

# Hartismere High School

POLICY DOCUMENT No C7

## SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY



Policy approved October 2009  
(to be reviewed October 2010)

## **Introduction:**

Hartismere High School aims to provide the learning experiences appropriate to ensuring that students are healthy, safe and enjoy a sense of well-being. It acknowledges that education on matters affecting sexual and relationship issues is part of achieving this aim.

In all areas of human experience a good base of knowledge and understanding is deemed necessary for informed opinions and decisions to be made - human sexuality is no exception. It is vital that pupils receive effective sex education before they become sexually active or put themselves at risk in other ways. It is also vital to correct prejudice and misinformation which may affect relationships with others both now and in the future.

The importance of sexual relationships in all our lives is such that sex education has a role to play in preparing children for their lives now and in the future as adults and parents. In sex education, learning information about the physical aspects of sex, must be complemented by learning about family life and the exercise of personal responsibility towards other individuals and the broader community.

In drawing up the School's policy due regard has been given to:

- consultation with parents, governors, teachers, the National Advisor in Personal Social and Health Education, the school nurse and others in the local community;
- the issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate);
- encouraging pupils to have regard to moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to behave responsibly in sexual matters.

Copies of this policy have been made available to all concerned parties including the LA, teachers and parents.

## **Specific Aims:**

The following aims reflect those of the School and the general aims of the Cross-Curricular Themes, and show how Sex Education is delivered within the context of a moral framework.

1. To provide a broad and balanced Sex Education Programme which:
  - offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Needs;
  - operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas.
2. By exploring moral and sexual issues and values to:
  - a) endow the pupils with positive pro-active attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships, e.g.
    - those appropriate to informed decision-making and evaluation of the socio-economic/cultural influences on sexual behaviour;
    - non-exploitation, commitment and trust in sexual relationships;
    - an understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters;
    - the skills to identify, avoid, resist and report unwanted sexual experience.
  - b) to foster self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility.
- 3 To give pupils knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices:
  - i the physical, emotional and social aspects of an individual's development as a male or female, personal relationships; responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour.
  - ii. family life - the value and importance of the family as a social institution; its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others.
4. To show that World Health has a global dimension and to understand the responsibility of groups, organisations and society for the health of the individual and the community.
5. To approach Sex Education by an active and creative process of enquiry and investigation through projects, discussions, role-play, case studies. Observation and analysis are central to this process.

6 To clarify the link between sexual practices and the transmission of STD's

### **Offering Advice:**

The Governors and staff believe that the School's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. If the offering of outside expert advice is not taken up, then a teacher may only give such advice after receiving written permission from the Headteacher and the parents/guardians - clearly this would not be done if the pupil did not wish it. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, and acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice.

### **Teachers cannot:**

- give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters (including contraception) to a pupil (either individually or within a group) if a parent has withdrawn that pupil from sex education;
- give personal contraceptive advice to pupils under 16 for whom sexual intercourse is illegal without parental consent.

### **Teachers can:**

- provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. school nurse, their GP or Brook Advisory Centre. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of factual information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupil through the form tutor or HEAD OF YEAR;
- give a child under 16 contraceptive advice if the teacher believes that doing so is in the child's best interests. However, in certain circumstances the teacher could be liable to criminal charges and therefore the Headteacher's instructions are not to give such advice and to refer the matter to him/her.

### **Explicit Questions:**

It is unlikely to be appropriate to deal with a pupil's explicit questions by dealing with it in front of the whole class, e.g. questions on oral and anal sex. In practice this means that teachers have to say 'I'm sorry but the School Policy and

legislation does not allow me to answer that question'. The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's concerns with the parents - a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it. Answers to the 'questions in a box' approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

### **Confidentiality:**

Having considered all available advice and guidance, the Governors and Headteacher state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse (e.g. moral or physical) or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately in writing to the Headteacher in compliance with the LA procedures for Child Protection. The Headteacher will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling. Although there is no legal duty on a teacher, or a Headteacher, to inform parents of matters which a child has confided to them:

- teachers must not promise confidentiality even though they cannot be made to break it once given;
- pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Headteacher and possibly to parents;
- teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

N.B. Failure of staff to adhere to this statement may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

### **The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex education:**

The division between biological and non biological aspects of sexual behaviour has been decided upon, and is indicated by the contribution to the Sex Education Programme made by the Science Department. The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of sex education are firmly restricted to the timetabled PSHE lessons.

The Science Department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in its timetabled lessons. The separate but strategically co-ordinated PSHE course deals with:

- a) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
- b) any other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's);
- c) aspects of human sexual behaviour, other than biological aspects.

N.B. It is the work covered in timetabled PSHE lessons and non science lessons upon which parents can exercise their right to withdraw their child - see below.

### **Withdrawing pupils from the Sex Education Programme:**

Relevant sections of this policy are made available to parents in the School prospectus together with details about the parent's right to withdraw their child from many aspects of sex education - parents will always be provided with a full copy following a request to do so

A full audit of PSHE has shown that issues such as over population, birth control and other sexual matters are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the Sex Education Programme.

N.B. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

### **What we do if a request for withdrawal is made by a parent?**

- we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them;
- we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermining the integrity of the Sex Education Programme and the entitlement of the other pupils, e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the Sex Education Programme;
- we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,
- we point out that pupils who have been withdrawn are vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to causing minimal embarrassment to the pupil and minimal disruption to the programme;

- we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

N.B. If the pupil does not agree with the parents desire to withdraw their child from the Sex Education Programme, the pupil has a statutory right to challenge the parents - the child has to apply to the courts for a 'specific issues order'.

### **Using Visiting Speakers and others:**

We believe that most of the Sex Education Programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors such as nurses, family planning or sexual health workers, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of sex education.

Care is taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of the Sex Education Policy. After gaining approval from the Headteacher for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the School and the manner of delivery of the Sex Education Programme. Issues to consider are:

- the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
  - will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
  - will the staff take an active role in the visitor's activities?
  - how will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
  - how will the visit be built upon and followed up?
1. Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the audience/target group and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
  2. In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.
  3. Reception/Office should be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
  4. Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged with the catering staff.

5. The visitor should be welcomed at the main door (usually by a pupil from the form on duty) and escorted to the office.
6. At the office the visitor will 'sign in', prominently display a 'Visitors Badge' and will then be escorted to the appropriate venue.
7. At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a pupil and the visitor escorted to Reception/Office before the pupils are dismissed.
8. After the visit the visitor will 'sign out', return the 'Visitors Badge' and will then be escorted to the exit.
9. A written acknowledgement of their contribution should be sent to the visitor.

N.B. health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can provide a link between the School and support services.

### **Homosexuality (Lesbian and Gay issues):**

It is inevitable and natural that homosexuality may be discussed during a programme of sex education. Teaching about homosexuality is not avoided although teachers take care not to advocate homosexual behaviour nor encourage sexual experimentation on the part of pupils. Bullying aimed at homosexuals and Lesbians is discouraged, as are all forms of bullying.

### **Equal Opportunities Issues and Special Needs:**

The nature of work undertaken must be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates, the Sex Education Programme is a 'spiral system' in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity.

Children with learning difficulties may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. Some parents find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their child (special needs or not) will some day become sexually active.

**INSET:**

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. Inset on the content of the PSHE programme will regularly be provided prior to delivery.

**Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing The Sex Education Programme:**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the Sex Education Programme are:

- 1) pupil feedback;
- 2) staff review and feedback, particularly at pastoral meetings;
- 3) parental feedback.