



The John Roan School

Sex & Relationship Education Policy

Whole School Policy Statement

Date of Last Revision: April 2006
To be reviewed April 2009

SEX & RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

1. What is Sex and Relationship Education?

Sex and Relationship Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

It has three main elements:

- Attitudes and values
 - learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
 - learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
 - learning the value of respect, love and care;
 - exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas; and
 - developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- Personal and social skills
 - learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
 - developing self-respect and empathy for others;
 - learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
 - developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
 - managing conflict; and
 - Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
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- Knowledge and understanding
 - learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
 - understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
 - learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
 - learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay; and
 - the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

2. **How Sex and Relationship Education is provided and who is responsible for providing it**

Sex and Relationship Education at KS3/4 by a team of specialist staff who teach PCHE/Citizenship. This is complemented by Science National Curriculum. The PCHE (Personal Citizenship and Health Ed) syllabus provides:

In P.S.H.E. lessons the teaching and learning objectives and aims are to:

- teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex;
- focus on boys as much as girls;
- build self-esteem;
- teach an understanding of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood;
- provide young people with information about different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment;
- use young people as peer educators, eg. teenage mothers and fathers;
- give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and the confidence to resist pressure;
- link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol; and
- ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Specific issues addressed when developing the policy

Sex and relationship education is for all children and young people in school. In developing the policy, the school considered the needs of all students.

The school ensures that teachers of sex and relationship education are aware of the Social Exclusion Report on Teenage Pregnancy and the role of effective sex and relationship education in reducing the incidence of teenage conceptions.

Relationships

Sex and relationship education at The John Roan School focuses on more than the physical aspects of reproduction and emphasises discussion about feelings, relationships and values. This helps young people to respect themselves and others and understand difference. Within the context of talking about relationships, young people are taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life for bringing up children. We recognise that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, children learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Teaching in this area is sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances.

Focus on boys and young men as well as girls and young women

Traditionally the focus has been on girls. Boys may have felt that sex education is not relevant to them and are unable or too embarrassed to ask questions about relationships or sex. Boys are also less likely to talk to their parents about sex and relationships. For these reasons, our SRE programmes focus on boys as much as girls.

Teachers plan a variety of activities which help to engage boys as well as girls, matching their different learning styles.

Ethnicity

The school is aware (DfES research) that children cannot always rely on their parents to talk to them about puberty or sex for a variety of reasons. In particular, a range of children from black and other minority ethnic communities are less likely to talk to their parents about sex and relationships. Some young women and men from some minority ethnic communities may rely on school as their main, and sometimes only, source of sex education.

It is therefore important that our Policy and Practice is both culturally appropriate and inclusive of all children. We consult with parents and students both on what is included and on how it is delivered in order to establish what is appropriate and acceptable for them. Before sex and relationship education is taught the Head of PCHE writes to parents informing them of the syllabus and giving them an opportunity to discuss the content and exercise their right to withdraw.

Special educational needs and learning difficulties

The John Roan School is aware that we have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationship education. Sex and relationship education aims to help all students understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives.

The school is aware that some students will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers and others may be confused about what is acceptable public behaviour. These children will need help to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable.

All staff including Teaching Assistants, the school nurse and carers as well as teachers should follow the school's Sex and Relationship Education policy when working with students with special educational needs and learning difficulties.

Sexual identity and sexual orientation

The school ensures that the needs of students are met in their programmes. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.

The DfES 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.

Within the centre of the School Equal Opportunities/Diversity policy and Anti Bullying Policy the school will deal with any incidents of homophobic bullying. Guidance issued by the DfES dealing with the unacceptability of and emotional distress and harm caused by bullying in whatever form – be it racial, as a result of a student's appearance, related to sexual orientation or for any other reason. (In addition Greenwich Anti- Bullying Policy and Guidance for schools).

3. Aims of Sex & Relationship Education at The John Roan School:

- a) To encourage young people to take a mature, informed and responsible attitude to sexual issues and understand the importance of loving, supportive relationships.
- b) To provide information to young people to equip them to make the right choices, preparing them for the realities and responsibilities of adult life.
- c) To challenge stereotypical view of male and female roles in personal relationships, and encourage a caring and tolerant attitude towards others' sexuality.
- d) To understand the importance of individual, personal choice and moral framework in managing relationships with others, including the right to say no.
- e) To understand the risks involved in sexual relationships; health, personal safety and emotional.
- f) To appreciate the moral values held by different groups and cultures in society.
- g) To encourage self esteem.

Outlines of the Sex & Relationship Education Programme

Key Stage 3

National Curriculum Science

Key Stage 3 (taken from the National Curriculum Science Orders)

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

Key Stage 4

2. f) the way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of sex hormones
g) some medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility
l) the defence mechanisms of the body
3. d) how sex is determined in humans

In Personal, Social and Health Education lessons students cover the following areas within the above moral/values framework:

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 (caring) 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;

4. How Sex and Relationship Education is monitored and evaluated

Because of the nature of the subject, small group work is most often used, but some whole class teaching is sometimes required. Videos are used and excellent published resources in this area are now available which enable teachers to focus on specific areas.

Content and methods are designed to be appropriate to the age and general development of students in the group and to be sensitive to religious beliefs and cultural practices.

Resources are reviewed before the programme and evaluated at the end of the unit of work. The criteria for the selection of resources is that they are in keeping with the moral framework and educational aims of the programme as outlined above.

Approach It is important that students are given information and encouraged to make healthy choices. It is therefore essential that work on 'ground rules' precedes any programme on sex education. Establishing an appropriate, serious atmosphere which is conducive to learning and reflective thought is vital. Students will be reminded of the importance of using the accurate language (even when they may be used to using slang terms). The importance of consideration and respect for other people in the class will be emphasised, including those who come from cultures where open discussion of sexual issues is not the norm and who may be experiencing some difficulties and embarrassment. Every effort will be made to reassure and establish a supportive atmosphere where discussion may take place.

On occasions it has been known for students to ask questions of an explicit nature; while wishing to give answers which are direct and simple, teachers may have reservations about answering publicly and may wish to give an answer individually. (Handling controversial questions is part of the discussions and training given to teachers prior to delivering the programme).

Use of Visitors:

On occasions visitors may be invited into classrooms to deliver aspects of the sex education programme. Visitors are always carefully briefed before the visits and the content is discussed in full to ensure that it is in keeping with the school's aims and values. Visitors may include health professionals, school health (nurse) or trained professionals from Greenwich Projects. On occasions the school takes advantage of offers from the Greenwich and Bexley Health Education Unit to receive Theatre in Education visits. These have proved useful, thought-provoking and a challenging way of raising issues and encouraging thought and consideration of topics related to sexual awareness for students.

Specific Issues Statements:

Advice to individual students:

It is important to distinguish between the function of providing education generally about sexual matters and counselling and advice to individual students on these issues, particularly if this relates to their own sexual behaviour. Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of students. But this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.

Contraceptive advice:

Particular care must be exercised in relation to contraceptive advice to students under The School Nurse offers a 'drop in' session for students concerned about any health issue. The School Nurse is governed by professional rules about confidentiality.

5. Confidentiality

At The John Roan School teachers are absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

Teachers at The John Roan School are aware that only in the most exceptional circumstances that school should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger students are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues should be addressed. Teachers should refer to the Designated Teachers in charge of Child Protection (J Farmer/A.Hitchcock).

A teacher, must not, however, ever offer confidentiality to a student. There may be issues or concerns raised by a student which will require the teacher to consult with other staff and/or inform parents. A programme of sex education will often raise issues for students; teachers must be sensitive to the possibility that students will disclose a problem or concern. Support and guidance will be offered in these cases so that the student feels able to tell parents with the help of their teacher / senior teachers.

Child protection

Children cannot learn effectively if they are concerned or frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence in the home. They have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment. Any fears or worries they bring into the classroom should not go unnoticed by staff. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

If a member of a school's staff (teaching or non-teaching) suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk of abuse, they should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns and to whom they should do so. The main recommendations are that:

- All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report their concerns or suspicions;
- All schools and colleges should have child protection policies, which should include procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse;
- As part of 'Every Child Matters' Greenwich has set procedures governed by the London Child Protection Procedures

6. Students Withdrawal Procedures:

Before each programme of sex education the PCHE co-ordinator will write to parents informing them when the programme is scheduled and informing them that they may review the resources and discuss the programme with the school. We also encourage parents to discuss the programme and the issues it raises with their child. For many parents this is a useful "way in" to discuss sex, especially for parents who find it a difficult topic to discuss with their children.

Parents have the right of withdrawal from any or all parts of a school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order (biological aspects of human sexual behaviour, human reproduction and the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence).

Parents who wish to exercise their rights to withdraw must write or telephone the Head of PCHE (Ms Ratcliffe).

This right extends to students over compulsory school age (6th form). A student in this category who sought to challenge the parental decision would, if s/he could not resolve the matter with the parents, ultimately have to apply to the courts.

7. Evaluation and Review

- At the end of each unit of Sex and relationship education students and staff evaluate the sex and relationship education programme
- The Sex and relationship education policy will be reviewed every three years and the next review of this policy will be April 2009.

Consultation and Dissemination of this policy

In constructing this policy, staff, governors, parents and students were consulted. The policy was finalised and placed on the school intranet.

J M Farmer (Deputy Headteacher), K Ratcliffe (Head of PCHE)