

Northern Counties School

Sex and Relationship Policy

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships for family life built on 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.

DfES 0116/2000

Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. At Northern Counties , sex and relationship education is a basic entitlement, which will contribute to the overall personal and social development of each pupil. The school believes the role and nature of sex and relationship education to be the provision of on-going, truthful and honest information presented in a non-judge mental manner within a relaxed and confidential setting. SRE is an integral part of our curriculum and is taught to all pupils from the Early Years to Post 16. Formal teaching of SRE throughout the school year is part of the PHSE curriculum delivered through a transdisciplinary approach.

In our school we believe:

- SRE is lifelong learning about ourselves including our emotions, self-esteem, relationships, rights and responsibilities, sexual behaviour, sexuality and sexual health. It takes place in many contexts: at home, at school and in the community.
- SRE is an entitlement for all young people. Difference and diversity must be taken into account when delivering SRE. Special educational needs or disability, gender, sexual orientation and age, nationality, religion, cultural and linguistic background, all affect access to SRE.
- SRE is most effective when provided in the wider context of social and emotional development. In schools, successful SRE is firmly rooted in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Our work in SRE is set in the wider context of our school values and ethos:

- We promote a healthy, safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff.
- We provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils, which values their diverse backgrounds and needs.
- We promote pupil's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing and help them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, at school, at work and in the community.
- We prepare our pupils to confidently engage with the challenges of adult life.
- We provide sufficient information and support to enable our pupils to make safe choices.
- Through the curriculum, we provide the students, with opportunities to develop the necessary skills to manage their lives effectively.
- We help our pupils to learn to respect themselves and others and move safely from childhood, through adolescence, into adulthood.

Aims

Develop learning for adulthood

Ensuring that pupils have access to high quality appropriate sex and relationships education will enable them to maximise their potential in life after school.

Maximise independence

It is important that the idea of personal choice form the basis of any sex and relationships education scheme of work and that all knowledge is given in this context. Pupils who are aware that they are able to make their own choices and express their own opinions in a friendly and secure atmosphere will be more able to discuss and share ideas about sex and relationships educations in a positive and sensible way.

Develop confidence

Part of pupil's self-worth is developed by their knowledge of gender roles and sexuality. It is also important that pupils learn as part of sex and relationships education their rights to say no to any experiences they do not wish to share. For younger pupils it is vital they learn about their right to say no clearly and unambiguously.

Effective communication

A key aspect of sex and relationships education is ensuring that students can express clearly their feelings and ideas in ways, which can be understood by others. Transdisciplinary work with the class team including speech and language therapists supports learning in this area. The importance of knowing and using the names of parts of the body and the ability to describe emotions effectively is specifically taught and generalised in all areas school life.

Trust and respect

Northern Counties School establishes an atmosphere of security, trust and respect for all. Sex and relationships education needs to be taught in a straight forward but interesting way, which ensures pupils' learning is extended. A responsive transdisciplinary approach is adopted when teaching SRE, which allows individuals, pairs or small groups to be taught at the appropriate level and in response to any emerging/identified needs. The messages about safe sex for older students who may become sexually active later in life is an important part of sex and relationships education. SRE should be taught in an environment where people feel secure and by staff they feel comfortable with to ensure any questions and concerns are addressed in a frank open way.

Empower families

Parents are often concerned about sex and relationships education either in the sense that they do not wish their child to learn about these issues or they are keen that they are taught about sex and relationships in the safe and positive environment. Teachers must ensure parents are clear about their rights in this area and that they are informed effectively about what their child is being taught. Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of a student's education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education programme except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e., the study of human growth and reproduction in Science lessons). We would make alternative arrangements for students in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity.

Principles Sex and Relationships Education Policy

1. Sex and relationships education is an integral part of each person's learning process, which begins in childhood and continues into adult life.
1. Sex and relationships education should be delivered in a positive way and should provide physical, mental, moral and social development.
2. All pupils, regardless of gender, race or disability should have access to appropriate sex and relationships education.
3. The sex and relationships education curriculum should be delivered in a way that addresses the need for differentiation and is relevant to each person's individual needs.
4. Parents and Governors should be informed and involved as to the content and context of the sex and relationships curriculum. Opportunities for discussion should be offered to parents and Governors.
5. The teaching of sex and sexuality should be delivered in a way which encourages responsibility and tolerance and which teaches to respect difference.
6. The recommendation of the Children Act, i.e. that 'those responsible for the sexual education of young people will need to bear in mind the particular needs of different young people'. The fact that young people with mental or physical disabilities have sexual needs should be encouraged, for instance and young people who have been abused, or have been in touch with abused young people, may need special counselling if they are not to regard sexual feelings as a matter of shame or to regard sexual relationships as impersonal and exploitive. The needs and concerns of gay young men and women must also be recognised and approached sympathetically.
7. Acknowledgement should be given and sensitivity shown towards religious beliefs and codes of behaviour within ethnic minority races and cultures and to generally respect the diversity of 'family' life.

Guidelines of the Sex and Relationships Curriculum

1. Schemes of work for units should be carefully planned to ensure a focussed and appropriate approval to the teaching of sex and relationship issues.
2. SRE will be monitored and evaluated as part of the whole school systems.
3. There will be parental and Governor involvement in the planning of modules i.e. Parents and Governors will be informed of the exact commencement. Parents should be invited to review the programme and resources and discuss the policy.
4. The teaching about sex and sexuality should be set within a framework, which encourages responsibility and tolerance within personal relationships.
5. There will be careful input on sensitive issues, such as masturbation.
6. It is important to endorse that sex and relationships education is about sexuality as well as sexual acts.
7. Pupils, where appropriate are taught about aspects of relationships and the development of relationships (grooming, sexual or political relating to the Prevent Agenda)
8. All members of staff should have the opportunity to discuss the sex and relationships education policy and programme.
9. There should be a collaborative approach to the delivery of sex and relationships education and should involve persons from our transdisciplinary teams including the wellbeing team and if appropriate external agencies.

10. Careful planning should address diversity of family life and should show an awareness of the differing attitudes, belief and principles regarding sex and sexuality within the wide range of culture and religions.
11. Transgender and homosexuality should be discussed with young people in a secure environment in a way which aims to dispel myths and which will help to clarify attitudes rather than treating it as 'special' or 'abnormal'.
12. Through planning and teaching strategies, including the use of ICT, VOCAs and visual structure, provision will be made to ensure that students with alternative communication strategies are given equal learning opportunities in this area.

This SRE Policy will be made available to parents and staff on the school website.