



SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Review Date:	July 2008	Last review date:	N/A
Policy Adopted:	August 2007	Next review date:	TBD

This Policy incorporates the Academy's vision and core values.

Introduction

The school recognises that a planned, appropriate and sensitive progress of sex education is a fundamental entitlement of all our students. This policy statement will be continually developed in consultation with parents, students and governors, to reflect that the Academy plays a supportive and complementary role to that of parents in preparing students to meet maturely the challenges of adult life.

The aim of the sex and relationship education policy is to clarify the provision of sex and relationship education to all students (including education about HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) and the teaching of human growth and reproduction as set out in the National Curriculum. Sex and relationship education is delivered through the PSHE and citizenship framework.

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents/carers.

The policy is based on the belief that sex education:

- i is an integral part of the learning process, beginning in childhood and continuing into adult life
- ii should be provided for all children and young people including those with physical, learning or emotional difficulties
- iii should encourage consideration of values, moral issues, sexuality, personal relationships and the development of communication and decision-making skills
- iv should foster self-esteem, self awareness, the skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experiences and a sense of moral responsibility.

Purpose

Sex education will be part of the curriculum but will not be taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way. Sex education is not intended to encourage unlawful sexual activity. It is important that our students develop understanding and attitudes based on values which prepare them to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

The purpose of the policy is to address the individual needs of our students as following:

- to present factual information concerning sexual development and the legal aspects of sexual behaviour, in a clear objective and sensitive manner, respecting religious, cultural and moral points of view
- to enable students to dispel myths and false ideas about physical and emotional development
- to appreciate the similarities and differences encountered in others



- to provide opportunities wherein students can develop their own moral framework for dealing with relationships and personal development
- to reassure students about sexual development, and reduce anxieties which may be experienced during adolescence
- to enable students to be aware of their developing bodies, emotions and those of others
- to encourage self-confidence and promote self-esteem, developing skills of assertiveness and communication
- to understand the different types of personal relationships
- to recognise the importance of responsibilities in relationships
- to recognise the problems of social pressures and how to deal with them
- to encourage respect for commitment, stable relationships and family life
- to have access to information about people/places to which they can go for appropriate help.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Governing Body is required to have a written statement of the policy available to parents. The statement must be drawn up in consultation with the Head of School. The Head of School must ensure that any sex education is provided in a way that ensures students are taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and for bringing up children, and that students are protected from teaching materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the students concerned.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided, but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under National Curriculum Science. The views of parents need to be borne in mind when developing a sex and relationship education policy, and parents are invited to comment on the extent to which this policy reflects their wishes and the culture of the community served by the Academy.

The Academy's Sex and Relationships Education Programme

Implementation

The programme will teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex. Young people need a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure. It may be necessary to link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol, and ensure that young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of students and because teachers therefore act in loco parentis, parents need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education within the PSHE framework.

Students need to be taught to behave responsibly towards sex and relationship issues and be able to make informed decisions. Students may be consulted on this sex and relationship education policy.



Organisation

In order to help students make informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. The participation of students in lessons is essential in order to encourage them to learn from others and to help them to use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. This requires the use of a balanced range of teaching methods.

Delivery of sex education

Sex education will be carried out in a variety of different ways and by different specialists as well as teachers:

- trained staff within the PSHE programme
- School Nurse Team
- Police Schools Liaison Officer
- by reference to sexuality in curriculum areas other than PSHE.
- Youth Community Tutor.

Certain lessons are compulsory under the National Curriculum in Science and are excluded from the right of parents to withdraw their children. Such lessons will not include material on AIDS, HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases, or any aspect, other than biological aspects, of human sexual behaviour.

The programme of study for sex education will demonstrate:

- i Progression This extends from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 with language, concepts and content increasing in depth and complexity as the students mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- ii Relevance and differentiation Teachers come to know the levels of development of their students; they are able to draw out existing knowledge and needs and to build on them appropriately
- iii Integration Sex education will be integrated into a programme of Personal, Social and Health Education and into other relevant areas of the Academy curriculum.

Sex education will not be isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way.

The hidden curriculum

A sex education programme is not just what is "taught" in the classroom. Young people learn much from the overall ethos of the Academy - from the attitudes of staff, from relationships, from gender and other issues. It is important that all staff, whether directly involved in the programme or not, discuss the Academy's approach to sex education in the broad sense. With increased understanding and support, most teachers will feel able to make some positive contribution to the 'whole' curriculum.

Continuity

The programme and policy is co-ordinated by a senior member of staff – Deputy Head of School (Curriculum). Continuity within the Academy is achieved by co-operation between the Deputy Head of School (Inclusion), the School Nurse Team and the PSHE team within the framework of a co-ordinated progressive curriculum which begins in Year 7 and extends through to Year 11.



Pastoral Support

Sexuality is an important part of living and learning but it may present some individuals with worries and tension at certain times in their lives.

The quality of support available for individual students worried or disturbed by some aspect(s) of their development, relationships or environment is of prime importance.

Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of children and young people.

Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It will require skilled judgement to know when to counsel and when - and how - to refer for specialist counselling and support.

Morals and Morality

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of sexuality and relationships. The programme will respect individual differences - inspired by cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds - and it will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life which are common to all faiths and societies.

Relationships

Relationships have an important part to play in sex education. Friendship, making relationships, valuing friendship, will be topics in the early part of the programme. Choosing a partner, assessing personal qualities, considerations before marriage, together with relationships within the family, will be considered together with roles, avoidance of stereotyping and acknowledging different attitudes and influences.

Contraception

Teachers may not give personal, individual advice on contraception to those under 16 years for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. Teachers must advise students to seek advice from parents and/or general practitioners or the School Nurse Team.

Different types of contraceptive methods will be dealt with together with information about agencies offering help and advice.

Abortion

It is accepted that abortion is an emotive issue and that any teaching must present a balanced view which respects a range of religious beliefs and which takes into account the law relating to abortion. It provides an opportunity to distinguish between fact and fiction (eg the stage at which human life commences) and values clarification (eg in what circumstances, if any, abortion is a positive choice).

Aspects of sexual behaviour raised outside the sex education programme

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the Academy sex education programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education as such, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and sensibilities.



The Governing Body expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that they will be conversant with this policy document and act accordingly.

HIV/AIDS/Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The publicity in public health campaigns and strong media attention have put AIDS into the language of even very young children.

Students in all age groups need to know the difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, basic hygiene and risky behaviours (for young children, for example, picking up discarded needles or any skin piercing, for older students sharing needles and specific sexual behaviour).

All need to learn that there are no risky groups, only risky behaviours, and that there is no danger from persons with AIDS in any normal social contact.

Although HIV/AIDS have received the majority of publicity in recent years, young adults need to know that there are other sexually transmitted diseases.

Homosexuality

The Governing Body recognises the need to address the issue of homosexuality and the need to provide education related to the spread of HIV/AIDS which will, of necessity, include reference to homosexuals and bisexuals. Objective discussion of homosexuality may take place in the classroom. The Governing Body will not permit the promotion of homosexuality.

Sexuality and physical development

The awareness of self and physical changes that occur are important in sex education, including development and puberty (physical/mental and social development) and acceptance of the nature of the sexuality in others together with the pressures imposed by such as peers and the media.

Sensitive issues

Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away and leaves children and young people confused and at risk. All official documentation is in favour of the discussion of topics such as contraception, abortion, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Visiting speakers

Visiting speakers may be used to help enhance the sex education programme. Where they are used, they will be required to conform to this policy statement. Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual students but, in a classroom situation, they should follow the Academy's Confidentiality Policy.

Confidentiality Policy

Teachers are required to adhere to the Academy's policy on confidentiality between themselves and students as set out within this section.

Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are



involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed.

Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so. If there is evidence of abuse, the Academy's child protection procedure should be adhered to, ensuring that students are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the Academy nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.