

# Sex & Relationship Education Policy



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## **Definition**

Sex and relationships education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline (21st Century Guidance 2014).

## **Legal Requirements:**

The sex education contained in National Curriculum science (Key Stages 1 and 2) is compulsory in maintained schools. All state-funded schools must have 'due regard' to the Secretary of State's guidance on SRE (DfEE, 2000). This states that: • 'All children, including those who develop earlier than average, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes' (1.13). • Children should learn 'how a baby is conceived and born' before they leave primary school (1.16). Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which: • Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. • Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils. This is stated in section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework (DfE, 2013a) and relates to duties set out in the 2002 Education Act and the 2010 Academies Act.

## **Aims**

The aim of RSE is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships, and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing.

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It helps support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. It helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

At Highfield School we aim:

- to provide knowledge and information to which all students are entitled;
- to clarify/reinforce knowledge students have already acquired;
- to raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;
- to help students to understand their sexual feelings and behaviour;

- to develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) which are necessary in a range of situations;
- to promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in public and private situations;
- to give practice of strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse;
- to provide the confidence to be an active member of society;
- to support access to information and facilities.

### **Sex education and the school ethos**

We believe that learning about their own sexual development, together with an awareness of their relationships with others, can greatly enhance the student's ability to lead their lives competently and with fulfilment. We also expect other learning outcomes to be enhanced by the increased self-esteem and confidence that a good sex education programme can bring about. At Highfield we value all staff and students as individuals worthy of dignity and respect.

### **The values of the sex education programme**

We believe that the basis of moral behaviour is that each of us feels valued for what we are, and of worth to others. Our students, with a variety of needs and from a range of backgrounds, need first to experience self-esteem before they can form satisfying relationships with others. Our aim is to give our students the skills to conduct loving and caring relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited.

The biological elements of sex education, including naming body parts, puberty and human development, are part of the National Curriculum Science programme, and are compulsory.

### **The organisation of sex education**

It is a legal requirement that students of secondary age, in whatever type of school, receive a compulsory programme of sex education. A basic programme of sex education and personal development is a part of every child's entitlement in Highfield School from 11-16, planned according to individual and group needs and development.

It will be taught by class teachers, who may decide to work on a team teaching basis. There will be times when gender groups will need to work alone, and other times when students will be grouped according to their development and maturity. No teacher will be expected to undertake specific sex education teaching without the support of colleagues in the school, and of attendance at training courses as

necessary. However we will not insist that a teacher who has strong reservations about sex education takes part in the programme.

We expect non-teaching staff who have much experience of the students, to be involved in planning, taking part and evaluation classroom work, although the overall responsibility rests with the teaching staff.

We intend that all students should experience a programme of sex education and personal development at a level that is commensurate with their age and physical development, with adaptations for those whose cognitive development is particularly slow. We are aware that such a programme can successfully follow the outline given below for almost all students.

Staff will decide the most effective methods to use in the classroom. We know that learning about personal matters is increased if students work in a supportive group where they feel safe.

**In KS3** formal curriculum classes SRE is delivered by classroom teachers in PSHE lessons through the following themes:

- Friends
- Knowing how I am changing
- Respecting Privacy
- Choosing
- Feelings
- Groups I belong to
- Personal sensitivity
- Human development
- Changing relationships
- My changing body

**In KS4** formal curriculum classes RSE is delivered within PHSE lessons by class teachers to include:

- Communicating about feelings and relationships
- Safe relationships and lifestyles
- Teenage pregnancy
- Sexual Health
- Relationships and divorce
- Pregnancy and birth
- Sexuality and enjoyment

Sex Education elements are also delivered through the outside provider STRIDE on a termly basis. Students are given the opportunity to explore and consolidate learning through drama and role play.

### **Safeguarding:**

Some issues may result in children and young people making disclosures which will be addressed in line with school safeguarding policy and procedures.

RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being .

Staff will follow school's policy with regard to confidentiality. Pupils should also be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality should they choose to make a disclosure to a member of staff.

A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

### **Our policy on specific matters**

#### **HIV and Aids**

We aim to prepare our students for as much independence as possible. In this context, we expect students to learn that condom use is normal behaviour in a physical sexual encounter. A further stage would be to explain that infection may be passed on when a condom is not used. Students may ask questions about AIDS in any context: the aims will be to answer honestly to the extent the student can understand; to reassure and alleviate any anxiety; and to counteract any prejudice expressed.

#### **Resources**

The most valuable resource in the education of our students is to be found in the understanding, experience, skills and creativity of our staff, teaching and non-teaching. We also appreciate that many every day objects and opportunities can be used in the teaching programme. However, to avoid confusing students, some explicit resources will be needed: slides and other illustrative material; cut-outs of bodies and body parts; and anatomically correct models.

#### **Guidelines for all staff and adults working with students in the context of personal care and development**

- treat every student as an individual, with dignity and respect;
- relate our language and behaviour to the developmental age of the student;
- reinforce the 'private' concept in all situations; avoid touching 'private' areas of students' bodies unless this is for a medical/care reason;
- encourage older students in age appropriate behaviour and point out why, when discouraging inappropriate behaviour;
- personal care to be carried out by an adult of the same sex as the student
- in all situations, formal and informal, we are all expected to follow the language and approaches we have identified in this policy.

## **A partnership with parents**

We place the utmost importance on sharing equal and joint responsibility with parents for their children's education and sexual matters. We will do our best to find out from them any religious or cultural views they may have which may affect the sex education they wish to be given to their children, although we would consider carefully any request which compromised our equal opportunities policy.

We are aware that some parents find it hard to cope with their children's sexual development and are happy for the school to take the initiative.

We will take every opportunity to inform and involve parents and carers:

- by making our commitment clear in the school prospectus;
- by reporting on sex education in the annual Report to parents;
- by placing sex education on the agenda at the Annual Meeting;
- by inviting parents to discuss personal development when their child enters school

Staff are willing to discuss with parents any matters which they are concerned about. It is important that there is no conflict of information given to the students.

## **Parents' right to withdraw their children from sex education.**

By working with parents in these ways, our experience has shown that we can convince them of the value of sex education for their children. We are optimistic that this situation will continue.

Parents now have the right to withdraw their children from sex education, although not from these elements which are in National Curriculum Science. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child, they are asked to discuss it with the Headteacher. We would like to make it clear that if students who are withdrawn from sex education lessons ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly by staff.

## **Monitoring the sex education policy and programme**

The school will need to assess how effective are the aims, content and methods in promoting students' learning. Feedback from staff, parents and students will help to judge this.

## **Highfield School Sex Education Policy**

### **A summary for parents**

Highfield School believes that sex education is part of the educational entitlement of all pupils. All young people, whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally, and need to be helped to understand their bodies and their feelings. Sex education helps our students' overall development, confidence and self-esteem.

The law now says that a compulsory programme of sex education including teaching about HIV and AIDS and other STDs must be provided for all pupils of secondary age (11+), whatever type of school they attend. This law also gives parents the right to withdraw their children from sex education at any age, except those parts which are in the National Curriculum Science syllabus.

The sex education programme we offer at Highfield School has been carefully planned to take account of students' age, maturity and physical development. It will develop slowly throughout the time young people are in school using well-proven methods, which allow time for repetition, practice of relevant skills, and reflection. It will be fully and constantly evaluated.

**In Key Stage 3** it will be integrated into the whole curriculum and taught separately. Areas covered will be:

- Friends
- Knowing how I am changing
- Respecting Privacy
- Choosing
- Feelings
- Groups I belong to
- Personal sensitivity
- Human development
- Changing relationships
- My changing body

**In Key Stage 4** age appropriate work will continue according to their needs and competencies.

- Teenage pregnancy
- Sexual Health
- Relationships and divorce
- Pregnancy and birth
- Sexuality and enjoyment

### **Who will teach it?**

The programme will be taught by class teachers, sometimes working together, and with support staff. (Input will be provided as appropriate by the School nurse and by Wakefield Young Peoples' Service.) Students will sometimes be taught in separate gender groups, or in small groups according to their maturity and understanding.

### **Working closely with parents**

Parents are invited to meet with school where they can discuss with staff any anxieties they may have about their child's growth and physical development. (This will be part of the Annual Review meeting.) **Additionally parents will be welcome to come to school at any time to discuss any of these matters with the Headteacher.**