

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

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Rationale

Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.

The objective of sex and relationship education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. Wave's programme, firmly embedded in PSHE, will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Pupils need also to be given accurate information and help to develop skills to enable them to understand difference, respect themselves and others and prevent and remove prejudice. Our pupils should learn to understand human sexuality, learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay, and learn about obtaining appropriate advice on sexual health.

Effective sex and relationship education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Through education we aim to reduce teenage pregnancy.

What is sex and relationship education?

It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable family relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.

It has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
- learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;

- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy and the dangers and problems associated with teenage pregnancy;
- understanding how the law applies to sexual relationships.

How Sex and Relationship Education is provided and who is responsible for providing it

Sex and Relationship education is delivered through the PSHE programme. Elements of Sex and Relationship education are also delivered through Science, RE and PE curriculum. Curricular overlap reinforces and consolidates rather than duplicates.

As far as practicable, where potentially sensitive subjects are taught, the delivery of PSHE will be in single sex groups.

Inclusivity

The Sex and Relationship education programme should focus on boys as much as girls. Staff delivering the Sex and Relationships programme should be aware of the views and sensitivities of ethnic minority groups such as Gypsy Roma families – it is not always culturally appropriate to deliver particular issues in a mixed sex group. 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.

However, all young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.

Some pupils will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused about what is acceptable public behaviour. These children will need help to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable.

Contraception

Trained staff in secondary schools should be able to give young people full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception, and their effectiveness. Pupils may wish to raise further issues with staff arising from discussion in the classroom. Trained teachers can also give pupils – individually and as a class – additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.

Teachers and support staff will not, under any circumstances, issue contraception to young people. Instead, they will provide information about where it can be obtained from.

Safer Sex

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

Information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STIs is vital, along with factual information about safer sex and skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex. Young people need to understand what is risky behaviour and what is not. Sex and Relationship education should inform young people about condom use and safer sex in general. Young people need skills to enable them to avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex (this will link with issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour such as drugs and alcohol).

Confidentiality

Effective sex and relationship education should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and in some circumstances to treat young people confidentially, and part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents. In order to be able to take responsibility for their actions, young people need to be more generally aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and local confidential services.

Disclosure by pupils is not encouraged in lessons on sex education in order to preserve the dignity and confidentiality of the pupil with their peers.

Nonetheless, there may be cases where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse. In these circumstances, the school must take steps to ensure that:

- wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer;
- any child protection issues are addressed;
- that the child has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

When the teacher who receives the information believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, they should refer the case to a designated teacher for child protection. They should also make clear to the pupil that they cannot guarantee confidentiality. The teacher should ensure that the pupil understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Sex and Relationship Education is monitored through a cycle of Curriculum Reviews. The programme is evaluated by the PSHE team annually and training needs are reviewed.

Parental Right to withdraw their child

All parents are informed of their right to withdraw their child from all or part of the Sex and Relationships programme except the Statutory National Curriculum Programme, through a letter prior to the delivery of Sex Education. This notification will include a reminder that parents can find out more about specific content by contact by contacting the Principal.

Should a parent wish to withdraw their child from a lesson, the parent would be responsible for delivering appropriate relationship education to their child. Whilst this part of the curriculum is being delivered, the child will receive other work from the school to complete in a situation where they are supervised.