

# **The Chauncy School**

## **Sex and Relationships Education Policy**

**Reviewed October 2008 in the light of the schools' participation in the Sex and Relationships Support Package run by Hertfordshire Local Authority, 2007-2008.**

**Recommended for approval by Governor's R&D Committee, November 13<sup>th</sup> 2008.**

# **Sex and Relationships Education Policy**

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## **Introduction:**

Health Education is one of the five cross curricular themes in the National Curriculum which pupils have an entitlement to experience throughout their education.

Sex and Relationships Education is a major component of the Schools comprehensive programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and makes up part of the new KS3 and KS4 programmes of study for Personal Well Being.

In all areas of human experience a good base of knowledge and understanding is deemed necessary for informed opinions and decisions to be made - human sexuality is no exception. It is vital that pupils receive effective sex education before they become sexually active or put themselves or others at risk in other ways. It is also vital to address prejudice and misinformation which may affect relationships with others both now and in the future.

The importance of sexual relationships in all our lives is such that sex education has a crucial role to play in preparing children for their lives now and in the future as adults and possibly parents. In sex education, learning information about the physical aspects of sex, must be complemented by learning about family life and the exercise of personal responsibility towards other individuals and the broader community.

In drawing up the School's policy due regard has been given to:

- consultation with parents, carers, governors, teachers, school nurse and others in the local community, including LEA guidance and the statement of law in the Sexual Offences Act of 2003/04.
- the issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate);
- encouraging pupils to have regard to moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to behave responsibly in sexual matters.

Copies of this policy have been made available to all concerned parties including the LEA, teachers and parents. It is also available on the school website

## **Specific Aims:**

The following aims reflect those of the School and the general aims of the Cross Curricular Themes, and show how Sex Education is taught within the context of a moral framework.

1. To provide a broad and balanced Sex Education Programme which:
  - Provides relevant knowledge and understanding
  - Promotes values and attitudes so as to see sex in the context of a loving, trusting relationship.
  - Relevant personal and social skills.
    - offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Needs;
    - operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas.
  
2. By exploring moral and sexual issues and values in order to.
  - a) endow the pupils with positive, assertive, pro-active attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships in order to enable them to make informed decisions about sex and relationships, for example:
    - those appropriate to informed decision-making and evaluation of the socio-economic/cultural influences on sexual behaviour;
    - non-exploitation, commitment and trust in sexual relationships;
    - an understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters;
    - the skills to identify, avoid, resist and report unwanted sexual experience.
  
  - b) to foster self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility.
  
3. To give pupils opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices about:
  - the physical, emotional and social aspects of an individual's development, personal relationships; responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour.
  - family life and other stable relationships - the value and importance of the family as a social institution; its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others
  
4. To approach Sex Education by an active and creative process of enquiry and investigation through projects, discussions, role-play, case studies.
5. To clarify the link between sexual practices and the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other STI's .see separate policy on Drugs/HIV education.

**Partnerships with parents/carers:**

The views and participation of parents is vital for the most effective sex education HIV and drugs programmes are discussed and the relevant resources viewed. There is a strong element of SRE in the Parenting Course that is run in twilight sessions that involves outside agencies such as the school nurse team.

Parents are fully informed and encouraged to enhance that part of the Sex Education Programme provided by the school by having discussions at home.

### **Offering Advice:**

The Governors and staff believe that the School's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. If the offering of outside expert advice is not taken up, then a teacher may only give such advice after receiving written permission from the Headteacher and the parents/guardians. Clearly this would not be done if the pupil did not wish it. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, and acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice. There remains a balance between the legality of a situation and the best judgement of the teacher involved.

### **Teachers cannot:**

- give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters (including contraception) to a pupil (either individually or within a group) if a parent has withdrawn that pupil from sex education;
- give personal contraceptive advice to pupils under 16 for whom sexual intercourse is illegal without parental consent

### **Teachers can:**

- provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. school nurse, their GP or Brook Advisory Centre, Numbers U Need booklet. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of factual information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupil through the Form Tutor or Head of Year and via reception
- give a child under 16 contraceptive advice if the teacher believes that doing so is in the child's best interests, However, in certain circumstances the teacher could be liable to criminal charges and therefore the Headteacher's instructions are not to give such advice and to refer the matter to him/her. Due consideration should be given to the legal advice laid out below as a result of the 2004 Sexual Offences Act

• *Under the Sexual Offences Act a young person has the right to confidential advice on contraception, condoms, pregnancy and abortion even if they are under 16*

• *The Act does not prevent the provision of confidential advice and treatment to young people under 16, including those under 13; a person does not commit an offence if they act for the purpose of:*

- a. Protecting the child from sexually transmitted infection*
- b. Protecting the physical safety of the child*
- c. Preventing the child from becoming pregnant*

*d. Promoting the child's emotional well-being by the giving of advice as long as they do not act for the purpose of causing or encouraging the activity constituting an offence or the child's participation in it.*

### **Confidentiality: and Child Protection**

Having considered all available advice and guidance, the Governors and Headteacher state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse (e.g. moral or physical) or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately in writing to the Headteacher in compliance with the LA procedures for Child Protection. The Headteacher will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling. Although there is no legal duty on a teacher, or a Headteacher, to inform parents of matters which a child has confided to them:

- teachers must not promise confidentiality even though they cannot be made to break it once given;
- pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Headteacher and possibly to parents;
- teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information;
- teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

N.B. Failure of staff to adhere to this statement may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Explicit Questions:**

It is recommended that before any question and answer session that might result in the asking of an explicit question, that a set of "ground rules" are established so that if such a question is asked, a response can be referred to the "ground rules" agreed.

It may be inappropriate to answer a pupils' explicit question (e.g. questions on oral and anal sex.). There are various options available, for example discussing it with the pupil on an individual basis, clarifying in front of the class after discussion with the PSHE Co-ordinator, telling the pupil that parents would be best to answer that question or making the arrangement/referring the pupil to another professional, e.g. the school nurse.,

In practice this means that teachers have to say 'I'm sorry but the School Policy does not allow me to answer that question at the moment'. The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's concerns with the parents - a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it. Answers to the "questions in a box" approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

### **The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex and**

**relationships education:**

The division between biological and non biological aspects of sexual behaviour has been decided upon, and is indicated by the contribution to the Sex Education Programme made by the Science Department (see Appendix One) The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of sex education occur in timetabled PSHE lessons.

The Science Department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in its timetabled lessons. The separate but strategically coordinated PSHE course deals with:

- a) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
- b) any other sexually transmitted diseases (STI's);
- c) aspects of human sexual behaviour, other than biological aspects.

**Withdrawing pupils from the Sex Education Programme:**

Relevant sections of this policy are made available to parents in the School prospectus and on the school website together with details about the parent's right to withdraw their child from many aspects of sex education - parents will always be provided with a full copy following a request to do so. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from non-statutory National Curriculum lessons such as PSHE, but not from statutory science lessons.

A full audit of PSHE has shown that issues such as over population, birth control and other sexual matters are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the Sex Education Programme.

Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so as sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

What we do if a request for withdrawal is made by a parent?

- we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them;
- we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents - care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the Sex and Relationships Education Programme and the entitlement of the other pupils, e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the Sex and Relationships Education Programme;
- we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,

- we point out that pupils who have been withdrawn have been/maybe vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the pupil and minimal disruption to the programme;
- we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- we offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

If the pupil does not agree with the parents desire to withdraw their child from the Sex Education Programme, the pupil can challenge the parents under Section B of The Children Act. The child has to apply to the court for a 'specific issues order'

### **Collaboration with outside experts/other professionals:**

We believe that most of the Sex and Relationships Education Programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors such as nurses, family planning or sexual health workers, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used to enhance, not instead of a planned programme of sex education.

Care is taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of The Sex and Relationships Education Policy. After gaining approval from the Headteacher for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the School and the manner of delivery of the Sex and Relationships Education Programme. Questions to consider are

- How explicit will the content and presentation be;
- Will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
- Will the staff take an active role in the visitor's activities?
- How will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
- How will the visit be built upon and followed up? The evaluation of the impact of the visit are vital.

1. Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the audience/target group and an idea of how their contribution fits into the Sex and Relationships scheme of work.
- 2- In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.

The health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can provide a link between the School and support services. A list of the current services offered by the School Nurse can be found in Appendix One

### **Sensitive Issues**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society

and therefore it is likely and natural that homosexuality and other sexual lifestyle choices will be discussed during a programme of sex education. Teaching about homosexuality is not avoided although teachers take care not to advocate homosexual behaviour, present it as the norm, or encourage homosexual experimentation by pupils. One of the many advantages of exploring gay and lesbian issues is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Any changes to the legislation on this issue is advised by the School Nurse

### **Equal Opportunities Issues and Special Needs:**

The Sex and Relationships Education must be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates, the Sex and Relationships Education Programme is a spiral system in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity.

Children with learning difficulties may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. Some parents find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their child (special needs or not) will some day become sexually active.

### **INSET:**

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be experts on the issues concerned - however, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly, honesty and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. Areas that have been specifically addressed by In Service Training are:

- an examination of the Schools Sex and Relationships Education Policy;
- Training by Local Authority Consultant for all LCO's and Pastoral Staff, July 2008.
- developing skills related to managing group work and discussion.

### **Monitoring, Evaluating Assessment and Reporting to parents/carers.**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. This will be achieved by the methods outlined in the separate policy Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the PSHE course. Specifically important to the Sex Education Programme are:

- 1) pupil feedback;
- 2) staff review and feedback, particularly at pastoral meetings; In addition, all form tutors have been provided with statements that allow them to comment on the Sex and relationships Education that their tutees might have undertaken in the end of year reviews.
- 3) parental feedback.

It is worth noting that in the regular pupil satisfaction surveys that are carried out a high percentage of pupils feel that there is someone specific that they can turn to if they have a problem.

#### Other Benefits

Sex Education can also contribute to the School by contributing to the quality of display work, assembly themes, etc.

#### **Conclusion:**

Our Sex and Relationships programme is inclusive and also takes into account our pupils different ethnicity, faith, disability (where relevant) and culture as well as the different learning styles of boys and girls.

### **Appendix 1:** **Biological Aspects of Sex and Reproduction delivered by the Science Department**

Key Stage Three:

- Adolescence (physical and emotional changes)
- The male and female reproductive system (structure and function)
- Sex cells (sperm and egg)
- The menstrual cycle
- Fertilisation and the development of the foetus
- Birth

Key Stage Four:

GCSE Biology;

- Gamete fusion (concentrating on genetics)
- Hormone action on the menstrual cycle
- Role of sexual reproduction in evolution

OCR Nationals;

- General description of sexual reproduction in animals and plants
- Structure and function of male and female reproductive systems
- Gamete fusion

## **Appendix 2; A comment on relationships between pupils and members of staff**

The possibility exists that a member of staff and a pupil might develop a relationship that goes beyond that which might be expected between a pupil and teacher.

It needs to be made clear that in doing so the member of staff would be in all likelihood committing a criminal offence, even if the pupil was above the age of sexual consent (i.e. 16)

If this situation had arisen the member of staff should approach the Head immediately and appropriate action taken. This is likely to be disciplinary. The same avenue should also be available to the pupil involved as it should also to the friends and peers of the student (or member of staff) if any impropriety was expected.

In the case of a pupil or member of staff informing any other member of staff other than the Headteacher confidentiality cannot and should not be promised as there are likely to be child protection issues involved that would need to be investigated through the proper channels.