



Sex and Relationships Education Policy

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Responsibility: Curriculum, Learning & Teaching Committee

Owner Adrian Green

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CLYST VALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY

Context

Clyst Vale Community College is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school of around 950 students. The ages between 11 and 18 are a time of significant physical and emotional change from childhood towards adulthood, and often a time of experimentation. Students are subject to a wide range of influences from peers, family and the media, which includes images and impressions of sex and relationships. It is in this context, of educating students, that this policy should be read.

Background

“Sex and relationships education is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions relationships and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.” (Sex Education Forum – 1999)

The most recent legislation relating to Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) are contained within the Education Act (2002) and the Learning and Skills Act (2000). The requirements are as follows:

- It is compulsory for all maintained schools to teach some parts of sex education ie the biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses. These topics are statutory parts of the National Curriculum Science which must be taught to all pupils of primary and secondary age.
- There is also a separate requirement for secondary schools to teach about HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.
- The broader topic of Sex and Relationships Education is currently not compulsory but is contained within non statutory Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) education within the National Curriculum and is strongly recommended within Government SRE Guidance (2000). School governors are in law expected to give ‘due regard’ to this guidance.
- Both primary and secondary schools are legally obliged to have an up-to-date SRE policy that describes the content and organisation of SRE taught outside the Science Curriculum.

Evidence has shown that good SRE can make a positive contribution to pupil’s personal and social development and help to prevent negative health outcomes such as unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

It is our belief that:

- students should have access to a good SRE programme, which will allow them to consider the levels of risk and make informed judgements about their actions;
- students should learn about the nature of healthy relationships and their importance in the bringing up of children;

- students must be protected from teaching and materials that are inappropriate with regard to age, sexuality, religious and cultural background;
- confidentiality is important, within the bounds of the college's policy (as described later).

Organisation

Sex education, as a mandatory requirement of the National Curriculum Science Orders, is taught to all pupils in Years 7 – 11. This covers basic anatomy, puberty and the biological aspects of sexual reproduction.

SRE that falls outside the Science curriculum, is taught through Course 42 and Deep Learning Days (in Years 7 – 11). The lessons are led by a trained teacher and supported when possible by a Health Professional.

The purpose of SRE is to enable teachers, health professionals and students to work collaboratively to promote the positive emotional and physical aspects of relationships. The specific aims and objectives of the SRE programme can be found in Appendix 1. Throughout all years it is supported by work within the Beliefs and Values curriculum (especially regarding marriage and some cultural or religious beliefs and customs). Other aspects of the Course 42 programme (particularly with regard to drugs education and peer pressure) also closely support SRE.

The SRE Programme

- The programme is designed so that it identifies learning outcomes appropriate to the student's age, ability and gender. It takes into account the necessity for extra assistance for students with specific difficulties (e.g. a signing assistant where appropriate for students with hearing difficulties) and allows for differentiated teaching by utilising supporting adults, and small group work.
- Clyst Vale staff and health professionals are trained, and therefore have a sound basic knowledge of SRE issues and are confident in their ability to teach sex education and discuss sex and relationships. They also have an understanding of the role of schools in contributing to the reduction of unwanted teenage pregnancies and in promoting sexual health.
- A safe and supportive teaching environment is offered by the use of ground rules developed in collaboration with the students. These promote tolerance of others (including differences in sexuality, religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds) and prevent disclosure of personal information within the classroom. Students are able to work in small groups supported by the teacher or health professional, with a spokesperson reporting back and/or whole group discussion as appropriate.
- Some vulnerable or SEN groups have a separate SRE programme delivered which is tailored to their level of understanding.
- Students are encouraged to consider levels of risk and make informed judgements about their actions.
- Information is given on local support services for young people such as sexual health and drug agencies.

- Student's views are influential in the process of SRE, with the use of questionnaires at various stages and adaptations to the curriculum being made as necessary.
- Parents who wish to raise any concerns that they may have regarding these issues, should contact the Vice Principal, Mr A Green.

Content

The SRE content follows closely two Core Themes in the PSHE Association Guidance (October 2014), Health and Wellbeing, and Relationships. Since then material specifically designed to cover the issues surrounding Consent have also been incorporated into the KS3 and KS4 curriculum.

Confidentiality

It is essential that the College's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedure is followed, should this become necessary.

- It is made clear to students at the onset of the SRE programme, that whilst their best interests are being maintained at all times, teachers cannot guarantee confidentiality to a student who makes a personal disclosure. In order to try and pre-empt this happening in the lesson, one of the ground rules used in lessons is "no personal comments".
- Students are also informed of sources of confidential help such as the names of the Child Protection officers, school nurse, Counsellors, GP, online support, or local young person's advice service.
- The school nurse will always encourage students to talk to their parents or carers where possible and offer them support to do so. In certain circumstances, the school nurse may also need to break this confidentiality, specifically if abuse might be suspected and follow the college's child protection and Safeguarding procedure.
- If a personal disclosure is made and confidentiality has to be broken, students will be informed first and supported as appropriate.
- Teachers may teach about contraception and can suggest people from whom a student can get general information (e.g. the local family planning clinic, school nurse, National Brook Helpline etc.).

APPENDIX 1

Aims and objectives of the SRE programme.

1. Facilitating discussion between students about a range of increasingly sensitive issues within a supportive and collaborative framework.
2. Promoting emotional and caring components of relationships, reinforcing and celebrating the positive aspects, not the negative.
3. Encouraging students to acknowledge the importance of feelings and emotions as opposed to the mechanical and physiological components of relationships.
4. Clarification of some pubertal and general physical development issues.
5. Encouraging students to discover that acknowledging ignorance is a powerful step in the acquisition of knowledge.
6. Fostering personal beliefs and values to help individuals understand how these may help them stand up to pressures from others.
7. To develop an understanding that teenage relationships without sex are appropriate but if sex is to be part of the relationship, unprotected sex is not acceptable.
8. Consideration of the consequences and methods to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancy.
9. Improving young people's knowledge about aspects of conception, contraception and the transmission of disease and STI's.
10. Improving young people's understanding of both healthy and abusive relationships
11. Understanding the concept of consent and the law concerning this
12. Negotiating, establishing and challenging ground rules.

The sessions rely on a balance of the skills and expertise of both trained professionals (teacher and health professional). An effective session relies on the sensitive but rigorous classroom management skills of the teacher. The health professional, when present, facilitates discussion on the basis of clinical experience and to add medical credibility.