

FIELD HEATH HOUSE SCHOOL



Sex & Relationships Education Policy

One of a group of schools under the trusteeship of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
Registered Charity Number: 287232

Next Review:

Under Review

PIELD HEATH SCHOOL SEX RELATIONSHIPS

EDUCATION POLICY

The Governing Body of Pield Heath School approved this policy statement on 4 July 2012 after discussions with staff, parents, carers, other professionals working with the students and advisers at Westminster Diocese Education Department.

Pield Heath School offers young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and associated speech, language and communication difficulties a caring, spiritual and secure educational community in which they are appreciated as individuals and given the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.

Our School Development Plan makes a commitment to develop the learning and personal relationships at school.

The key stages include: using praise more often than sanctions; allowing students as much scope as possible for making choices and decisions during the school day; and allowing students to take on responsibility wherever possible.

Sex education and the school ethos

The Governors 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 which a good sex education programme can bring about. Our school development makes commitment to developing learning and relationships in the school through encouraging autonomy and the taking of responsibility. At Pield Heath School 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 worth to others. Our students, with a variety of disabilities and from a range of backgrounds, need first to experience self esteem before they can form satisfying relationships with others. For many of them marriage and parenthood are unrealistic expectation, but this does not mean that they are to be excluded from forming loving and caring relationships during their lives. Our aim is to give our students the skills to conduct such relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited.

Our aims for sex education

We seek to ensure education related to matters of sexuality is approached in the context of the whole Christian community of which Pield Heath School is a part and that the moral principles and values of that community are embraced.

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, so that they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;

- 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.

The sex relationships education programme

Sex relationships education is to be taught throughout the school at the appropriate level of maturity. We intend that all students shall experience a programme of sex education and personal development at a level which is commensurate with their age, physical development and levels of understanding. We are aware that such a programme can successfully follow the outline given in the Sex Relationship Education Mapping Document.

The programme will be taught by the RE, PSHE/C and Science coordinators.

Throughout the programme it is acknowledged that many issues contravening Catholic teaching will be encountered. These issues will be addressed within a framework which acknowledges that whereas these issues do not occasion fundamental changes in Catholic moral teaching, they do require our Community response in asserting the gospel values of fidelity and chastity as well as forgiveness, compassion and concern for others. A Catholic approach will be used to deal with issues of controversy that students may be encountering.

Whilst our Catholic approach to others must always be non-judgemental of them as individuals and whilst seeking always to be compassionate towards and understanding of individuals, all our students have the right of access to knowledge of the consequences of their choices and actions. Suitable opportunities and contexts should be sensitively sought to spell out these consequences at appropriate levels of understanding and maturity.

Always the aim should be to enable our pupils to cope with their own sexual development albeit with appropriate support and to encourage growth where there is potential for growth, towards the ideal of fully functioning persons; remembering that we are all on our journey in Faith, in the process of being made whole in Christ.

The organisation of sex education

It is a legal requirement that students of secondary age, in whatever type of school, receive a programme of sex education. The governors expect a basic programme of sex education and personal development to be part of every student's entitlement in Pield Heath School from 7-19, planned according to individual and group needs and development.

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 support staff, who have much experience of the students, to be involved in planning, taking part in and evaluation of classroom work, although the overall responsibility rests with the teachers delivering the programme.

In classes in the post-16 department a specific time, will be set aside for the programme. In KS2, 3 & 4 it will be more appropriate to integrate the personal development programme across curriculum in particular through PSHE, RE and Social Communication.

Continuity and a common approach throughout the school will be essential.

The detailed SRE programme will be drawn up by the teachers responsible for RE, Science and PSHE/C within the broad outline above.

Sexual Abuse

We are aware that some of our students may have experienced sexual abuse. We do not accept that this is a reason for avoiding education about sex and personal matters. Indeed it makes it more essential: such teaching may help students avoid some abusive situations.

If disclosure takes place during a lesson or to a member of staff, the school safeguarding guidelines make it clear what action is to be taken. We hope that such disclosure will be treated in a calm and supportive manner without causing further anxiety or distress.

Appropriate methods for sex education use activities which distance the subject matter from students, by using pictures, stories and models, which encourage discussion about what the fictional characters do, say and feel. This also lessens the scope for student responses like I do/did/would do...etc. and also serves to protect staff from personal questions.

RESOURCES

The most valuable resources in the education of our students are to be found in the understanding, experience, skills and creativity of our staff.

Programmes that will be used in the delivery of sex education are as follows:

RE: Journey in love H – volumes 1&2 (Sr Jude Groden Publ:Mccrimmons)

Science:?

PSHE/C: Living and Growing

We shall invite parents and carers to meet the staff who deliver sex education to see how these resources will be used.

Use of outside visitors

It is not anticipated that people from outside the school will be involved in teaching the sex education programme. But it is important that all visitors, including other professionals, who come into contact with the students are aware of the schools policy; on language (for example, using correct names for body parts); on increasing independence and choice; and on guidelines about personal care and touch.

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 chronological age of the student;
Reinforce the private concept in all situations; avoid touching private areas of students bodies as far as possible. Discourage older students from age inappropriate behaviour; for example sitting on laps; hugging and kissing in greeting adults; 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 on 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 son/daughter, although we would consider carefully any request which compromised our equal opportunities policy or the schools moral principles and values.

We are aware that some parents find it hard to cope with their son/daughter'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 to parents
- By inviting parents and carers to discuss personal development when their child/young person joins the school and post-16 department.
- By inviting parents and carers to a meeting where resources are available and their use explained.
- Staff are willing to discuss with parents and carers any matters which they are concerned about. It is important that there is no conflict of information given to the students.

Parents rights to withdraw their children from sex education

By working with parents and carers in these ways our experience has shown that we have convinced them of the value of sex education for their children. We are optimistic that this 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 or carer wishes to withdraw a child, they are asked to discuss it with the Executive Principal to be clear about what the student will do when withdrawn/ parents and carers are not obliged to do so but we would like to make it clear that if students who are withdrawn from sex education 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, carers and students will help to judge this. The sex education team (RE, SC & PSHE/ C Coordinators) will be responsible for developing ways of collecting this information and for presenting it, via the principal to the governors.

Implementation of this policy

1. This policy document is to be placed in the staff handbook.
2. The policy will be available on the school website.
3. The detailed programme of sex education and personal development will be in place by September 2013.
4. Necessary staff training will take place.
5. There will be a report to the Governing Body annually.

This policy will be reviewed regularly on a three year cycle.

04 July 2012, 2015, 2018