

BRIMSHAM GREEN SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

1. This policy has been reviewed by the governing body on a regular cycle This updated policy was approved by the governors in December 2009 and will be formally reviewed during 2011/12.

Members of the school staff responsible for co-ordinating the development and implementation of the policy are:

*Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral Care) (Mr R Clammer)
Co-ordinator for Personal, Social and Health Education (Miss P Davies)
Head of Science Faculty (Mrs K Ash)*

Support and advice is received from the School Nurse, South Gloucestershire advisory staff, and from year heads, tutors and science staff as appropriate.

2. POLICY FORMATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

This policy is a development of a school policy which was originally approved by the governing body in March 1988 and which has since been regularly reviewed and re-approved. The school has held a number of opening evenings for parents at which policies and approaches have been explained, opinions sought and workshops held to demonstrate materials and methods used in the classroom.

3. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

- 3.1 Sex and relationships education (SRE), as with all aspects of Personal, social and Health Education (PSHE) should ideally be seen as a co-operative venture with parents, and the learning experiences offered by the school should be complementary to and supportive of the role of parents. All SRE within the school should, therefore, have “due regard for moral considerations and the value of family life”.
- 3.2 All teaching programmes and materials used should be open to inspection by parents, the involvement and consultation of whom should be actively encouraged.
- 3.3 Legal rights of parents regarding sex education

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gave parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school’s programme of sex education, *other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order*. This right was enshrined in section 252 of the Education Act 1996 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This parental right currently extends to all pupils attending the school, including those over compulsory school age, and may be exercised by either parent or a person who has

responsibility or care of the child. However, the government announced in a DCSF press notice dated 5.11.09. , that it will be legislating to alter the right of withdrawal down to the age of 15 from 2011. This will mean, in effect, that parents will not have the right to withdraw Year 11 or sixth form students from Sex & Relationship Education. In practice this will make little difference at Brimsham Green, since very few parents choose to exercise their right of withdrawal at the present time.

Whilst parents are not required to give reasons for their decision, the school would be grateful if parents would voluntarily indicate their reasons for withdrawal so that any possible misunderstanding about the nature of the sex education provided by the school can be resolved. In view of the context for the teaching programme it is, or course, hoped that no parent will feel the need to withdraw a pupil.

- 3.4 Parents will be informed of their right of withdrawal through the school prospectus, school newsletters, and any topic-based workshop evenings. Any parent considering withdrawing their child from sex education is encouraged to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the Deputy Head (Pastoral Care) or PHSE Co-ordinator. Should a parent then wish to exercise their right of withdrawal, they must put their request in writing to the Headteacher.

Details of the PHSE programme will be posted on the school website and we will do our best to draw parent's attention to any particularly sensitive issues which may be coming up. On occasions there will be displays/workshops linked to parents' evenings, therefore giving parents the opportunity to ask questions and view materials in advance.

- 3.5 In the event of a pupil being withdrawn, the school will be happy to provide or advise parents on suitable sex education materials for use at home.
- 3.6 If a child is withdrawn from a class during a sex education lesson, the school will endeavour to provide suitable alternative supervised study arrangements. This will probably be in the study centre, but might be under the supervision of a member of staff in a different teaching group. Under exceptional circumstances it might be necessary to ask a parent to supervise a pupil at home but this would be negotiated in advance.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 To ensure that the school sex education programme meets the needs of all young people in the school and is developmentally appropriate.
- 4.2 To emphasise that sex education is placed within the context of the school's PSE (Personal, Social and Health Education) programme.

- 4.3 To give information to parents about the programme so that they are aware of what will take place and will be aware of opportunities for involvement and consultation.
- 4.4 To provide guidance for all staff (teaching and non-teaching).
- 4.5 To indicate the school's interpretation of all relevant legislation and the Local Authority's policy guidelines on this area.
- 4.6 To indicate how the school's approach to sex education relates to their school policies such as equal opportunities and child protection policies.
- 4.7 To recognise that healthy sexual development both affects and is affected by many areas of one's life, e.g. physical health, emotional and mental health, personal relationships.
- 4.8 To give students the opportunity to discuss and explore the concept of responsibility within relationships and, in particular, to increase the understanding of the responsibility of parenthood.
- 4.9 To give students the knowledge and skills to enable them to develop their own values and attitudes; to be tolerant of those other than their own, and to be able to make informed choices about their well-being.
- 4.10 To help students understand the functioning of their own bodies and those of the opposite sex, and to develop a positive self image.

5. MORAL AND VALUES FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Personal, Social and Health Education has an important role in an individual's development, playing a fundamental part in the total life of the school, both curricular and non-curricular. It is central to relationships and the way of learning, thus preparing young people for responsible lives in the community.
- 5.2 Students acquire knowledge from various curriculum areas, and PSHE helps to underpin any curriculum experience and promote positive self-esteem and confidence.
- 5.3 Within Brimsham Green School, PSHE takes place through specific courses and through cross-curricular themes within the syllabuses of other disciplines, e.g. sex education in science.
- 5.4 Brimsham Green is a SEAL school and believe in the importance of social and emotional aspects of learning. It believes that these must both be taught (through inclusion in all departments' learning outcomes as well as discrete lessons) and "Caught" (through the ethos and practices of the school, and the fact that staff should model appropriate skills and behaviours)
- 5.5 Extra curricular life at Brimsham Green is important and the "hidden Curriculum" is affected by the school's ethos and organisation.

6. ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

6.1 Co-ordinator responsible for planning and delivery.

The programme shall be co-ordinated by the PSHE Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Pastoral Deputy Head.

6.2 Who will teach it?

- (1) Due to the need for a trusting relationship, expertise in appropriate teaching methods and understanding of the aims of the programme, sex education teaching will be carried out almost exclusively by Brimsham Green School staff (either the tutor, year head, year team support staff or school nurse led and co-ordinated by the PSHE co-ordinator).
- (2) Outside speakers will be used on occasion and then in a co-operative teaching situation with a member of school staff. All outside speakers will be carefully vetted for suitability before making presentations to students. As part of the school's safeguarding procedures, outside speakers are never left alone with students. School staff are always present and presentations carefully monitored for effectiveness.

6.3 Training provision

- (i) Training is essential for all and will be an on-going process to ensure all staff are kept updated, and briefed on suitable methodology and content. This will be done through year team meetings and staff INSET sessions.
- (ii) Basic training will be led by the PSHE co-ordinator. However, on occasions it may be appropriate to bring in outside help to advise of any of required training areas, or send staff on external courses. Full use will be made of the local authority's PSHE adviser.

6.4 Methodology

- (i) The teaching methods should be active, participatory and experiential, where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
 - (ii) Teachers should endeavour to answer student's questions honestly and sensitively and in a way that is appropriate to the individual student's developmental needs and, if the question arises in a classroom context, in such a way that takes the context into account.
- (ii) This is a prerequisite for the safe expression of fears and concerns and the exploration of one's own values.
 - (iii) Students need to explore actively issues concerned with personal values in order to make informed choices in their lives. An emphasis on practical skills training related to decision making is therefore essential.

(iv) In order to deal effectively with sensitive and difficult issues it is important for teachers to be able to understand and appreciate the various points of view arising from different cultural and ethnic perspectives. The particular needs of our physically disabled students will also be addressed in all years.

(v) The programme should contain the following elements:

Knowledge: Factual information presented honestly and objectively about (for example) growth and development, aspects of the law, aspects of religious and cultural differences.

Attitude: Students should be encouraged to think about different values and attitudes which are held, particularly with regard to responsibility in moral issues.

Skills: The development of decision-making and assertiveness skills which will enable the students to assess situations and carry out informed choices about their future lives.

6.5 Specific classroom arrangements

- i) The teaching approach demanded in order to achieve the curriculum content should be set within a classroom atmosphere which encourages trust with all.
- ii) Students need to be presented with a balanced view which respects a range of religious beliefs and peoples' experiences.
- iii) As a number of issues are very sensitive and some emotive the class arrangements may vary from single sex groups, half teaching groups or whole tutor groups. This will be based on group dynamics and teacher experience.

6.6 Curriculum entitlement

- i) The personal and social development of pupils is the responsibility of all teachers and a concern with all aspects of the taught curriculum as well as fundamental to the ethos of the school.
- ii) The SRE programme is not just what is taught in the classroom. Students learn from the overall ethos of the school, from the way it is organised, from the environment, from the attitudes of staff, from relationships and from the pastoral support system. There are clear and important links between SRE and the schools emphasis on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) which are both taught and modelled throughout the school.
- iii) The sex education programme, in line with other areas of PSHE, shall contain the notion of a "spiral curriculum", which develops themes from age 11-18, taking into account the age and maturity levels of the students.
- iv) Additional support and intervention will be provided for individuals and groups where a specific need is identified. The school's pastoral team will maintain a network of links with the widest possible selection of external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision can be identified.

6.7 Procedures for reviewing effectiveness of programme

- i) The development of PSHE involves co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation by staff, to check that the aims of the programme are being met and are appropriate, and, most importantly, to help students monitor their personal learning. This process develops self-awareness which recognises achievements and promotes strategies for dealing with needs.
- ii) Reviews will include students, year teams and the consideration of the whole programme.
- iii) Reviews will take place at the end of each unit and annually prior to writing the following year's schedule.

6.8 Resources

Resources need to be selected with care to ensure appropriateness for the group, also familiarity for the member of staff.

Outside speakers are appropriate especially if they are used in conjunction with the members of staff and not used in isolation. Follow up work is essential.

Resources will reflect the chosen methodology. Teacher training will include methodology and familiarity with resources.

6.9 Secondary school liaison with primary school

Wherever possible, the PSHE Co-ordinator will meet with local primary head teachers and will continue with this liaison to ensure continuity. Primary schools will have a copy of Brimsham Green's sex education policy.

6.10 Curriculum Content

The detailed content of the curriculum is contained with the Science and PSHE schemes of work and hand books

6.11 The Science Orders contain the following sex education topics:

Reproduction: (Key Stage 3)

About the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence;

The human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation;

How the foetus develops in the uterus, including the role of the placenta.

Hormones: (Key Stage 4)

The way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of insulin and sex hormones.

Genetics: (Key Stage 4)

At fertilisation , genetic material from both parents combines to produce the individual.

7 **SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

Within its sex education programme, the school must inevitably deal with a range of controversial issues. To make sense of such issues, students need to be provided with factual information, and also to consider a range of moral and legal questions. This should be presented within a framework which encourages and enables students to manage their relationships in a morally responsible and healthy manner. The aim of the school should not be to promote a single or particular viewpoint, but rather to enable the students to reach considered decisions of their own.

7.1 Abortion

The debate is often polarised on this emotive issue. Students should be presented with a balanced view which respects a range of moral and religious beliefs and the possible (unknown) experiences of some pupils. It is important to distinguish between fact and opinion (eg the stage at which human life commences) and clarification of values (eg whether there are circumstances under which abortion may be a positive choice).

7.2 Contraception

It is important that students gain accurate knowledge and understanding of contraception, and the confidence to talk easily about the subject, some time before it is needed. It is not the role of the teacher to give individual contraceptive advice to students. If approached by a pupil for advice on these or other aspects of sexual behaviour, the teacher should, wherever possible, encourage the student to seek advice from his or her parents and, if appropriate, from relevant health service professionals such as the school nurse or from local clinics.

7.3 Homosexuality

Existing law and official guidance makes it clear that there is no doubt about the legality of objectively and honestly exploring the issues of lesbian and gay sexuality in secondary school sex education lesson. Whilst it is not the role of the school to promote any other forms of sexuality, we take note of the HMI statement that:

“Information about and discussion of homosexuality needs to acknowledge that experiencing strong feelings of attraction to members of the same sex is a phase passed through by many young people but that for a significant number of people, these feelings persist into adult life.”

(HMI Health Education 5-16)

This being the case, caring teachers, whatever their own views, will wish to counteract prejudice and to support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every student, irrespective of sexual orientation. The topic should be treated with sensitivity and understanding, and should acknowledge that we live in a society which encompasses widely differing moral and religious views on the subject. This topic fits into our wider relationships programme, which considers all relationship – friends, family and partners.

7.4 Child Sexual Abuse

The school has a detailed, published policy on child protection which is available to all interested parties. With regards to a sex and relationships education policy there are two dimensions:

The school should ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff are adequately trained in the recognition of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and are aware of the correct procedures to be followed in the event of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

Pupils are equipped with the skills of assertiveness, a lack of guilt or embarrassment about sexual matters, the skills of expression and the feelings of self esteem which will minimise their chances of being abused or suffering abuse in silence.

7.5 HIV/AIDS

Education regarding HIV/AIDS is an important strand within the overall sex education policy and is, indeed, a statutory requirement. Topics covered should include the difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, basic hygiene, risky behaviour (to include safe and unsafe sexual practices) and sources of help and advice.

These should be covered, along with other sexually transmitted diseases, in a context which emphasises the connection with individual decision-making about contraception and relationships. All teaching and non-teaching staff should be made fully aware through the school training programme of the risks and the care they should exercise when dealing with blood spillages or used needles.

Knowledge of any persons with HIV status must be treated as confidential information which requires disciplinary action if breached. The school cannot support discrimination against any member of staff or pupil on the grounds of HIV status whether assumed or real.

7.6 School counsellor

The school currently employs a qualified school counsellor for one day per week. The service provided is normally confidential to clients but the counsellor makes it clear that, if disclosures are made concerning child protection or other issues affecting the child's health or safety, this information may need to be passed on. It is not the role of a counsellor to give individual advice. The pupils will be encouraged to seek advice from his/her parents or appropriate health service professionals.

7.7 Complaints Procedure

The school has a complaints procedure. Any parent who has concerns relating to this topic should, in the first instance, contact Mr Clammer in order that they may be resolved informally. If it is necessary to use the formal complaints procedures, a copy may be obtained from the school office.

8. **OTHER RELATED POLICIES**

- a. Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policy
- b. Drugs Policy
- c. Child Protection Policy
- d. Medicine Needs Policy

9. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

Brimsham Green School is committed to the process of equalising opportunities for all members of the institution regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. The school will promote positive images of the part everyone in the community has to play.

10. **DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY**

The attention of parents and students will be drawn via the school newsletter to the existence of this policy which will be posted on the school website and be available from the school office.

Reviewed and Reapproved : 19/01/2010

Signed : Chair of Pastoral Committee 19/01/2010