

POLICY STATEMENT: SEX, RELATIONSHIP AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Every Child Matters The Ridings High School is committed to improving the outcomes for children as identified in Every Child Matters: Change for Children (Children's Act 2004):

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well Being

This Policy links to the 'Be Healthy' outcome, in particular that children and young people are sexually healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy and choose a healthy lifestyle.

RATIONALE

As advised by the Education Act 1996, the DfES Sex and Relationships Guidance (July0116/2000), the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the National Curriculum Statutory Guidelines for Citizenship and non-statutory guidelines for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), sex relationship and health education is taught as part of the PSHE programme, which is studied by all tutor groups during tutorial periods. The reasons for this are as follows:

- Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. The school has a duty to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to make such decisions;
- Education has a role to play in helping pupils choose a lifestyle that will be beneficial to their long-term health; and school has a role to play in helping to encourage a feeling of responsibility for one's own health;
- School has to provide pupils with the skills and information to cope with children's earlier exposure to alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, sexual activity and pornography;
- The UK still has the highest rate of teenage births within Western Europe, as well as high rates of sexually transmitted infections.

Definition of Sex and Relationship Education

It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving 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:

1. Attitudes and Values

- Understanding the importance of values, 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 the decision-making.

2. Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Making 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.

3. 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.
- Understanding the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Purposes of the Policy

- To help and support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development.
- To develop the skills and understanding necessary for pupils to live confident, healthy and independent lives.
- To enable pupils to learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as the building blocks of community and society.
- To provide pupils with accurate information and to help them to develop the skills that enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others.
- To help promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To develop in pupils a sense of responsibility for their own health and behaviour.
- To promote the notion that pupils should be careful not only of their own lives, but also those of others.

Guidelines

- Sex Education is seen as part of 'Education for Personal Growth and Development' and includes sensitive and sometimes controversial topics, within a framework of personal relationships, responsibility and family life. It is integrated into a full programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE). The syllabus encourages a positive and responsible approach to sexual activities and attitudes. The school ethos fosters positive esteem, self-confidence and respect for oneself and others. The course is designed to help pupils:
 - understand the body functions and develop a self image;
 - recognise that healthy sexual development affects many areas of life;
 - have a concept of responsibility within a moral framework;
 - explore the responsibility of parenthood;
 - acquire the skill of decision making necessary to make informed choices;
 - be aware of the pressures of sexual behaviour,
 - give opportunity for discussion concerning personal development within a sensitive environment.
- The scheme has been structured according to the age, ability and maturation of pupils; we follow a spiral curriculum.
- The course runs in harmony with the other curricular programmes that impinge on Health and Sex Education, e.g. Science. As in any discipline there are many areas of overlap and cross-curricular referencing. However, the tutorial programme is primarily concerned with attitudes and not merely knowledge.

- The factual knowledge is to be presented objectively and honestly, with opportunity for discussion and exploration of attitudes and values. Acquiring decision-making and coping skills are given high priority.
- Pupils may be withdrawn by their parents from all or part of sex education that does not form part of the Statutory National Curriculum. Any parents wishing to enact this right will be invited to view the materials and discuss any aspects of the course with the PSHE Co-ordinator in order to encourage parental partnership with the school as co-educators. If however parents still wish their child not to attend sex education lessons then the same procedures are followed as in RE Exemption (see School Prospectus)).

Context of the Sex, Relationship and Health Education Policy

- The curriculum includes human relationships and physical development, parents and family in Year 7; sexual relationships in Year 8, contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Year 9; rights and responsibilities in relationships, with further consideration of STIs, contraception and abortion in Year 10; parenting in Year 11. The topics are reintroduced again at a more sophisticated level in years 12 and 13.
- Teachers teach the material with their own tutor groups, thus maximising the close relationship established between pupil and tutor. This allows sensitive issues to be explored within a familiar and safe environment. Tutors are supported by Deputy Year Heads, Year Heads, and the PSHE Co-ordinator, the Directors of Upper and Lower School, and, as required, the School Health Nurse.

Organisation of the Programme

- Teaching methods are active, participating and experiential, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The range of learning methodologies is designed to help engage boys as well as girls, matching their different learning styles and maturation.
- The programme has been developed by a working party consisting of Deputy Year Heads and other interested tutors, with the support of training from the Avon Health Promotion Service, and under the co-ordination of the PSHE Co-ordinator.
- Resources are numerous and are regularly reviewed and monitored by the Deputy Year Heads in conjunction with the PSHE Co-ordinator.
- The resourcing of the programme is managed through the PSHE budget and is the responsibility of the PSHE Co-ordinator, working in conjunction with the Directors of Upper and Lower School and the Deputy Year Heads.
- The programme is supported by Health workshops run by Bristol North Healthcare Trust Nurses. These include:

- Year 7 - Puberty;
- Year 8 - Anti-smoking;
- Year 9 - Substance abuse;
- Year 10 - HIV/AIDS, Contraception/STIs

- The programme is evaluated as follows:
 - through review by Year teams within the Year Meeting programme;
 - through termly pupil evaluations carried out in tutor groups;
 - through discussions by the PSHE Co-ordinator, Directors of Upper and Lower School and Year Heads with individual pupils;
 - through discussion at Year Council meetings;
 - through lesson observations;
 - through pupil questionnaires.
 - Through Best Practice fora.
- Staff training: Tutors are provided with full details of the teaching programme and accompanying resources as part of the whole school INSET programme. Thus allowing them considerable opportunities to prepare and familiarise themselves with all aspects of the programme.
- Deputy Year Heads regularly help prepare tutors to deliver the programme through Year Team meetings.
- Where requested, other support and training may be provided through the Bristol North Healthcare Trust School Health Nurse.

Specific Issues

1. Confidentiality

- The Sex Education Forum advised that there is no basis in principle or authority for suggesting that there is any legal duty on a teacher, or a Headteacher, to inform parents of matters that a child has confided to them.
- **Teachers should not promise confidentiality**, neither are they legally obliged to break it. Nevertheless, a pupil does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom will not be reported to his/her parents. In the absence of an express promise, a pupil may not assume that information conveyed is private. It is a matter of professional judgement whether a teacher should indicate to a pupil whether information could be offered confidentially, and whether such a confidence could then be maintained having heard the information. In deciding on the appropriate action to take, the school expects all teachers to act appropriately in order to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- Under the Children's Act 2004, Every Child Matters: Change for Children, teachers have a duty to share information with other agencies involved in the delivery of services for children, as appropriate, in order to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- The Bristol North Healthcare Trust School Health Nurse may offer confidentiality, as may other health professionals.

2. Sexual Activity

- The programme aims to make young people aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and of local confidential services.
- 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 takes steps to ensure that:
 - wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer;
 - school will inform parents unless the Head decides it is not in the child's best interests to do so;
 - any child protection issues are addressed;
 - the young person has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception by an appropriate service provider and that information is available about such services.

3. Sexually Transmitted Infections

- Against a background of increasing incidence on HIV/AIDS and STIs in the 16-19 age group, the school considers it essential that pupils have age appropriate education and factual information that relates to safer sex, to prevent infection and of the services available, and action to take if infection is suspected.
- The PSHE programme is designed to ensure that:
 - pupils clarify their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STIs;
 - pupils are taught assertiveness skills for negotiating relationships;
 - pupils are aware of the services available to help prevent/treat STIs and HIV.

4. Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

- The school has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met in our programmes. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.
- Circular 5/94 confirms that restrictions regarding teaching about lesbian and gay issues do not apply to schools. The school expects that teachers will want to counteract prejudice and victimisation and will support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every pupil. Whatever an individual teacher's feelings may be, the school has a general duty to ensure that every pupil, including those who may be or become lesbian or gay, have their educational and pastoral needs met.
- In line with the guidance issued by the DfES (Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Circular 10/99), the school regards as unacceptable homophobic bullying and

the emotional distress and harm caused by this and other forms of bullying (see "Bullying Policy").

5. Abortion

- The school recognises that some pupils and parents have strongly held views and religious beliefs about abortion. Where abortion is discussed within the programme, the school is committed to allowing pupils the opportunity to explore the dilemmas and to develop the skills to discuss abortion with parents and health professionals.
- However, in line with DfES guidelines, the school believes that our key responsibility is to provide appropriate information and effective advice on contraception and on delaying sexual activity in order to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies.

6. Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

- Teachers are aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue.
- In these circumstances, the guidelines contained in the Child Protection procedure will be followed.

Links with other Policies

- Child Protection Procedures
- Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Social Inclusion
- Drug and Alcohol Education Policy

Answering Difficult Questions

- Ground rules help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about questions or comments from pupils. The following are suggested as guidelines:
 - no one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question;
 - no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
 - only the correct names for body parts will be used;
 - meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Tutor may provide their groups with anonymous question boxes of pupils to place questions that might be difficult asked in a whole class context. This gives the tutor time to prepare an appropriate and informed response.

The policy relies significantly on the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Sex and Relationship Education Guidance – DfES July 2000
- South Gloucestershire Sex and Relationship Guidance (Draft)

- The National Curriculum Handbook for Key Stages 3 and 4 (1999). Statutory Requirements for Citizenship, non-statutory guidelines for PSHE
- National Healthy School Standards: Sex and Relationship Education 2001 (Department of Health)
- Inspecting PSHE 11-16 OFSTED 2001
- Every Child Matters: Change for Children, November 2004

Conclusion

The course has been thoroughly investigated, prepared and organised in accordance with Statutory Requirements, non-statutory guidelines and guidance as identified above. No resources will be used that have not been previewed by the PSE Co-ordinator whether they are visual, audio or written materials. The materials used are constantly being monitored and reviewed in the light of new evidence.

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