

SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Aims and Objectives of the Sex Education Policy

Sexual development is an integral part of a student's personal development – physical, mental, emotional, social, moral and spiritual. As young people grow and develop through childhood, puberty and young adulthood, they are discovering and forming their own sense of identity and the basis for their future development as adults. For an individual to seek an answer to the question "Who am I?" which ignores the sexual dimension, is to limit understanding of an essential part of his or her personal identity.

In terms of developmental psychology, sexuality is increasingly regarded as an integral as well as an essential part of human personality. Many psychologists describe sexuality as one of the most important aspects of human development, providing the physiological and psychological basis of the human capacity to love and form interpersonal relationships. This understanding of sexuality, which sees it as the foundation of all relationships, is in sharp contrast with some traditional definitions which describe sexuality principally in terms of its reproductive function.

Sherburn High School has recognised that a piecemeal and physiological approach to sex education is neither sufficient nor appropriate. It is recognised that values and attitudes are central to sex education and that the ethos and educational philosophy of the school have a contribution to make.

Students learn most of what it means to be male or female through their relationships with others – initially by being members of a family (however constituted or defined) and then through contact with children and adults outside the immediate family circle. This experience is extended further through being a member of the wider community. The school community has a particularly formative influence on how students regard themselves and on the expectations they have of themselves and others in terms of being male or female.

Moral and Values Framework

The values and attitudes which the school seeks to promote should be reinforced and not contradicted by the experience students have as members of the school's community. Students are encouraged to have regard for moral values and the value of family life.

Equal Opportunities

All students in school have access to the school's health / sex education programme. However, the 1993 Education Act does give parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the sex education programme, other than those elements which are required by National Curriculum Orders.

While sex education should be an essential part of all students' curriculum, additional care will need to be taken to ensure that for students with special needs this aspect of the curriculum is a carefully structured and approached in a sensitive manner with the needs of the individual students uppermost. It should be taught in an atmosphere of warmth and understanding. Particular care will need to be taken with language and other forms of communication so that content and presentation can be tailored to meet the student's age, stage of development and special needs.

Reviewing Effectiveness

The sex education programme needs to be continually reviewed to ensure an effective approach is maintained. Evaluation of the programme includes national research (May 2006) investigating sexual health issues amongst Y10 students at Sherburn High School.

Specific Issues

Advice and information on sexual matters (including contraception)

Teachers are not acting unlawfully in giving information about contraception. Presentation of information about contraception should, however, recognise that:

- there are disadvantages as well as advantages in using contraception (teachers should not take responsibility for advocating a particular form of contraception);

- the decision to use contraceptives and the method chosen is a matter to be decided by the couple concerned. Medical advice may be necessary and in some forms of contraception is essential;
- there are moral, religious and cultural issues involved as well as medical and social ones;
- the legal age for consent to sexual intercourse between males and females is 16 years.

It is also important:

- to encourage respect for the rights of each individual in terms of their own sexuality, including the right not be sexually active.

Discussion of contraception will inevitably raise questions about pre-marital sex, casual sex, stable relationships outside of marriage, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection / AIDS. It is essential that student recognise the pressures which can be brought to bear on them by others and the effect which advertising, the use of alcohol and of drugs can have. It is important that young people feel confident in reaching a well informed considered position and in maintaining this in the face of pressure.

Individual Counselling

A teacher approached by a student for personal advice on aspects of sexual behaviour should, wherever possible, encourage the student to seek advice from his or her parent or guardian. Where the circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the student has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct, which is likely to place him or her in moral or physical danger or in breach of the law, the teacher has a general duty to warn the student of the risks involved. Whether the teacher should take the matter further by informing the Deputy Headteacher, and whether the Deputy Headteacher should consider involving the student's parents, or specialist support services, will depend on the particular circumstances involved and the professional judgement of the staff. In no circumstances, however, should a member of staff bind him or herself to confidentiality. Nor should a member of staff take responsibility for advocating a particular form of contraception to a student or group of students. This is a matter where a young person should be advised to seek professional guidance through his / her doctor or local clinic.

The school also provides counsellors who provide several weekly sessions for individual students to access advice and support (Relateen, Connexions, School Nurse).

Child Sexual Abuse Procedure

North Yorkshire have produced comprehensive literature outlining guidelines employed in cases of suspected child abuse and the procedures to be followed by the various agencies. (See Protecting Children from Abuse Policy.)

Involvement of Health Professionals / Visitors

The "Expert Visitor" approach is rarely as effective in helping young people develop positive attitudes to the issues involved in sex education as an approach which allows a group to build up a working relationship, involving mutual respect and trust, over a period of time. However, the school does have close working links with local health professionals (especially Mrs Kinnersley who visits the school on a regular basis) and she plays a vital role in the delivery of contraceptive advice / discussions. The school nurse, with her colleagues, regularly has road shows publicising where sexual health advice can be accessed. There is a weekly drop-in clinic incorporating sexual health advice.

Working with Parents

Information regarding the sex education programme is presented to parents in the Prospectus. It is the school's policy to encourage parents to contact school regarding any query / issue they may have. Parents have the right to withdraw their child by contacting school.

Dissemination of the Policy

The policy will be given to all staff and governors. It is also available for parents if they should so require.

Procedures for Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation is undertaken.

Sex and Relationship Education

Learning Outcomes by Key Stage (Ofsted report *Sex and Relationships*, 2002 HMI 433)

By the end of Key Stage 1 (items with * and in *italics* are statutory and part of National Curriculum Science programme of study)

- By the end of Key Stage 4

Pupils will be able to:

- Recognise the influences and pressures around sexual behaviour and respond appropriately and confidently seek professional health advice
- Manage emotions associated with changing relationships with parents and friends
- See both sides of an argument and express and justify a personal opinion
- Have the determination to stand up for their beliefs and values
- Make informed choices about the pattern of their lifestyle which promote well-being
- Have the confidence to assert themselves and challenge offending behaviour
- Develop quality of empathy and sympathy and the ability to respond emotionally to the range and depth of feelings within close relationships
- Work co-operatively with a range of people who are different from themselves

Pupils will know and understand:

- *The way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of the sex hormones**
- *Some medical uses of hormones including the control and promotion of fertility**
- *The defence mechanisms of the body**
- *How sex is determined in humans**
- How HIV and other sexually transmitted infections affect the body
- The link between eating disorders and self-image and sexual identity
- The risks of early sexual activity and the link with the use of alcohol
- How the different forms of contraception work and where to get advice
- The role of statutory and voluntary organisations
- The law in relation to sexual activity for young people and adults
- How their own identity is influenced by both their personal values and those of their family and society
- How to respond appropriately within a range of social relationships
- How to access the statutory and voluntary agencies which support relationships in crisis
- The qualities of good parenting and its value to family life
- The benefits of marriage or a stable partnership in bringing up children
- The way different forms of relationship including marriage depend for their success on maturity and commitment

Pupils will have considered:

- Their developing sense of sexual identity and feel confident and comfortable with it
- How personal, family and social values influence behaviour
- The arguments around moral issues such as abortion, contraception and the age of consent
- The individual contributions made by partners in a sustained relationship and how these can be of joy or benefit to both
- The consequence of close relationships including having children and how this will create family ties which impact on their lives and those of others.

PSD Department
April 1993 (Revised)
PSD Department/Governors Curriculum Sub-Committee 1994
May 2000 (Revised)
May 2001 (Revised)
May 2005 (Revised)
Curriculum Standards Committee
June 2006
June 2009 (Revised)

Next Review Date: October 2010

K:\Policies for website\Sex Education.doc

