

Sex and Relationship Policy



1. Introduction

1.1.1 We have based our school's Sex and Relationship Policy on the Catholic Education Service document "Education in Sexuality", where it is stated that "Children and young people need to be provided with 'positive and prudent' sex education." Further, the document quotes Pope John Paul who stated that "the education in sexuality of people should be truly and fully personal: 'for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person – body, emotion and soul – and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.'"

1.1.2 Sex education is defined as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding 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'. Sex education is part of the personal, social and health education curriculum in our school. While we use sex education to inform children about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. We do not use sex education as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 We teach children:-

- about the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults;
- that humans reproduce;
- to respect their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship;
- about the importance of family life;
- about moral questions;
- about relationship issues;
- to respect the views of other people;
- about sex abuse and what to do if they are worried about inappropriate behaviour.

3. Context

3.1 We teach sex education in the context of the school's aims and values. While sex education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach sex education in the belief that:

- sex education should be taught in the context of marriage and family life;

- sex education is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process;
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
- children need to learn the importance of self-control.

4. The National Healthy School Standard

4.1 The school is renewing the national Healthy School Standard, which promotes health education. As participants in this scheme we will:

- consult with parents on all matters of health and education policy;
- train all our teachers to teach sex education;
- listen to the views of the children in our school regarding sex education;
- look positively at any local initiatives that support us in providing the best sex education teaching programme that we can devise.

5. Organisation

5.1 We teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum, for example, Science, P.E. and R.E., where we feel that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and how it is changing and developing.

5.2 We teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach, at an appropriate age, about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. For example, we tell the boys that their voices will change during puberty and we explain to the girls about menstruation. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

5.3 In Key Stage 1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

5.4 In Years 5 and 6 we place a particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. We liaise with the Local Health Authority about suitable teaching materials to use with our children in these lessons. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children (as stated earlier in this policy). We work very closely with the School Nurse in this area.

6. The role of parents

6.1 The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- inform parents about the school's sex education policy and practice;
- answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school;
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it if necessary;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to sex education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

6.2 Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme that we teach in our school. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

7. The role of other members of the community

7.1 We will encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, give us valuable support with our sex education programme. Other people that we may call on include local clergy, social workers and youth workers.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Teachers will teach about sex education in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that he or she may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals (See also Safeguarding Policy).

9. The role of the Head Teacher

9.1 It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

9.2 The Head Teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework.

9.3 The Head Teacher will monitor this policy on a regular basis and report to Governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The Resources Committee of the Governing Body will monitor our sex education policy on an annual basis. This Committee will report its findings and recommendations to the full Governing Body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the sex education programme, and will make a record of all such comments. Governors require the Head Teacher to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of the sex education programme that we teach in our school.