

The Meadows School



Governing Body Policy on Sex & Relationships Education

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Amendment Register

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1. Rationale

The Governors believe that a knowledge and understanding of human sexuality is an important element of the secondary school curriculum and a basic requirement for the students' development towards maturity and adulthood. The Governors also believe that such knowledge and understanding should be acquired within the context of social development in which the value of family life, the responsibilities of parenthood, the value of personal moral standards and respect for others are given full emphasis.

At The Meadows School, Sex and Relationships Education is seen within the context of an overall commitment to Health Education. It is acknowledged and understood that we are providing this education within a multi-cultural and multi-faith society and it is our intention to develop and offer a curriculum and methodology that is open to all young people, but which also recognises, respects and celebrates difference.

Young people need to feel comfortable with their growing sexuality and develop self-esteem, self-image and decision making skills. Behaviour and attitudes formed when young are a major influence on future lifestyles. Our curriculum will work in a way that encourages the development of good sexual health.

2. Sex Education – The Law

Section 46 of the 1986 Education Act requires that the LA, the Governing Body and the Principal, "*...shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where Sex Education is given to any registered pupils at the school, it is given in such a manner as to encourage pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.*"

This policy is in line with the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and Sex & Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE 0116/2000' which states 'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in Sex and Relationship Education' (para.1.26).

In 2017, the Government announced its intention to make relationships education (at primary) and 'relationships and sex education' (at secondary level), statutory in all schools, including academies and free schools, through the Children and Social Work Act. Relationships and sex education (RSE) is an integral part of PSHE education and should always be taught as part of a broader PSHE programme. The Act also gives Government the 'power' to make PSHE education statutory in its entirety following a period of consultation. Changes would take effect from September 2019, though schools will be expected to prepare in advance.

3. Sex and Relationships Education and the School Ethos

We believe that, for our students, learning about their own sexual development, together with an awareness of their relationships with others, can greatly enhance the students' ability to lead their lives competently and with fulfilment. We also expect learning outcomes to be improved by the increased self-esteem and confidence which a well implemented Sex and Relationships Education programme can enhance. Our School Improvement Plan makes a commitment to developing learning and relationships in the school through encouraging autonomy and the taking of responsibility. At The Meadows School we value staff and students as individuals worthy of dignity and respect in line with the school values which are underpinned by British values.

4. Aims of the Sex Education Programme:

- 4.1. To make students aware that meaningful relationships are built on trust.
- 4.2. To recognise the need for responsible and caring relationships within the family unit.
- 4.3. The exploration of both personal and collective attitudes and feelings.
- 4.4. The acknowledgement of peer group pressure and the endangered moral dilemmas.
- 4.5. The acquisition of knowledge relating to personal health and self-preservation.
- 4.6. The encouragement and development of positive decision-making skills.
- 4.7. The recognition of a range of options.
- 4.8. Acknowledging the effects of lifestyles and one's actions.
- 4.9. The awareness of cultural diversity and differences.
- 4.10. The acceptance of one's own and others' sexuality.
- 4.11. Learning to give and receive support.

5. Implementation

- 5.1. Sex and Relationships Education shall be available to every student throughout their time at school, in a form appropriate to the student's age and level of maturity.
- 5.2. Sex and Relationships Education should be delivered in co-educational groupings.
- 5.3. The curriculum should be co-ordinated to ensure a balanced, sensitive and progressive programme of Sex and Relationships Education.

- 5.4. The Sex and Relationships Education curriculum should make full use of resource materials, visual presentation, literature and outside speakers. Details of such materials and speakers are to be approved by the Governing Body and to be available to parents/carers on request. On occasions when an outside speaker is used, a member of the teaching staff should be present throughout the lesson to ensure the contributions are consistent with the school policy.
- 5.5. The main vehicles for the teaching of Sex and Relationships Education will be through the Personal Social Development modules supported by other areas of the curriculum as appropriate, in particular science (for factual biological aspects of sexual function), in accordance with the National Curriculum.
- 5.6. Such programmes will encompass sexual function and behaviour as one of several equally important aspects of individual development such as self-awareness, moral integrity, personal hygiene and health.
- 5.7. In particular, the Sex and Relationships Education curriculum will include:
 - 5.71. Factual knowledge of the reproductive and birth process, including health aspects;
 - 5.72. The range and normality of human sexual behaviour;
 - 5.73. Personal integrity and the setting of personal moral standards;
 - 5.74. The importance of the family unit;
 - 5.75. Respect for life and the right of the individual;
 - 5.76. An appreciation of ethical and moral dilemmas in sexual matters, including abortion;
 - 5.77. An awareness of sexual discrimination and its avoidance;
 - 5.78. Protection from sexual harassment and abuse;
 - 5.79. Protection from sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS;
 - 5.80. An understanding of the law relating to sexual matters;
 - 5.81. The process of adolescence and development to adulthood;
 - 5.82. Marriage and parenthood;
 - 5.83. Inter-personal relationships and respect for others, and;
 - 5.84. Contraception.

Contraceptive Information/Advice to under 16's:

No teacher at The Meadows School shall give direct advice to individuals or groups of students under 16 years old. There will be information about types of contraception, but at no time will advice be offered, even though in Health Education there will be some discussions about contraception.

Advice to Over 16's:

Students will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If students need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.

- 5.8. The content and effectiveness of the course should be subject to regular monitoring and review. This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of new legal requirements or proposed changes to the curriculum.
- 5.9. The rights and responsibilities of parents/carers in relation to Sex and Relationships Education should be acknowledged. Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their child from all or part of the Sex and Relationships Education programme are requested to notify the Principal in writing. When appropriate, arrangements should be made for parents/carers to view teaching and learning materials and be given the opportunity to discuss the school's approach. Copies of the school policy should be available to parents/carers on request.
- 5.10 In the pastoral role, teachers will be concerned with the safety and well-being of students in their care. When offering guidance to individual students, care must be taken to recognise the responsibilities of parents/carers. If approached by an individual student for specific advice on sexual matters, staff should encourage the students to consult parents/carers or a health professional. Where a student confides in a member of staff, no guarantee of secrecy may be offered and the teacher concerned must consult a member of the Senior Management Team. If a student appears to be at moral or physical risk, staff should refer the matter to the Senior Management Team.

6. Our Policy on Specific Matters

Students who use alternative methods of communication:

Some students are unable to use speech; they use signing' symbols and/or communication switches and aids. The staff will adapt their teaching of Sex and Relationships Education to ensure that these students have equal access (for example writing with symbols computer programme includes 'private' body parts).

Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content: self-awareness, gender awareness, body recognition, privacy.

6.1. Sexual Abuse:

We are aware that some of our students may have experienced abuse. We do not accept that this is a reason for avoiding education about Sex and

Relationships. Indeed, it is more essential; such teaching, as part of the school's personal and safety programme may help students avoid some abusive situations.

If disclosure (of sexual abuse) takes place during a lesson, or to a member of staff, the schools Child Protection 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 and distress. The school works closely with the Child Protection Department of Sandwell LA and Social Services/Health Children's Disability Team.

6.2. STIs, 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 when people have sexual intercourse. A further stage would be to explain that infections may be passed on when a condom is not used. Students may ask questions about STIs and AIDS in any context; we would aim to answer honestly to the extent the student can understand; to reassure and alleviate any anxiety; and to counteract any prejudice expressed.

6.3. 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. We also appreciate that many objects and opportunities can be used in the teaching programme. However, to make teaching clear, some explicit resources will be needed; Sex and Relationship Education videos and other illustrative material; outlines of bodies and body parts; and anatomically correct models. We shall invite parents and carers to meet the staff to see how these resources will be used.

6.4. Use of outside visitors:

It is not intended that people from outside will be involved in teaching the Sex and Relationships Education programme on a regular basis. However, it is important that all visitors and other professionals who come into contact with the students are aware of the school's policy; on language (for example, using correct names for body parts while accepting names used by students); 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 to greeting adults
- Carry out personal/intimate care, such as toileting by two adults of the same sex and the student whenever possible
- Follow the language and approaches we have identified in this policy in all situations, formal and informal.

7. A Partnership with Parents/Carers

We place the utmost importance on sharing equal and joint responsibility with parents/carers for their children's education and sexual matters. We will do our best to find out from parents and religious or cultural views they have which may affect the sex education they wish to be given to their children.

Parents' Right to Withdraw their Children from Sex and Relationships Education:

Parents are entitled to withdraw their children from the elements of Sex and Relationships Education that are not in the National Curriculum science. However, we find that this rarely happens; by working in partnership with parents, they acknowledge the value of this important aspect of their children's education. We are optimistic that this situation will continue.

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from Sex and Relationships Education, they are asked to discuss it with the school, to be clear about what the student will do when withdrawn.

8. Implications for Whole-School Development

The Sex and Relationships Education Policy will have links with policies on Anti-Bullying, Behaviour Management and Teaching and Learning.

Monitoring the Sex and Relationships Policy and Programme

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years.