

## Oak Field School and Sports College

### Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Date of Original Policy: 2010 Revised 2016

Revised February 2018

Rationale: Oak Field School recognises the entitlement of all pupils to receive S Relationships and Sex Education, which is current, meaningful and relevant. Oak Field promotes respect for diversity, promoting our pupils as global citizens. We encourage a sense of compassion and understanding of others, and a deep respect for human worth and dignity. We recognise and respect every member of the school community's ethnicity, cultural and religious values and sexual orientation. The advance of modern technology brings with it issues of safeguarding and the school will needs to address on-line safety in its various forms. This policy forms part of this commitment.

We are aware that parents need to know what their children will be taught at different ages. Our sex and relationships programme form part of the wider PSHE education provision. At Key stage 3 and 4 aspects of sex and relationships education are a statutory entitlement.

Responsibility for Policy: School Governing Body, Head Teacher and Subject Leaders for Health Education and PHSE. The Policy follows the guidance of the Secretary of State's 2000 guidance on SRE. Governors are mindful of their wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 for ensuring that the school strives to do the best for all the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity religion or sexual identity. As a leading player in the SRE and pupils with SRE they are also mindful of the PHSE Supplementary Advice (2014) Sex and Relationships Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in which one of the main recommended resources for SRE and SEN *Living Your Life* was written by Oak Field School.

Pupils

Consultation with pupils informs us not only what they want to know as well as knowing what they think of what is being currently taught. Pupils are involved in the development of resources.

## Parents and Families

Parents are kept informed about the policy through the school's prospectus and on the website. A comprehensive programme of training is provided for parents and families. A copy of the policy is available in the Family Room. Frequently asked questions from parents accompany this policy.

## CONTEXT

Catering for 160 pupils and students with severe and profound and complex intellectual and physical disabilities, aged 3-19, the school has a commitment to the development and delivery of a positive sexuality and relationship education. In this aspect of the curriculum the school is supported by an active Sexuality and Relationship Monitoring Group. (Established in 1985) This body, which includes governors, parents, staff and other associates of the school who have an interest in this area of work acts both as a monitor of and support to staff and parents in the delivery of sexuality and relationship education taught in the school.

Relationships and Sex Education forms an integral part of the school curriculum, and whilst sex education is seen as part of the wider programme of health education for pupils and students, it is important that these sensitive issues are addressed if pupils are to gain skills to deal with life - its joys as well as its hazards. Dedicated time is given to this area of the curriculum. The sex education and relationship education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and the school recognises that this education will need to evolve and adapt over time as the pupil population changes.

## Sex and Relationship Curriculum

This is a spiral curriculum in which themes and topics are revisited as students grow and develop. There are key learning modules within the programme: The Physical Self; Emotions; Relationships; Sexual Expression; Public and Private Behaviours; Being healthy and staying safe. The curriculum is taught as appropriate to age and ability.

## Assessment and Evaluation

From a base-line assessment of knowledge and needs, an appropriate programme of SRE can be devised for individual students. Regular assessment can evaluate progress of student as well as effectiveness of teaching and resources. The school uses

Sexual Knowledge and Behaviour – an assessment tool by Rev Jane Fraser and Hilary Dixon as a basis for assessment.

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

- a) Relationships and Sex Education within the school is made relevant and accessible to all young people, being sensitive in the use of sex education resources, ensuring that they reflect cultural diversity. The School ensures that the sex education programmes are appropriate and relevant to all young people within the school. This entails discussion about sexuality and personal relationships within a variety of cultural contexts and the presentation of a broad spectrum of belief.
- b) The moral framework within which sex education is taught is inclusive not exclusive.

The School strives to ensure that the moral framework within which sex education is taught is inclusive of all young people within the school. No sex education programme is value free, even if it takes place in science. Teachers are aware of the hidden values implicit in many sex education materials and approaches and the need to make these values explicit. Value laden messages can be used constructively if they are explicit and stimulating.

- c) Young people are made aware of the range of moral and cultural frameworks within society.

It is important that students are made aware of the diversity of moral opinion in society concerning sexual behaviour and personal relationships. Such moral frameworks are both secular and religious and include religion, the law and equal opportunities philosophies among others. They are also made aware of the range of cultural frameworks that exist in society for and implementation of a programme of sex education;

- to a programme of sex education presented in a moral framework which recognises the diversity in society;
  - to sex education which is sensitive to values, standards and personal responsibility.
- regulating sexual behaviour and relationships.

d) The School ensures that there is a gender dimension to all sexuality and relationship education work.

It is important that gender issues in sexuality and relationship education are not excluded in an attempt to teach sexuality and relationship education within a religious or moral framework. An honest exploration of masculinity and femininity is a vital part of sex education and it is important that we do not assume that there is a religious consensus on issues concerning gender such as the role of women in society. Equal opportunities in the area of gender and ethnicity should not be mutually exclusive.

e) Young people are supported, not undermined, in their cultural identities.

It is important that staff do not make assumptions about the cultural and/or religious traditions of students. The first step in this process is for staff to identify the needs of young people. It is necessary to distinguish between young people's needs and the needs of those who speak on their behalf, acknowledging the gap which may exist between religious/community ideals and actual practices.

The School also takes steps to communicate with and involve parents and does not assume homogeneity within one community. When consulting with parents and communities, the school takes steps to ensure that these views are representative of all parts of the community. The School also endeavours to communicate clearly to parents the nature of the programme on sex education.

f) Young people are encouraged to develop and clarify their values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships and to respect and empathise with those of others.

For young people to develop self-esteem and confidence it is vital that their cultural identities are supported and valued. Self esteem is an important part of the process by which young people develop their own values and attitudes towards sex and sexuality. An approach to sex education which celebrates diversity in this way encourages young people to be aware of the traditions and beliefs of others, promoting mutual understanding and tolerance.

As a school we wish to counteract prejudice and to support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every student, irrespective of sexual orientation. The topic of sexual orientation and same sex relationships should be treated with sensitivity and understanding, acknowledging that we live in a society which encompasses widely differing moral and religious views on the subject. We wish all students to live happy, safe and fulfilled lives whatever their sexual orientation and acknowledge that all students need support and guidance. The topic fits into our wider relationships programme, which considers all relationships – friends, family and partners.

### Working with young people and their families

The School is committed to working with parents and carers. The school has a detailed programme to ensure that the education does not occur haphazardly, though for it to be effective cooperation between home and school is essential. The young person receives a consistent approach, one that is sensitive to his or her needs as well as being appropriate to his or her level of understanding. It is important that staff and parents feel confident with the task in hand so that the young person feels secure.

Parents are notified when particular aspects of sex and relationships education are to be taught. Education should not exacerbate confusion. Parents and staff are encouraged to discuss the issues openly to avoid confusion.

On-going training for parents and aims to raise awareness that pupils of whatever age are sexual beings, developing physically, sexually and emotionally. Guided courses of study are provided for parents, using the fpa “Talking Together” books as a basis for this training. A range of books for parents have been created to support parents in these sensitive aspects of their child’s life. We emphasise appropriate behaviour being taught from an early age.

Due regard is given to cultural and religious differences and parents are encourage to discuss concerns. Regular meetings are held for parents to discuss concerns and issues and learn more of their child's education in this area.

### Rights and principles for pupils and students.

1. The Governors are of the opinion that in this all age school all pupils and students are entitled to an appropriate and balanced sex education programme. They seek to ensure that all pupils and students access the broad and balanced curriculum to which they are entitled which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'
2. The Governors endorse the National and local guidance given in relation to sexuality and relationship and endorse the stated rights and principles stated below:

#### Right to Sexuality

"It is important to recognise that a knowledge of sex and sexuality is a basic human right and students have a right:

- to be a sexual being
- to grow up and achieve adult status
- to form and break relationships
- to acquire knowledge about sexuality and social behaviour such as they are able to assimilate
- to privacy and dignity
- to make informed sexual choices;
- to have opportunities to love and be loved and enjoy as

full a range of satisfying human relationships as possible;

- to legal protection, (including protection against exploitation

Principles which guide how we ensure inclusive education and differentiate learning

- respect for human worth and dignity
- freedom of thought, speech, writing and worship
- equal opportunity for personal development
- - continuous learning which allows for progress, however slow the progress;
- - autonomy is needed by everyone - each within individual capability;
- a person's ethnic origins, cultural and religious values must be recognised and respected at all times;
- the individual's right to learn and develop at an appropriate pace.

### Entitlements

More specifically, having regard for the uniqueness and special circumstances alluded to previously, all pupils and students have entitlements:

- to receive information about human development, with facts being presented in an objective, balanced manner, appropriate to the age, stage, level of maturity and learning needs of the individual;
- to knowledge about sexuality, with a structured framework of learning experiences designed to prevent unnecessary anxiety. This includes learning to communicate

about sexuality and the development of appropriate language and vocabulary;

- to consideration of and specific training for relationships building and socio-sexual behaviour in order to promote greater social confidence; this would include realistic information on responsibilities and expectations of personal relationships;
- to information, advice and guidelines on inappropriate sexual behaviour (social, legally and culturally unacceptable), and all aspects of exploitation;
- to involvement of teachers, parents, governors and carers in the planning

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RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX POLICY AND PROGRAMME

A SHORT GUIDE FOR PARENTS & FREQUENTLY ASKED

QUESTIONS

Why does there need to be a policy and programme for sex education?

Life and social skills form an integral part of the curriculum and sex education is seen as part of the general health and emotional development for the students at Oak Field School. Whilst accepting that sex education is only part of a much wider programme of life skills, it is important that its content be examined in some detail. It is a very sensitive area of the curriculum, but one which must be managed if young people are to be equipped to deal with life - its joys as well as its hazards. Education should be not happen in a



haphazard way. Parents of younger pupils may feel that this is not relevant, but all children need to know about their bodies; know their body parts; learn about modesty and dignity; make choices in life and keep healthy and safe.

### What role can parents/carers play?

For such a programme of education to be effective, it is vital that there is cooperation between home and school. The child or young person must receive a consistent approach, that is sensitive to his or her needs as well as being appropriate to his or her level of understanding. With the co-operation of parents, appropriate programmes of education can be followed. School can help with resources which can be used in the home to support the young person.

### Is this for all pupils?

Parents and staff need to be aware that pupils of whatever age are sexual beings and appropriate behaviour needs to be taught from an early age. Respect needs to be given to their feelings as well as support been given in an understanding of their responsibilities. It can be difficult for both parents and staff to accept the fact that however limited a young persons' intellectual ability may be, he or she is developing physically, sexually and emotionally. As they approach adolescence, changes are happening to his or her body, which are difficult to understand. Emotions occur and may result in inappropriate behaviour, which causes anxiety both for the young person and his or her family.

### Can a pupil be withdrawn from sex education classes?

Under the 1993 Education Act, parents may now withdraw their child from sex education classes. It would need to be pointed out to parents that much of relationship and appropriate education is part of the total curriculum; incidental education in this area is as important as formal sessions. If a parent has a concern about sex education they should direct it to the Head Teacher in the first instance. If not satisfied they should then contact the Chair of Governors.

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gave parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order. This right was enshrined in section 252 of the Education Act 1996 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This parental right currently extends to all pupils attending the school, including those over compulsory school age, and may be exercised by either parent or a person who has responsibility or care of the child. However, the government altered its legislation to alter the right of withdrawal down to the age of 15 from 2011. Parents do not have the right to withdraw Year 11 or sixth form students from Sex & Relationship Education.

Whilst parents are not required to give reasons for their decision, the school would be grateful if parents would voluntarily indicate their reasons for withdrawal so that any possible misunderstanding about the nature of the sex education provided by the school can be resolved. In view of the context for the teaching programme it is, of course, hoped that no parent will feel the need to withdraw their child. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Who has responsibility for the organisation of School Sexuality and Relationship Education?

Working with the Governing Body, this is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and PSHE Health Education Subject Leaders.

2. Who will teach it?

Each education phase in school will have staff who will be responsible for curriculum delivery. All staff will be responsible for supporting pupils and students in their general learning and development in their school life. Learning in the informal setting is as important as the formal teaching sessions. Other professionals will be used as appropriate. Training is provided for staff.

3. How are classes to be organised?

Classes are organized within Key Stages according to suitability.

At times this may be ability grouping or single sex groupings. Sexuality and relationship education should be made relevant and accessible to all students at school.

4. Who monitors the resources and effectiveness of the programmes?

There is a wide range of resources, chosen to suit individual needs, and they are shown to the parents and the Monitoring Group. The Monitoring Group and staff provide regular reviews.

5. Are there any particular issues staff should be aware of?

Contraceptive advice - Parents may wish to discuss with the school doctor or nurse or access an appropriate clinic.

Confidentiality - It is made clear to students what whilst there can be a degree of confidentiality, in the case of suspected abuse, such information must be passed on.

Child Protection Procedures - The school is governed by the ACPC procedures. A parent booklet is available from school.

6. Does the school have a bullying procedure?

The school has a policy on bullying which is available to all parents.

7. Are there procedures for supporting any members of the school community infected or affected by H.I.V?

The school is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy and would support any family for who this was a concern.

9. Does the school work with parents on this area of work?

There is close liaison with parents. Workshops are held and there is a wide range of parent booklets. Parents are kept informed about the policy through the school's prospectus and on the website. A comprehensive programme of training is provided for parents and families. A copy of the

policy is available in the Family Room. Frequently asked questions from parents accompany this policy.

10. Who can access the policy?

The policy is available to parents, Governors, and relevant bodies.

11. Who monitors and evaluates the Policy?

There is a Sexuality and Relationship Education Monitoring Group, which monitors the education in school. It includes staff, Governors, parents and other members of the wider community. It works with staff and runs regular parent workshops, when parents can discuss concerns and issues as well as reviews the resources used in school.