

SEX and RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY (SRE)

The Aims of Sex and Relationships Education

Sex and relationship education should prepare young people for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- be aware of their sexuality and understand human sexuality;
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- understand the reasons for having protected sex;
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationships they want;
- communicate effectively;
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unintended/unwanted conceptions, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV;
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others;
- avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex;
- access confidential sexual health advice, support and, if necessary, treatment; and
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

The Delivery of Sex and Relationships Education

Millthorpe School will deliver Sex and Relationships Education to all pupils through three areas of the curriculum:

a) Through Personal, Social and Health Education:

Key Stage 3

- emotional and physical changes at puberty, including information about menstruation
- responsibility within relationships
- communication within relationships
- informing pupils about sexual activity so that they make informed and responsible decisions.

Key Stage 4

- sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS
- contraception, to include knowledge about safe sex and where and who to approach for help
- parenting skills - the difficulties of parenthood and the effects it can have on a young person

- the issue of teenage pregnancy.

b) Through teaching the National Curriculum Science Programmes of Study:

Key Stage 3

- that fertilisation in humans... is the fusion of a male and a female cell
- about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence
- about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation
- how the foetus develops in the uterus
- how the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health.

Key Stage 4

- the way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of 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.

c) Through the ethos of the school community, which has a formative influence on how pupils regard themselves and the expectations they have of themselves, in line with the Inclusion Policy of the school.

Marriage and the Family

As part of sex and relationship education, pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. We recognise that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society but care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

Consultation with parents and pupils

It is important that parents are aware of the provision of SRE within the school. Information is provided through the prospectus. Letters will also be sent home at key points in the programme of delivery. Parental views are always welcomed. Pupils review key elements of the programme and their views are taken into account when reviewing the programme of SRE. The school also works closely with health professionals in this area. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex and relationship education provided at school except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum. Parents are asked to discuss this fully with the Headmaster before exercising this right.

Outside Speakers

It is recognised that outside speakers can make a valuable contribution to SRE. It is important that:

- They are fully informed of the school SRE Policy to which they must adhere in their presentation
- Joint planning of their contribution takes place with school staff since the school retains the overall responsibility.

Staff Training

Those responsible for the delivery of SRE are encouraged to update their skills through in-service training. Members of staff delivering SRE work together to discuss and review their teaching. Teachers are encouraged to observe more experienced colleagues.

Specific Issues

Puberty

Work on puberty builds on work already covered in the primary schools. We involve health professionals in the delivery of this section of the programme.

Menstruation

Research shows that about a third of girls are not told about periods by their parents. It is vital that menstruation is included in Year 7. Girls requiring help in school are dealt with sensitively. Supplies of sanitary protection are always available.

Sexual identity and sexual orientation

We must make sure that the needs of all pupils are met in our SRE programme. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment is clear that teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.

Contraception

Knowledge of the different types of contraception, and of access to, and availability of contraception is a major part of the Government's strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy. Effective sex and relationship education has an important role to play in achieving this.

We are therefore able to give young people full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception, and their effectiveness. Pupils may wish to raise further issues with staff arising from discussion in the classroom. We may also give pupils - individually and as a class - additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.

Outside the teaching situation our school nurse can give one-to-one advice or information to a pupil on a health related matter, including contraception.

Confidentiality

It is important that teachers, pupils and parents are aware of our policy on confidentiality within SRE. The policy is based on maintaining the best interests of the pupils.

- Pupils must know that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that if confidentiality needs to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.
- If there is any possibility of abuse, the school's child protection procedures must be followed.
- Pupils must be informed of sources of confidential help e.g. school nurse, GP, counsellor or young person's advisory services.
- Ground rules on confidentiality will always be set in lessons.

Personal disclosures

Disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the teacher should talk again individually to the pupil before the end of the school day. The teacher may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague without giving the name of the pupil. If not, the teacher should follow the school's confidentiality policy.

City of York Council has produced guidelines for all secondary schools on dealing with personal disclosures. Millthorpe School will follow these guidelines.

Safe Sex and HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections

Teaching about safer sex is one of the Government's key strategies for reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. In teaching about safer sex the following principles are adhered to:

- information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS is vital;
- young people need to understand what is risky behaviour and what is not;
- sex and relationship education should inform young people about condom use and safer sex in general;
- young people need skills to enable them to avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex (this should link with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour such as drugs and alcohol); and
- young people need factual information about safer sex and skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex.

Abortion

We need to ensure that, when abortion is covered in the SRE programme, pupils have an opportunity to explore the dilemmas, that they know and understand about abortion and that they develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals.