

TASKER MILWARD SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION POLICY (August 2013)

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1. Introduction

School Information Regulations 1981 require that schools publish in their prospectus, details of all content and organisation of any sex education they provide. *The 1986 / 1996 Education Act* invests responsibility for sex education with Governors and Headteachers who have a legal obligation to “make and keep up to date” a written statement of their policy.

The 1988 Education Reform Act stated that schools should provide a curriculum which “promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life”. Sex education is an important dimension of this statutory entitlement.

The 1993 Education Act states that, “ all maintained Secondary Schools will be required to provide such sex education for all pupils as part of their overall curriculum provision”.

The 1996 Education Act states that “...sex education is defined as specifically including information about AIDS and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.”

The 1996 Education Act also states that “...sex education should be provided in such a way that it encourages’pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and family life”.

The 1996 Education Act re-affirms the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education lessons occurring outside the National Curriculum.

Sex and Relationship Guidance ref DfEE 0116/2000 offers guidance on good practice in policies.

Learning and Skills Bill 2000 removes responsibility for sex education from the LEA and places it with Heads and Governors. It also provides guidance which must be taken into account when writing policies.

This policy safeguards the interests of parents who for personal, cultural or religious reasons wish to withdraw their children from the sex education offered by the school. Pupils may not be withdrawn where aspects of the National Curriculum requirements such as in Science (e.g. reproduction) or Geography (e.g. population control/contraception). For this reason, the sex education programme is delivered discretely through PSHE days, the Skills curriculum and the WBQ.

2. Philosophy

The school believes that access to a well-balanced and carefully planned programme of sex education should be available to every pupil regardless of ability, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation and physical or emotional disability.

The sex education programme should reflect the continuous nature of change and development from childhood to adult life and prepare young people for the responsibilities and risks they may face. Sex education is an overarching term for all the learning we need in order to understand our own and others’ sexuality and to develop skills, relationships and informed decision making.

The sensitive and careful development of aspects of sex education should be regarded as a whole school responsibility. All staff should encourage the development of self-esteem and respect for others and, wherever possible, help pupils towards developing personal and interpersonal skills important in adult life.

Specific aspects of sex education will, however, be delivered through a planned and co-ordinated programme of Personal, Social and Health Education. The KS3 Skills Curriculum, WBQ programme and discrete PSHE days are the main vehicle for this. The PSHE co-ordinator liaises with other departments (e.g. Science and RE) to ensure a complementary and coherent approach.

This policy reinforces the philosophy described in the Strategic Equality Plan which states our commitment to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parent and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

3. The Main Aims of the Sex Education Programme

To support the personal and social development of all pupils, 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.

- To discuss sensitive issues in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias, and sensitively pitched to the level of pupils' needs and experience.
- To discover what pupils know, understand, think and feel and to identify their needs.
- To make pupils aware of the legal issues with regard to sexual behaviour.
- To create a programme for progressive and differentiated learning which caters for pupils' needs and is sensitive to individuals and groups.
- To generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
- To enable pupils to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, and social) and to provide reassurance that change is part of the life cycle.
- To emphasise the value of loving and caring relationships and the place of sexual intimacy within them.
- To emphasise the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young while respecting the varied cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality.
- To develop skills in personal relationships decision making and problem solving.
- To help children affirm their rights, to be able to resist unwanted touch or advances and to communicate about such matters.
- To develop awareness of sexual identity, to challenge sexism and prejudice in society and to promote equal opportunities.
- To emphasise the risks of sexual behaviour outside of a mutually faithful relationship and to enable the pupils to keep themselves safe from the physical, emotional and moral risks of casual and promiscuous behaviour.
- To be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them.

4. The Details – The Main Parts of the Programme are:

Developing respect and self-esteem and the ability to make safe and healthy decisions with regard to sexual relationships, while accepting the responsibilities of adult life.

Developing balanced and acceptable attitudes towards sexual behaviour showing concern for rights, responsibilities, risks and consequences.

Developing an awareness of moral values in the context of family life education.

Considering the physical and emotional development associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood.

- physical; emotional; sexual development
- puberty
- adolescence; developing sexuality; relationships
- adulthood; love; marriage; partnerships; values
- parenthood; father's role; family structures; family breakdown

Concern for the rights and responsibilities, risks and consequences associated with developing sexuality.

- pregnancy, contraception; abortion;
- sexually transmitted diseases; safer sex; HIV/AIDS;
- reputation
- staying safe; sexual abuse; supporting agencies; getting help

5. Staff and Delivery

Sex education is taught by teachers of Skills and the WBQ who are competent to deal with the sensitive and embarrassing nature of the material.

Wherever possible, training will be sought to enable them to develop the knowledge and skills needed for this subject.

Staff teaching sex education will encourage an atmosphere of trust and respect where pupils feel confident to ask questions which concern them. Children are naturally inquisitive and questions will be welcomed. When appropriate a teacher may choose not to answer a particular question where the answer might embarrass some pupils in the class. When such questions are likely, pupils may be invited to present anonymous written questions to allow all pupils to participate and avoid inappropriate questions or embarrassment.

Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away and leaves children and young people confused and at risk. All official documentation is in favour of the introduction of topics such as contraception, abortion, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse etc.

The school stresses the need to tackle these sensitive issues in a broad and balanced way free from sensationalism and personal bias, at a time most appropriate to the pupils' personal developmental needs. The school hopes that parents will co-operate with its aims, but if there are any worries or queries you should contact the teacher who delivers your child's PSHE, the Head of PSHE, your child's Head of Year or a senior member of staff.

6. Contraception

Teachers can teach about all forms of contraception and family planning in the classroom,

including to pupils below 16, as long as it is in the form of general information and is within the terms of the policy. Teachers are not qualified to give medical advice to individual pupils. This is the role of the appropriate health professional such as the school nurse. When working in the classroom, health professionals should restrict themselves to general information about contraception and sources of contraceptive advice and treatment.

7. Abortion

Teachers can teach about abortion in the classroom, including pupils to below 16, as long as it is done sensitively and objectively and is in accordance with the policy. Teachers are not qualified to advise pupils on forms of abortion, though can inform pupils on sources of professional help and advice.

8. Visitors

Visitors are a valuable resource when used as part of the planned programme. The teacher responsible for the class is always present at such times and the content of the visitor's talk or involvement will have been discussed and agreed in advance.

Whenever appropriate the School Nurse is involved in the sex education programme and works beside staff to deliver it.

9. Resources

Our teaching staff are our main resource. However, additional resource materials may be used after careful selection and evaluation. This includes the use of video and multi-media. See also (8). Resources are to reflect all backgrounds to support a positive self-image. In addition, teaching materials should not be stereotyped or discriminatory

10. Parental Role

The interest and support of parents is a crucial part of the sex education programme. The programme is briefly outlined in the school prospectus which is sent to all new parents. The PSHE co-ordinator can be contacted to answer any questions parents have or to discuss the programme.

Staff, resources and materials are always available for parents to see. Parents are invited to discuss areas of concern with staff at any time by arrangement, or to attend sample lessons if they wish.

Where appropriate, parents will be involved in homework in an active role designed to encourage discussion of values at home. This is designed to alert parents to the issues being considered and to encourage them to take the initiative for their child's sex education if they wish.

Throughout the sex education programme at Tasker Milward we regard our role as complementary to the parental role, at all times. It is our intention to support the valuable work done at home rather than to take over this important parental responsibility. The sex education programme will, however, be sufficiently

comprehensive to provide the necessary information, to aid the development of essential skills and attitudes, and to help pupils who may not benefit from this support at home.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school and presented bi-annually to Governors, unless major changes are necessary outside this cycle.

The PSHE co-ordinator is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the policy and its impact on an annual cycle and for contributing to the school Self Evaluation

The designated member of staff will ensure that the views of pupils, including but not exclusively, the School and Year Councils, are collected and used to both review current, and inform future, practice.

Links:

This policy supports the philosophy and values stated in the Strategic Equality Plan. It also links with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and E-Safety Policy.