quite possible that a pupil will ask a question that you do not know the answer to. In these situations it is best to be honest,
praise them for asking such a good question and say you will find out and let them know in the next lesson/appropriate time.

D. SINGLE SEX OR MIXED GROUPS
Decisions on HOW the lesson is going to be delivered can also help when covering sensitive issues, e.g. consider whether it is appropriate for the classes to be mixed or single sex groups. Also consider the best facilitator/teacher for the lessons: would a female or male teacher be more appropriate, or would this not matter? The key point is that it is delivered by someone who is competent and confident to do so.

It’s important to remember that children need (and often want) to understand the changes and challenges that face all genders in relation to puberty and body changes as they grow into young adults. One way to deliver this would be for the girls and boys to be taught the same lesson regarding body changes, but separately, therefore they would receive the same information but be given the opportunity to ask questions that may be more specific to them, reducing any potential embarrassment.

E. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFEGUARDING
Staff cannot offer or guarantee pupils unconditional confidentiality. This should be understood by all staff and pupils, and embedded through the use of a group agreement. Staff should follow the school procedures as set out its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if they feel that a pupil is at risk or in danger. Any concerns should be swiftly discussed with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL - or equivalent in settings where the role title differs). External agencies delivering programmes should be made aware of the school’s safeguarding policy and procedures.

On rare occasions, a teacher may be directly approached by a primary-age child who is sexually active, is contemplating sexual activity or is involved in an abusive situation. This should be viewed as a child protection issue and reported to the Safeguarding lead, following school safeguarding/child protection procedures immediately.

F. ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS
The knowledge and beliefs that young people bring to the classroom should be the starting point for Relationships Education. Varied and interactive teaching methods can be used to give young people opportunities to express their own ideas, share and learn about the views of their peers and to reflect on discussions. Examples include activities in pairs and groups, games, graffiti sheets, question boxes, storyboards, class discussions, role play, diamond nine activities (where children prioritise a set of statements according to their perceived importance, helping to clarify values and attitudes) and the use of puppets or other visual aids.

G. SOCIAL NORMS APPROACH
The fact that humans are largely influenced by and conform to peer norms underpins social norms theory and practice. Humans feel safer and more emotionally comfortable when they conform, which explains the success of the fashion-led industries, not limited to clothes but food, cars, furniture, in fact almost all aspects of life.

Research has focussed on whether the perception of peer norms is the same as the actual peer norms, and findings across the world have shown that they are consistently quite different. Young people (and adults) tend to overestimate the amount of risky behaviour (bullying, substance misuse, sexual behaviour etc.) their peers are engaged in and underestimate the safe and protective behaviours of the peer group. Crucially, we are inclined to believe that the way in which the majority behave is most acceptable.

Therefore when the perception of ‘usual’ or ‘normal’ behaviour such as an exaggerated view of the normal amount of risk-taking behaviour becomes the prevalent or majority view we become more inclined to adopt that behaviour even when if it is contrary to an actual consumption proven by research – because this is less well known.

Practical application of Social Norms theory provides us with strategies which can actually make
a tangible difference to young people’s behaviours. In essence, the more we can promote positive and healthy behaviours the more those behaviours increase within the group. By correcting the misperceptions of norms of behaviours the more likely the actual norms of behaviours will change.

The more we talk about and focus on extreme (negative/risk-taking) behaviour, in education programmes, the more we contribute to the misperception problems. We need to talk regularly and credibly about the fact that the majority exhibit healthy and positive behaviours.

Therefore a balanced Relationships Education programme will promote healthy norms challenging misperceptions of peers’ risk taking, and taking a preventative approach.

H. TERMINOLOGY/LANGUAGE

For young people, learning about the body, feelings and relationships brings with it a range of new vocabulary. Recognising this and giving pupils time to absorb this will help them learn best, as well as provide a safe environment in which everyone is using the same language and therefore understands what is being discussed. This is particularly important and relevant in relation to using the correct names for the sexual organs. The SCARF Relationships Education Puberty Glossary is designed to support teachers in this area by providing key terminology with age-appropriate definitions.

Although children learn the correct names for body parts as part of the Science curriculum, the Programmes of Study statements are not specific about the correct names for genitalia. In 2002, Ofsted’s report on Relationships Education, which draws upon good practice, states that by the end of Key Stage 1 they expect pupils to know and understand:

- The basic rules for keeping themselves safe and healthy
- About safe places to play and safe people to be with
- That they have some control over their actions and bodies
- The names of the main external parts of the body including agreed names for sexual parts.

It is important for schools to recognise that families will have their own language when referring to genitalia, and that children can learn the correct medical words at the same time, forming a key part of safeguarding. The NSPCC ‘PANTS’ campaign: NSPCC ‘PANTS’ campaign, aims to support primary aged children in keeping safe with the message that privates are private, using materials appropriate for parents, schools and pupils (see website details at the end).

I. ASSESSMENT

Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment of the Relationships Education programme is important as it enables schools to:

- Understand children’s stage of development and needs
- Deliver relevant and engaging lessons
- Reflect on and analyse the impact and effectiveness of Relationships Education in the classroom and across the school.

In 2013, Ofsted published grade descriptors for PSHE education, reflecting their criteria for making judgements on:

- The achievement of pupils in PSHE education
- The quality of teaching in PSHE education
- The quality of the PSHE education curriculum
- The quality of leadership in, and management of, PSHE education.

3. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS /CARERS

http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11549/1/Sex%20and%20relationships%20education%20in%20schools%20(PDF%20format).pdf OfSTED, 2002
Effective Relationships Education requires a partnership approach. Parents should be consulted during the development and review of a school’s Relationships Education curriculum and policy; Coram Life Education’s survey revealed that most schools want advice on consulting parents. Aspects of a Relationships Education curriculum will vary between schools and it is important that the Relationships Education delivered supports the needs and requirements of its community – effective communication and open dialogue between staff, parents/carers, governors and pupils will help to achieve these aims. Parents should be aware of the school’s duties in relation to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, their duty to promote inclusion, equality and British values, the role of personal development within this and a school’s duty to safeguard children and young people. Effective and comprehensive Relationships Education helps to keep children safe.

Parents often appreciate help and guidance with supporting their children’s physical and emotional development. Being aware of what is covered within the school Relationships Education curriculum, the type of questions asked by children and young people and techniques to answer questions in an age-appropriate manner is helpful information for parents, as is familiarisation with the resources used.

4. THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW
Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all, or part of the Relationships Education curriculum, except for those parts included within the National Curriculum (Science) and from September 2019 that which falls under the new requirements for Primary Schools. This means that it will be statutory for primary schools to address relationships in their Relationships Education (as well as the NC Science elements) but they may also want to cover other topics, in accordance with the needs of the children and school community. If they choose to do this, the right to withdraw from those other topics (such as puberty and human reproduction) will still apply, and parents should be made aware of this right. Effective methods to communicate the school approach to Relationships Education, including the parental right to withdraw their child include: the school website, prospectus, curriculum/information evenings, as well as the Relationships Education policy.

Because Relationships Education is best delivered in partnership with parents, schools are encouraged to think creatively about how best to work with their parents in introducing how Relationships Education is delivered, to minimise the chances of a child being withdrawn. Previous success stories include: inviting parents in for coffee mornings and parents evenings to view proposed Relationships Education resources and consult them on the planned programme; working with concerned parents to identify what in particular they would like to withdraw their child from and finding a mutually agreeable solution with the child’s needs and safety at the heart of the discussion.

Further support and resources
For further guidance regarding the delivery of effective Relationships Education Coram Life Education have produced a series of short films, demonstrating good practice in the areas covered in the Teaching and Learning section of this document. These can be found on the SCARF website.

Useful websites for specific subjects and issues within Relationships Education:
Female Genital Mutilation FORWARD http://forwarduk.org.uk/key-issues/fgm/

HIV and AIDS NAT http://www.nat.org.uk/

Sexual Health and Wellbeing Information for both young people and professionals BROOK- https://www.brook.org.uk/

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk

GIRES-The Gender and Identity Research Education Society's website (specifically these two pages regarding Transgender):
www.gires.org.uk/education/information-for-educators

and

http://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk/resources

fpa (Family Planning Association) - specifically the law on sex
http://www.fpa.org.uk/factsheets/law-on-sex

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) - covers a range of issues such as online safety, sexting and personal safety
https://www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC Speak out. Stay safe programme (formerly Childline Schools Service) is offered to primary schools in the UK supports specially trained volunteers to talk to children about abuse: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/working-with-schools/speak-out-stay-safe-service/

Information for Children, Parents and Teachers about the body and growing up
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/puberty/Pages/pubertyhome.aspx

Information for professionals delivering Relationships Education and its forthcoming statutory status Sex Education Forum: http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/

Where professionals can report and have removed inappropriate material online (e.g. inappropriate images of pupils):

POSH (Professionals Online Safety Helpline):
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline

Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people in relation to youth produced sexual imagery:

Further background information on the current and intended status of Relationships Education and PSHE:
Department for Health Policy Statement on RSE and PSHE March 2017

Sex Education Forum (professional membership body) Frequently Asked Questions

Ofsted Not yet good enough: PSHE education in schools (2013)