

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy



THE
ALDRIDGE
FOUNDATION

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

The vision of the sponsor is that the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy will ensure there is a sensitive and consistent approach to the teaching and Sex Education and Relationships.

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SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Rationale

The aim of the sex and relationship education policy is to clarify the provision of sex and relationship education to all students (including education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) and the teaching of human growth and reproduction as set out in the National Curriculum. Sex and relationship education is delivered through the PSHE and citizenship framework. The Academy is committed to ensuring that all students should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of sex education; the Academy believes that high quality sex education is an essential part of schooling which supports young people's development and prepares them for adult life.

The Academy's sex and relationship education programme aims to support the personal and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility, free from any abuse.

The aims are to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of students;
- prepare the students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- complement and be supportive to the role of parents and have regard to parents' views about its content and presentation; and
- to encourage health-promoting behaviour.

The sex education programme will reflect the Academy ethos and demonstrate and encourage the following values:

- personal responsibility in all forms of behaviour;
- self-esteem and confidence;
- respect and consideration for others; and

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. (In this policy statement, "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

It is natural for caring adults to want to protect children and young people from information, attitudes and lifestyles which they themselves find distasteful. However, it is important to recognise the power of confusion caused by "informal" learning - from television, radio, magazines, newspapers, gossip, jokes, and various other sources. Education within the curriculum can do much to dispel myths, reduce fear and anxiety, clear up misunderstanding and counteract prejudice. It is important that our students develop understanding and attitudes based on values which prepare them to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

1. Statutory Duty of Academies

The Governing Body is required to have a written statement of the policy available to parents. The statement must be drawn up in consultation with the Principal. The Principal must ensure that any sex education is provided in a way that ensures students are taught about its importance for

family life and for bringing up children, and that students are protected from teaching materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the students concerned.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided, but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under National Curriculum Science. The views of parents need to be borne in mind when developing a sex and relationship education policy, and parents are invited to comment on the extent to which this policy reflects their wishes and the culture of the community served by the Academy.

2. The Academy's Sex and Relationship Education Programme

Implementation

The Academy has an on-going programme of sex education throughout Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post-16. This programme is regularly updated and reviewed. The programme will be delivered through National Curriculum Science lessons and through the Academy PSHEE / Tutorial programme. The programme will teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex. Young people need a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure. It may be necessary to link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol, and ensure that young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of students and because teachers therefore act in loco parentis, parents need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education within the PSHE framework.

Students need to be taught to behave responsibly towards sex and relationship issues and be able to make informed decisions. Students may be consulted on this sex and relationship education policy.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Academy's sex and relationship education programme are:

- to explore what students know, understand, think and feel and to identify their needs;
 - to encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by using appropriate words for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions;
 - to create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment;
 - to counteract misleading myths and folklore;
 - to provide constant reassurance that change is part of the life cycle and to give help in adjusting to such change;
 - to enable students to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, social) and in ages when puberty or social activities develop;
 - to learn to respect each other as individuals, and to encourage boys and girls to understand and honour one another;
- to recognise the value of loving and caring relationships and the place of intimacy within them;
- to appreciate the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young;
 - to understand and respect cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality;
 - to help children know their rights and responsibilities;

to promote personal safety and self esteem so that young people are able to resist unwanted touch or advances and can communicate about such matters and seek advice;

to develop growing understanding of risk and safety and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe;

to be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them; and

3.1.15 to be aware of the law on sexual behaviour.

4. Organisation

In order to help students make informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. The participation of students in lessons is essential in order to encourage them to learn from others and to help them to use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. This requires the use of a balanced range of teaching methods.

5. Delivery of sex education

Sex education will be carried out in a variety of different ways and by different specialists as well as teachers:

- Specialist staff within the PSHE programme;
- Outside agencies such as Brook Advisory Service.
- Nurse;
- Police Schools Liaison Officer; and
- By reference to sexuality in curriculum areas other than PSHE.

Certain lessons are mandatory under the National Curriculum in Science and are excluded from the right of parents to withdraw their children. Such lessons will not include material on AIDS, HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases, or any aspect, other than biological aspects, of human sexual behaviour.

5.3 Parents must be aware that, through other National Curriculum subjects such as English, Drama and History, controversial issues may come up and therefore require a certain amount of discussion. Within this category, as long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject, it will not be deemed to be part of the sex education programme and therefore not subject to parental right of withdrawal. However, the Academy holds the belief that staff will deal both sensitively and professional with any issues which arise in the classroom.

A number of these issues are mentioned below

- Birth, contraception, child-rearing, abortion and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, beliefs, values and morality;
- awareness of the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships, such as Relate;
- awareness that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and understanding the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact upon lifestyles, such as the menopause;
- awareness of partnerships, marriage and divorce and the impact of loss, separation and bereavement; and
- discussion of issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effect on individuals.

5.4 The programme of study for sex education will demonstrate:

Progression This extends from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 with language, concepts and content increasing in depth and complexity as the students mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Relevance and differentiation Teachers come to know the levels of development of their students; they are able to draw out existing knowledge and needs and to build on them appropriately.

Integration Sex education will be integrated into a programme of Personal, Social and Health Education and into other relevant areas of the Academy curriculum.

Sex education will not be isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way.

6. The hidden curriculum

A sex education programme is not just what is "taught" in the classroom. Young people learn much from the overall ethos of the Academy - from the attitudes of staff, from relationships, from gender and other issues. It is important that all staff, whether directly involved in the programme or not, discuss the Academy's approach to sex education in the broad sense. With increased understanding and support, most teachers will feel able to make some positive contribution to the "whole" curriculum.

7. Continuity

The programme and policy is co-ordinated by a senior member of staff. Continuity within the Academy is achieved by co-operation between the [Academy Nurse] and the PSHE team within the framework of a co-ordinated progressive curriculum which begins in Year 7 and extends through to Year 11.

8. Pastoral Support

- Sexuality is an important part of living and learning but it may present some individuals with worries and tension at certain times in their lives.
- The quality of support available for individual students worried or disturbed by some aspect(s) of their development, relationships or environment is of prime importance.
- Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of children and young people.
- Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It will require skilled judgement to know when to counsel and when - and how - to refer for specialist counselling and support.

9. Morals and Morality

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of sexuality and relationships. The programme will respect individual differences - inspired by cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds - and it will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life which are common to all faiths and societies.

10. Relationships

Relationships have an important part to play in sex education. Friendship, making relationships, valuing friendship, will be topics in the early part of the programme. Choosing a partner, assessing personal qualities, considerations before marriage, together with relationships within the family, will

be considered together with roles, avoidance of stereotyping and acknowledging different attitudes and influences.

11. The Parental Right of Withdrawal from lessons where these issues are being addressed

Parents now have the right to withdraw their children from their sex education although not from those elements which are in National Curriculum Science. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from these classes, they are asked to discuss it with the Principal or Vice Principal to be clear about what the student will do when withdrawn. It should be made clear, however, that if students who are withdrawn from sex education ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly by staff.

12. Use of Outside Visitors

It is anticipated that professionals from outside Academy will be involved in teaching the sex education programme at certain times. Every visitor or professional speaker involved in this programme will be made aware of the sex education policy of this Academy. The Academy Management exercises great care in the choice of external speakers. Any outside speakers used in the teaching of sex education will always be accompanied by at least one member of the teaching staff. Parents will be informed and given the opportunity to withdraw their children from any such talks.

All materials, videos and other resources used in the teaching of sex education will be appropriate to the students and carefully chosen. Parents may view them on request.

13. Information

Parents will be made aware of the content of sex education lessons

The Academy will make parents aware of when their child is due to receive sex education by letter, at Parents' Evenings, and at Parent Forum / PTFA as necessary.

14. Monitoring and Reviewing

- Sex Education will be monitored by the Deputy Principal and the Heads of Year;
- an annual report will be made to Governors and a summary included in their annual 'Report to parents' - the full policy will be made available on request to parents at any time throughout their child's stay in the Academy; and
- a nominated Governor will have a link role between the school and the Governing Body.

The Sex Education Policy is continually under review and is adjusted as necessary.

11. Confidentiality Policy

Teachers are required to adhere to the Academy's policy on confidentiality between themselves and students as set out within this section. Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed. Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so.