

# Sex & Relationship Education Policy

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*It is a legal requirement that all schools provide an up-to-date sex and relationship education (SRE) Policy (1996 Education Act).*

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**This policy has been written as a result of discussions and consultations involving the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher (co-ordinator for PSHEE), Director of Learning for Science, Teachers of PSHE, School Nurse, Governors and students.**

## Context

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Sex and relationship education should empower young people, build self-esteem, offer a positive and open view of sex and sexuality and support sexual self and mutual acceptance and respect.

SRE is firmly rooted in our school's Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and is also delivered as part of other curriculum areas such as Science and RE. This policy links with other school policies such as the anti-bullying policy, the equal opportunities policy and health and safety policy.

## Aims & objectives of sex and relationship education

SRE supports and promotes our students' 'spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'

At Willingdon Community School Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is underpinned by the ethos and values of our school and we uphold it as an entitlement for all our students. We recognise the need to work as a whole school community to ensure a shared understanding of SRE and the values underpinning it and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our students.

## The Aims of Willingdon Community School include:

- Providing pupils with opportunities to take responsibility, to have pride in themselves and their environment and to explore the breadth of possibilities for their future.
- Providing a comprehensive curriculum committed to the development of the individual which is broad, balanced and relevant, facilitating spiritual, moral aesthetic, physical, social and intellectual development."

The aims of the Sex Education Curriculum at Willingdon are primarily concerned with:

- facilitating the provision of factual information and an understanding of it.

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- encouraging the development of a range of appropriate personal skills in managing relationships.
- clarifying attitudes and values.
- developing an understanding of biological, emotional, social, legal and moral aspects of sex and sexuality.

## Objectives

To achieve the above aims at Willingdon the following objectives will be considered: these should match the age and maturity of the students involved. For KS3 and KS4 our learning outcomes include:

### Attitudes & Values:

- to learn the value of respect, love and care
- to learn to value and respect ourselves and others
- to develop an understanding and valuing of diversity regarding for example; religion, family life, culture, gender identify and sexual orientation
- to develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide decisions, judgements and behaviour
- to promote a positive attitude to healthy lifestyles and keeping self-safe
- to be aware of and comfortable with their sexuality

### Personal & Social Skills:

- to learn how to identify and manage emotions confidently and sensitively
- to develop self-respect and empathy for others
- to develop communication skills with peers, school, family and health professionals
- to develop critical thinking, decision-making, negotiation and assertiveness skills
- to develop an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice
- to develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- to develop the ability to understand the impact of external factors, such as the media, Internet, peer groups and remain independent decision-makers
- to learn how to assess risk and to develop strategies for keeping safe
- to develop the ability to give and secure help
- to behave responsibly within sexual and personal

relationships

- to learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse of self and others

### Knowledge & understanding:

- to learn about and understand the biological facts related to human growth such as puberty, reproduction, conception, pregnancy and birth
- to understand human sexuality, reproduction, genetics, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- to understand how the law applies to sexual relationships
- to learn about contraception, condoms, emergency contraception and abortion
- to learn about the routes of transmission, symptoms and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDs
- to be aware of the reasons for and benefits of abstaining from or delaying sexual activity
- to learn about the responsibilities of parenthood
- to understand the possible impact of risk-taking behaviour such as drinking or drug taking on sexual health
- to learn about school-based, local and national sources of confidential information, advice and treatment

## The sex & relationship education curriculum

SRE is firmly rooted in our school's Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship framework and is delivered through four interrelated strands:

- 1) Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of students' abilities.
- 2) Preparing to play an active role as citizens.
- 3) Developing a healthy safer lifestyle.
- 4) Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

## The organisation of sex and relationship education

SRE is co-ordinated by the PSHE co-ordinator, Lesley Naylor. She is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme. She monitors the planning and delivery of content, provides appropriate resources, and offers guidance and support in the delivery and assessment of SRE.

The PSHE Co-ordinator in line with other curriculum areas will endeavour to keep up to date with materials and guidance for SRE. She will lead, organise or inform staff and the wider school community of training and current issues.

### Staffing

At Willingdon School there is a specialist team of staff who deliver PSHE Lessons. Each year group receives a 1 hour lesson of PSHE every fortnight.

### Governors

The governors have been consulted on this policy. The PDWB governors support the PSHE co-ordinator in monitoring the implementation of this policy.

### Training and Development Needs

We will provide appropriate training for all staff and governors whenever necessary. This training should provide the opportunities for staff to clarify their own attitudes and assumptions about SRE, discuss appropriate teaching and learning methods for the delivery of SRE and to update their knowledge and understanding of key issues.

### Visitors

We welcome the support of visitors offering specialist support and links with the community. The school nurse, other health professionals and Theatre in Education groups, may be involved at different stages of the programme. Visitor sessions always complement the existing SRE provision and never replace or substitute teacher-led curriculum provision.

Whenever visitors are involved, teachers will ensure that they have discussed and shared the planning, form and content of the input they intend to provide. Visitors will only provide input alongside teaching staff; the teacher will always be present and be

responsible for classroom management. When visitors are used to support the delivery of SRE the planning tools from Effective use of visitors contributing to the PSHE and citizenship curriculum; Good practice guidelines for schools and visitors will be used.

Visitors delivering SRE in a classroom setting need to follow the guidelines on confidentiality (as set out below) and work within the school's value framework and SRE programme. Where appropriate, students will be given the opportunity to ask questions and seek information confidentially.

### The Right of Withdrawal

Parents who wish to withdraw their child from any or all parts of the school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order, should inform the Headteacher, preferably in writing. If possible it would be helpful if parents could indicate their reasons for withdrawal so that any misunderstandings about the nature of the sex education provided by the school can be resolved.

Pupils withdrawn from any part or all of the sex education curriculum will be required to attend school on those occasions. They will be supervised within school, the time being used constructively to support other areas of their education.

## Delivering the sex and relationship education curriculum

### Teaching and learning methodology

Teachers and staff will use a range of strategies to deliver SRE but will focus on active and experiential learning techniques. This will enable student participation and involvement in their learning and develop students' confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships.

These techniques, include:

- Establishing ground rules with students - as in all aspects of PSHE a set of ground rules helps create a safe environment.
- Knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from students.
- Encouraging reflection.

## Resources

All resources are selected to ensure that they are consistent with the schools ethos and values and support the SRE aims and objectives. Care is taken to ensure resources comply with the school's equal opportunities policy.

## Differentiation & Entitlement for All

Willingdon Community School is Committed to Equality: Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities. Much of this work is in response to new legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings. Legislation requires schools both to eliminate direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and to promote equality for pupils/students, staff and others who use school facilities. These developments reflect the growing awareness of the need to view different equality strands beneath one umbrella, rather than seeing them as separate fractions competing with each other for time and resources.

In our school we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community across a range of strands, which include: race, disability, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, religion and age as well as any other factors which have the potential to cause discrimination, eg socio-economic factors.

Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is carried out as part of the review process of this policy.

For specific reference to these strands please refer to the Equalities policy.

Our SRE programmes incorporate a range of different teaching styles and learning opportunities in order to meet the needs of all individuals and groups.

## Special Educational Needs and learning difficulties

Our students have different abilities based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, literacy levels and learning difficulties, but we will aim to ensure that all students are properly included in SRE. We will, for example use differentiated materials.

Some students with SEN may be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others maybe confused about what is acceptable

public behaviour.

These students in particular will be supported in developing skills to reduce the risks of being exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable.

Teachers will focus on activities that increase a student's assertiveness, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding.

## Mixed & single gender groups

Generally SRE will be taught in mixed groups so that boys and girls are encouraged to work with each other. It is important that both boys and girls know about the experience of puberty for the opposite gender.

Boys in the past may have felt left out of SRE, the objectives of our SRE programme should encourage them to be included, able to participate and begin to explore issues around male identity.

## Religion & Ethnicity (see Appendix E)

## Consultation with Students

A key aspect in employing effective teaching and learning strategies is the involvement of our students in their learning. We will consult with them during lesson time and at school council meetings on issues they would like to cover and we provide opportunities for them to evaluate lessons, resources and teaching methods. Eg. Asking students to complete surveys 'Health Related Behaviour' and in house versions of 'TellUs'

## Monitoring and Evaluation of the SRE Curriculum

Teachers and students will evaluate the lessons to aid future planning. Monitoring takes place through liaison between the PSHE Co-ordinator and class teachers. Students are involved in evaluating the programme – through focus groups, end of unit questionnaires and surveys.

## Specific Issues

We recognise that some aspects of SRE for teachers, students, parents and the wider school community may be considered sensitive or

challenging. What constitutes a sensitive/challenging issue is likely to vary according to the individual, group, place or context.

We respect the varied beliefs and values held by our school community, however personal beliefs and attitudes will not influence the teaching of SRE. Teachers and all those contributing to SRE are expected to work within our agreed values framework as described in this policy and supported by current legislation and guidelines.

Students may ask questions or seek information about specific issues. It is school policy to address these questions and provide information in a straightforward age and maturity appropriate way. The school nurse may be used to support this process. In this way, students will be offered reassurance and will have misinformation corrected.

## Confidentiality & child protection

Willingdon Community School is committed to acting in the best interest of all the individuals within the school community. Confidentiality contributes to this and will be used as a ground rule for all SRE lessons. As part of discussions about confidentiality, all students will be informed of the limits to teacher confidentiality and will be told that teachers will respect the confidentiality of a pastoral discussion except when the teacher is concerned about their safety or that of another child.

During these circumstances the teacher has a general responsibility to ensure that the pupil is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice from the confidential sources marked below. The teacher will also inform the named teacher in charge of child protection (Sue Dixon). It will be arranged for the pupil to receive counselling if appropriate, and where the child is under age , for the parents to be made aware , preferably by the pupil themselves (and in that case checking that it has been done) Whether specialist support services or the local education authority should be involved will depend on the particular circumstances involved and the professional judgement of staff.

Students will be discouraged from making personal disclosures during PSHE lessons. As an integral part of PSHE students will be made aware of confidential sources of information. These confidential sources of help could include helplines such as Childline, the school nurse, the school counsellor or a local young person's advice service or local sexual health service.

In this way students will be empowered to access support services, including sexual health advice and treatment if they require it.

As part of SRE at Willingdon Community School students will be encouraged to talk to a trusted adult, possibly a parent or carer, if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. Students will also be reminded that the age of consent for heterosexuals and same sex relationships is 16.

Teachers and support staff are aware that teaching sex and relationship education can lead to student disclosures of abuse. All staff and visitors involved in the delivery of SRE are also clear that they cannot offer or give unconditional confidentiality to children in the school. Staff are aware of school child protection procedures, Staff will reassure students that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and supported.

Personal information about a student is only shared on a need to know basis and in the best interests of the child. All school staff will respect information given to them in confidence. Information about a pupil or student such as a pregnancy or their HIV status will not become a matter for general discussion among staff.

## Liaison with Parents & Carers

Our school would like to share responsibility with parents and carers in the delivery of sex and relationship education. We are confident that good communication and sharing our philosophy, aims and purpose of SRE will enable parents/carers to support our SRE programme.

We will use the school website to inform parents and carers of the content of the SRE programme and their right to withdraw .

Complaints: Should any parent wish to complain about the way in which the school has carried out its responsibilities in relation to sex education , complaints should first be addressed to the Chair of Governors, c/o Willingdon Community School. If following investigation and a response from the Governors a parent wishes to carry the complaint further, then the complaint should be addressed to the County Education Officer, c/o County Hall Lewes.

The Policy will be reviewed regularly.

## Appendix A: Specific Issues

### Abortion

The purpose of sex and relationship education is in preparing students 'for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life' and abortion is one part of society. It is important, therefore, that as one aspect of a secondary sex and relationship education programme young people are aware of the choices that would be available in the event of an unplanned pregnancy, with abortion discussed as one of these choices.

The programme should:

- provide factual information about abortion and the law as it relates to abortion
- provide information about what someone should do if they suspected they were pregnant
- develop an understanding of abortion and the reasons why someone would choose to have an abortion
- provide an opportunity for young people to explore the choices around unplanned pregnancy in a safe, non-judgmental environment e.g. adoption, abortion or bringing up the child
- develop communication skills to discuss sexual health issues, such as abortion with parents, carers and health professionals
- explore the differing religious, cultural and moral attitudes towards abortion

When speaking about abortion in a classroom setting it is important to remember that there may be members of the class who have some personal experience of abortion. For example, a young person may have had an abortion herself or may know of a family member or friend who has had an abortion. It is also worth remembering that miscarriage is also referred to as a spontaneous abortion. Therefore, it is important to point out the differences between the two and to make the point that many pregnancies end in miscarriages.

### Contraception

Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe. This element of the SRE curriculum is equally relevant to both boys and girls. The average age of first sex is 16, but teachers need to be aware that some students younger than 16 will be sexually active.

In secondary schools, teaching about contraception should include:

- raising awareness of the importance of contraceptive use in reducing the risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception
- to be aware of the reasons for and benefits of abstaining from or delaying sexual activity
- information about the law as it relates to accessing contraception, where contraception can be accessed locally and the confidential nature of these services
- information about who and where they can go to for confidential advice about contraception (including helplines and websites)
- consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of various types of contraception in terms of effectiveness and prevention of STIs
- discussion of combining different contraceptives for example, using the combined pill to prevent pregnancy and condoms to prevent STIs
- acknowledgement and discussion of the different religious views on contraception
- practising condom skills
- developing communication and negotiation skills
- awareness of the impact of drinking and/or drug use on safe contraceptive use

### Family Life

The importance of marriage and family life is stressed in the DfES SRE Guidance 2000. Students should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. However the guidance recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage and that 'teaching needs to be sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances'.

It is important for schools to understand the broad range of experiences that children and young people have of family life and to be sensitive to them. For example, an activity about family and who we look like in our family may be very difficult for an adopted child. A happy and caring family life can happen in a wide variety of settings.

Equally any form of 'family' can be a source of oppression. The broad range of experiences that

children and young people have of family life may include one or more of the following:

- living in nuclear or extended family groupings;
- living in single parent families;
- living with an adoptive family;
- living with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parents/carers;
- living as refugees;
- living in poverty and deprivation;
- living in a family in which they are the main carer;
- living with siblings or relatives other than parents;
- living between two homes;
- living in foster homes;
- living in residential homes;
- living with parents/carers/relatives/siblings who for example, are abusive, have mental illness or have learning difficulties.

It is important that students and students understand the responsibilities and commitment involved in child rearing and the impact of parents/carers on child development. Teaching about family life includes:

- learning the value of family life, marriage, stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- opportunities to explore and value the range of families in society
- discussion about the roles and feelings of parents and carers
- teaching about the role and responsibilities of a parent, and the qualities of good parenting
- information about where families can get support
- encouraging students to seek support from family members

## **HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Sexual Health**

Since 1995 there have been significant increases in the number of diagnoses of genital chlamydia infection, genital warts and gonorrhoea. The rises were steepest in 16-19 year olds. Some STIs can cause long-term physical health consequences. Left untreated for example, chlamydia can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. HIV is also on the increase.

Young people need to be aware of the risks of contracting a STI and how to prevent it. Although the emphasis on sex and relationship education should be on prevention of infection, through abstaining from or delaying sexual activity and teaching the reasons for safe sex, students also need to know about diagnosis and treatment.

### **Teaching about HIV/AIDS and STIs includes:**

- an examination of young people's attitudes, values and their responsibility towards self and others
- providing information about the routes of transmission, symptoms and treatment for STIs & HIV/AIDS
- an understanding of what is risky behaviour and what is not
- developing student skills to avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- practice and development of condom skills and knowledge about where to access condoms
- developing student awareness of the impact of drinking and or drug use on safer sexual practice
- provision of information about local services which provide diagnoses and treatment for STIs
- opportunities to explore and challenge some of the ignorance, myths and prejudices about HIV and AIDS

Sex and relationship education will also provide knowledge and information about other health issues related to the sexual and reproductive organs such as:

- discussing the importance of self-examination for early detection of breast and testicular cancer
- discussing the possible link between early sexual activity in young women and cervical cancer
- discussion of the need for women to have smear tests, starting in their early twenties

## **Sexuality**

The DfES SRE guidance 2000 sends a clear message that "It is up to schools to make sure that the needs of all students are met in their programmes, young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs, teachers

should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.”

The content of sex and relationship education is 'inclusive', so that all young people's needs are met, whether they are heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. Assumptions are not made that all young people are or will be heterosexual or that they come from families with heterosexual parents. Specific lessons will be concerned with exploring and challenging prejudice, homophobia and transphobia.

At Willingdon Community school any issues of Homophobic and transphobic bullying are dealt with effectively.

### **SRE at Willingdon involves:**

- discussions about sexual identity and orientation
- developing an understanding that sexuality is an important part of an individual's personality, but not necessarily a defining part
- opportunities to begin to gain an understanding of the nature of sexuality particularly during a period when they themselves are unsure about and developing their own sexual identity
- information about the age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual intercourse
- discussion of issues related to 'coming out'
- developing tolerance and empathy towards people who are different
- opportunities to challenge prejudice and discrimination
- reference to local and national services that can support young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender students

### **Appendix B: Dealing with questions**

A key objective for sex and relationship education is to provide an environment in which children and young people feel able to ask questions. Children and young people should be encouraged to discuss sex and relationships with their parents, carers and older family members, but if they ask a question in school then this question should be answered.

Having a set of ground rules provides boundaries over what is appropriate and not appropriate and about how to respond to unexpected questions or comments from students in a whole-class situation.

### **Suggestions for responding to questions:**

If a question is of a personal nature, remind the student of the ground rule: 'no one has to answer personal questions'.

If a teacher or member of staff does not know or is unsure of an answer, they will say so and explain that they will get back to the student later (and try to specify when).

Colleagues, the PSHE Co-ordinator and the school sex and relationship education policy can be consulted for support and guidance on responding to a challenging question.

It may be important to clarify what is meant by the question. Students can be asked how much they already know about the answer to the question or why they are asking the question.

Lengthy or complicated responses are not usually necessary; a simple and concrete piece of information offers clarity and may avoid confusion. The issue can then be placed within the context of the schools SRE curriculum. "At the moment we are looking at 'X', in year 9 you will look at 'Y' in more detail." It may also be appropriate to provide the young person with ideas about where to go for further information i.e. the school nurse, websites (that have been checked out as appropriate), helplines, family members.

Recognise different views are held, for example, about contraception.

If a question is very explicit (for example about a particularly kind of sexual activity) and seems too old for the year group arrange to respond in the next lesson. This will provide time to come up with an appropriate response. Such questions may indicate sexual abuse or access to pornography and will need careful handling.

If you have concerns about sexual abuse, follow the school's child protection procedures.

If a student needs further support, s/he could be referred to the school nurse, school counsellor, helpline or outside agency

## Appendix C: Teaching & Learning

**Agenda setting** - activities should be used to find out what students already know and have strong feelings or opinions about. This should make an impact on lesson and programme content and delivery making clear links with the worlds of children and young people outside the school. Activities could include writing ideas and responses on displayed graffiti sheets; quizzes; paired interviews; rounds; questionboxes or human bingo.

**Values clarification** - a critical objective of SRE is to help students develop their values and their attitudes to relationships within a moral framework. A number of methods enable students to compare their views with others and to appreciate the spread of opinion in a group. Misunderstandings and assumptions will need attention and challenging. Students can form an attitude continuum to show how strongly they hold a view; visual images can be discussed; cards with beliefs or opinions written on them can be sorted into agree/disagree or important/not important piles for discussion and comparison with other groups.

**Problem Solving** - problem solving about relationships and situations associated with sexual health is a key and complex skill that is an essential component of an SRE programme. Activities should give opportunities to practice personal and social skills to include clarifying the problem, generating different solutions and evaluating and selecting the best way forward. Methods could include using problem page activities; conflict resolution strategies and a carousel or fish bowl arrangement to encourage lively paired work with a rehearsal of a specific solution or skill, such as saying no to unwanted sexual pressure.

**Encouraging reflection** - learning from experience necessarily involves reflection and is crucial as it encourages students to consolidate what they have learned and form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Time should be set aside during and at the end of a session for the group to discuss what has happened, based on the following questions: What happened? How did I feel? What did I learn? How can I apply what I have learned?

## Appendix D: Faith & religion

As stated in the example policy it is important that a school's SRE programme values different faith, religious and secular perspectives. Furthermore, we need to create a safe framework in which parents and carers from faith communities and members of the wider community understand more about SRE, are able to discuss their views and beliefs and to feel involved with the process of developing SRE.

One aspect of this would be for teachers to further develop knowledge of different faith perspectives on SRE. However, it is equally important that assumptions are not made about an individual or a family from a particular faith background as they may hold very different views. In East Sussex the LEA Travellers' services can provide information and resources on gypsy traveller views on SRE. The following may also be of help in developing understanding.

### Religion and Contraception

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#### Baha'i Faith

'The Baha'i Faith began in Persia in the middle of the last century. Its founder, Baha'u'llah (meaning Glory of God) lived from 1817–1892, and is regarded by Baha'is as a messenger of God. His teachings centre on the unity of humankind and of religion, and include the harmony of religion and science, the equality of men and women, and the abolition of prejudice. Source: The Buddhist Society.

#### Catholicism

'For the past twenty years Roman Catholicism has been struggling with the tension between the traditional position of the central teaching authority of the church on population issues and various moves to change the doctrine. Pope Paul VI in the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968) restated the traditional Catholic condemnation of artificial contraception stating that every conjugal act had to be open to the transmission of life. The same document encouraged the development and refinement of natural family planning methods acceptable to official church teaching. Population problems are usually discussed within the context of economic and political development. The official view is challenged by a number of Catholic scholars

who feel that it is right of individuals to follow their own conscience. In fact, a large number of Catholics in western societies practice all methods of contraception’.

Source: Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference for Marriage and Family Life.

## Christian Science

‘Members of the Church of Christ, Scientist, are not counselled in personal matters, and are therefore free to make their own decisions regarding family planning.

Christian Scientists depend on prayer for healing, and not on medical aid. This means that they prefer to be free of drugs and all forms of medication, including the contraceptive pill. Freedom from sexual activity is not uncommon between couples wishing to progress spiritually or during pregnancy’.

Source: The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

## Church of England

Contraception is acceptable to most in the Church of England, as long as it is mutually acceptable to both partners. It is generally agreed that parents have a responsibility to decide the number and spacing of their children, decisions based on the needs of existing children, prospects for maternal and child health and the particular social context. However, the Anglican tradition allows for a wide range of views, all of which are held sincerely and reached after much thought and prayer.

Source: General Synod of the Church of England. Board for Social Responsibility.

## Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

It is the privilege of married couples who are able to bear children to provide mortal bodies for the spirit children of God, whom they are then responsible to nurture and rear. The decision as to how many children to have and when to have them is extremely intimate and private and should be left between the couple and the Lord.

Church members should not judge one another in this matter. Married couples should also understand that sexual relations within marriage are divinely approved not only for the purpose of procreation, but also as a way of expressing love and

strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.

(Source: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Policies and Guidelines, (Handbook 2 page 195) Also available online [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org))

## Hinduism

Hinduism is a way of life as well as a religion. The Orthodox Hindu worship is centred on the home, and the eldest member performs religious and ceremonial rites with all the family present. Hinduism is primarily in favour of reproduction (pro-natalist), with many Hindus believing that it is their duty to produce a son, since only sons can perform the funeral rites that enable a man’s soul to go to heaven. Sons are therefore needed to say prayers to ensure the survival in the next world. (a son is known as a ‘putra’ – he who saves from hell). Contraception is therefore not generally practised until after the birth of a son or sons when the parents feel confident that they are unlikely to die without a son. Hindus are also given to believe that ‘semen is the elixir of life’ and are advised to observe partial abstinence from sex, especially during religious festivals. Abortion is prohibited except where the life of the mother is in jeopardy.

## Humanism

Humanism is not a religion but an ethical system of beliefs. Humanists base their morality on human responsibility for their own lives and concern for the quality of life of others. Great emphasis is placed on tolerance and open mindedness.

Humanists are strong advocates of family planning. They believe that the use of contraception is justified as it ‘can prevent the misery of unwanted pregnancies and unwanted children and if it can avoid the damage to women’s health often caused in the past by repeated pregnancies.

They do not share the view of some religions that the only purpose of sex is to have children, but regard it as an expression of love and a healthy enjoyable experience to be shared within a loving relationship. They are however aware that the sexual freedom that contraception has brought carries responsibilities with it. A lack of consideration for the feelings or health of another is considered immoral.

Text approved by the British Humanist Association.

## Islam

Whilst pre-marital sex is prohibited, a sexual relationship is seen as an important and necessary part of married life, both for the purpose of having children and to ensure that the sexual needs of the couple are satisfied within a legitimate relationship.

Contraception has been judged permissible in certain circumstances:

- 1) To space childbearing thus promoting the health of all children in the family. For example to protect the health of an existing child who may not yet be weaned.
- 2) Where there is fear for the physical and mental well being of the mother.

The withdrawal method, was practised by early Muslims with the tacit approval of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him.) Some Muslim jurists have inferred from this that other non-permanent methods such as condoms, cap, IUD, and oral contraceptives are also permissible.

Abortion is never permitted as a means of birth control. Allah tells Muslims in the Qur'an:

Kill not your children for fear of want. We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin.

Qur'an 17:31 YA

Vasectomy too is strictly forbidden. Although female sterilisation may be permissible, this is only when there is a medical opinion that the woman's life would be endangered or her mental health seriously affected by a pregnancy, which could not be prevented by other legitimate means.

Text approved by Dr S Darsh of the Islamic Shari'ah Council.

## Jehovah's Witnesses

'Jehovah's Witnesses believe that family planning and contraception are matters for personal conscientious decision, with the exception that abortion and contraceptive methods which may work by preventing implantation of a fertilised egg are incompatible with their religious beliefs'.

Source: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

## Judaism

The sources in Jewish law state categorically that a man may not use any form of contraception. However, as any mention of females and contraception was omitted from the sources, most if not all use this omission to interpret that females may use contraception. However, for those that believe no 'physical impediment' may be used, even for females, oral contraception may constitute an exception as the pill does not interfere in any way with the natural act of intercourse and the male seed is not directly destroyed. Even the very religious, who may have many children, may seek and be given permission from a Rabbi to space their children to preserve their own health, which is always of paramount importance. It is popular in the Jewish population for a couple to have at least one boy and one girl. However, if a woman's life would be at risk by becoming pregnant, even for the first time, she would be under no pressure to bear a child.

Text approved by the League of Jewish Women.

## Sikhism

Sikhs believe in monogamy and great importance is attached to high moral character and sexual morality. One of the five Ks (Religious Symbol) of Sikhs is Kachhahra, which is a special pair of shorts worn as an undergarment by all initiated Sikhs, both men and women. This highlights the importance attached to sexual morality in Sikhism.

Traditionally in Sikhism, like many other religions, the family size used to be large.

However, attitudes today are beginning to change. Birth control through the use of contraception is an acceptable practice within Sikhism and the family size is usually small. As there is no actual religious prohibition, acceptance of family planning has grown in line with social and cultural changes.

The bearing of children is regarded as one of the main reasons for the institution of marriage, but the details and extent of contraceptive practice are left to the conscience of the couple. Many Baha'is will not use methods that may work by preventing the implantation of a fertilised egg'.

Source: National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom. Information Office. Members of the Baha'i faith as hospital patients: some notes for nurses, doctors, and health care workers.

## Buddhism

'Buddhists are the arbiters of their own destiny. Cultural and other influences apart, they are free to act according to their own insights and understanding. They are, however taught to act responsibly and to take complete responsibility for the effects of these actions. In acting thus, they would be guided by certain personal undertakings. Foremost amongst these would be the undertaking to avoid intentional harm to any living (breathing) thing, cultivating as integral to this, genuine attitudes of loving kindness (metta) and compassion (karuna) with regard to them.

Birth control by means of contraception is not ordinarily a problem for Buddhists, as harm cannot by definition be done to a non-existent being. As Buddhism is open to personal interpretation, attitudes to this and other questions will vary depending on levels of education and understanding of the surrounding culture'.