

**POLICY FOR SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION BEING PROVIDED IN
HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS**

Report of the Director, Children, Schools and Families

Author: Gillian Cawley Tel: 01582 830348

Executive Member: Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of the report

To seek Cabinet approval for the publication of the CSF Guidance on Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) for all Hertfordshire schools.

2. Summary

2.1 The previous guidance, "Sex Education in Schools" was published in 1996 and remains, de facto, our policy.

2.2 A number of government initiatives requires CSF to undertake review. The principal drivers are:

- Updated Guidance on Sex and Relationship Education published by the DfES
- the revised National Curriculum Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship Frameworks and Programmes of Study
- the National Healthy School Standard
- the Social Exclusion Unit Report on Teenage Pregnancy.

All these documents are available for scrutiny on request.

2.3 Development

A period of reflection, research and professional discussion has taken place over the previous period, culminating in a draft guidance document for Hertfordshire. The draft reflects national policy, the views of schools and the professional advice of CSF officers.

3. Conclusion

Cabinet is invited to endorse for publication this draft SRE Guidance document. The Strategy Panel considered this draft at their meeting on 14 January. A number of amendments were recommended which have been made. Subject to these the Panel recommended it to Cabinet for approval.

4. Background

- 4.1 The purpose of revising the earlier guidance document was to assimilate latest government advice and expectations in order to provide clear and unambiguous direction to schools on sensitive but highly important issues.
- 4.2 Discussions and consultation have been widespread amongst a large and diverse number of professionals from CSF, schools, health and voluntary organisations. Comments have been incorporated into a revised draft (see appendix) which now also reflects the changes requested by Members of the Strategy Panel on 14 January.
- 4.3 In particular, the draft guidance has been made widely available to members of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Group, school nurses, health visitors and of course, teachers, headteachers and governors. Responses have been extremely positive.
- 4.4 This Guidance backed by provision of training will further develop the quality of SRE provision in Hertfordshire. Clearly, proper differentiation will be made in terms of its application to pupils with regard to their ages and levels of maturity. These are crucial issues in terms of their physical, moral and emotional development.
- 4.5 The presentation of the final document will be upgraded in accordance with other HCC documentation.
- 4.6 In accordance with best practice stakeholders will be asked to review and evaluate the guidance again within the next two years.

5. Areas covered by the guidance

- Background initiatives and research
- SRE by definition and in practice
- SRE policy
- Meeting the need of pupils who have Special Educational Needs
- Sexual identity
- OFSTED's expectations
- Teaching materials and methods
- National Curriculum provision
- National Healthy Schools Standard
- Teaching sensitive issues
- Working with parents/carers
- Working with the wider community
- Confidentiality
- Section 28

6. Sensitive issues

- 6.1 The guidance covers issues which many teachers are uncomfortable about addressing in a classroom situation and frequently ask for help in delivering. These may include:
 - Defining what constitutes a stable family life and loving relationships
 - Diversity of sexual orientation
 - Homophobic bullying

- Contraceptives
- Abortion
- Sexually transmitted infections

6.2 This guidance aims to provide clear advice on how these topics might be covered within the school context. However, it is not prescriptive and the ultimate choice about how a school will teach SRE remains with the school community. The school governors, school staff, pupils, parents/carers and other members of the community need to discuss and agree how this guidance needs to be interpreted for their school. This is made clear within the guidance.

7. Financial implications

7.1 There are no financial implications.

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Gillian Cawley (Tel: 01582 830348) or Amber Carroll (Tel: 01582 830233)