



WATERMILL SCHOOL

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY

Written by Matthew Coupe	Adopted October 2015
Reviewed in :	October 2016
Reviewed in:	October 2017
Reviewed in:	October 2018
Reviewed in:	January 2020
Next review date	January 2021

Introduction

The Governing Body recognise that this policy takes into account the school's legal obligations and is based on the principle that Sex Education should be available for all children in accordance with section 241 of the 1993 Education Act.

In the document, "Sex and Relationships Education Guidance" (DfEE, July 2000), the Secretary of State said this about Sex and Relationships Education.

"It 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 orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching."- (para 9, page 5)

Sex and relationships education (SRE) is an integral element of a broader developmental programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. It is lifelong learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, empowering students to make informed and wise decisions to keep them safe.

For younger pupils, learning focusses more on understanding feelings in themselves and in others and on the skills of friendship. They learn about risks in everyday life and develop their thinking about risk taking behaviour. As they get older, pupils consider the ways that others can influence how they think and behave and begin to think about peer pressure and how to resist it.

Why Sex and Relationships Education?

Legal obligations – Schools have a legal obligation to provide a 'sex and relationships education' programme. They also have a responsibility to keep an up to date policy which must be available to parents. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from these lessons.

Rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infection in the U.K. are among the highest of all European countries. The government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and sex education is seen as a key element along with consultation with parents and involvement of outside agencies.



The schools approach to sex and relationships

education consists of:

- Pastoral support for students who experience personal difficulties or concerns and who approach staff for support.
- Provision of appropriate information and support through leaflets and books and with the expertise of other agencies
- School nurse support through appointments and the drop-in service.

Through this approach we aim to develop: **Knowledge and Understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and a range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, the benefits to be gained from such a delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.
- Being able to recognise and avoid unsafe situations and how to access help

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 that is inclusive of the diverse society in modern Britain.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of informed 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.
- Developing the skills of being assertive and how to stay safe and avoid all types of exploitation and abuse.

Morals and Values Framework

Our approach will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships.
- Respect, understanding and empathy toward others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, religions, sexuality, feelings and views.
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion.



- The right not to be abused by other people or to be taken advantage of.
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters.

We also believe that students have an entitlement to:

- Age and circumstance appropriate sex and relationships education.
- Access to information, advice and support from trusted adults and helping services.

This involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The school's approach will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on personal bias. We shall have an approach that is educational, rather than one based on propaganda, and one which will usually follow the curricular documents published by Stoke-On Trent entitled "Relationships Education". These documents are available for parents to see, should they wish to reassure themselves as to content.

Equal Opportunities

The school strongly believes that all students should have access to sex education that is relevant to their needs, depending on their circumstances, ability and background and to achieve this, the school will take account of:

- **Ethnic, religious and cultural diversity** - Different groups may have different attitudes. The school will consult students and parents about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.
- **Sexuality** - Our approach will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral support will take account of the needs of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender students and we shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.
- **Special educational needs** - We shall consult with parents, teachers and students, taking account of the fact that some students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular strategies being required to meet their needs.

Whole School Approach

A whole school approach will be adopted that actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding sex education. In particular:

- **The school leadership team** supports the provision and development of this in line with this policy by providing leadership, adequate resourcing and time in the curriculum.
- **Teaching staff.**
All teachers are involved in the school's sex education provision. Some teach this through the PSHE /tutor period programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding sex or relationship issues. All staff are trained in how to keep children safe and understand how to report concerns to the school's designated safeguarding officer.



- **Support staff** may be involved in a supportive role in some lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral role supporting students outside of the classroom.
- **Governors** have responsibilities for school policies and they are consulted.
- **Parents/carers** have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's sex education provision. The policy is available on the school web site.
- **The school nurse** plays a key role in supporting sex education through the provision of pastoral support for students either on a one to one basis or through the School Nurse 'Drop in'.
- **Outside agencies and speakers** are involved as points of referral as support services for students. The school will work in partnership with them and jointly plan their work within the school in adherence to this policy. We will also promote relevant outside support agencies that students can access.

Aims of the programme:

- To provide accurate information about, and understanding of sex education issues.
- To dispel myths.
- To explore a range of attitudes and to help students to reach their own informed views.
- To develop our pupils' self-respect and their respect and care for each other.
- To increase student's self-esteem.
- To develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations e.g. communication with and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others.

Confidentiality and Informing Parents

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help and this must be made clear. Child protection procedures must be followed when there are any disclosures about abuse. It is very rare for a student to request absolute confidentiality and if they do staff must make a careful judgement about whether a third party needs to be informed. This should be based on:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm the student may be experiencing.
- The student's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Unless clearly inappropriate, students should be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer.

Parental Concerns and Withdrawal of Students

Although parents can withdraw their children from dedicated 'sex education' lessons, they do not have the right to withdraw them from those aspects that are taught in Science or where it arises incidentally in other subject areas. We will work in active partnership with parents, value their views and keep them informed about our provision and should they have any concerns about the provision we will take time to address their concerns.

This policy should be read together with the:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.



- Behaviour Policy.
- The PSHE Policy.