



Queenswood School

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX and HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Member of staff responsible: Mrs J. A. Tanner
Last Updated: 5 August 2021
Review Date: 4 August 2023

Aims: to clarify the provision of sex and relationship education to all pupils - teaching about growth and reproduction; how we experience changes in our bodies and feelings; how to have loving relationships and how to keep safe. School has the responsibility for the safety and welfare of its pupils: whilst acting 'in loco parentis'; it is essential that children are fully prepared for their life experiences in the future and are 'armed' for what they will 'discover' in secondary school.

Areas of Responsibility:

The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. We recognise that, from a child's early age, the parents are the key figures in helping their children to cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up: the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings is essentially a matter for the parents. We also acknowledge that teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils and act 'in loco parentis'. Our policy is to support parents in their role but we also believe that sex education is part of the educational entitlement of all pupils. We expect parents to discuss sex education with their children and any developmental changes and associated issues and those that arise within their own families. In turn, we provide education which is age-appropriate and sensitive. Care is taken to assess the class' ability to absorb such material and content. Careful consideration is given to the appropriateness of certain specific subject matter, bearing in mind the particular 'dynamics' and maturity of the class involved.

Parental Consent:

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the more explicit 'Sex Education' lessons, they have the right to do so by law, (but not from the lessons which will deal with relationship issues and not from a lesson which is within the Science Curriculum). Parents would be contacted before the Sex Education lessons were due to begin to seek their consent or withdrawal from the specific lessons. Concerns of parents will be explored and the possibility of adjusting the programmes to accommodate the needs of the child will be given consideration. Any specific sex education material that will be used in sessions will be available for parents to see beforehand if they so wish. Pupils would be protected from teaching materials that may be considered inappropriate bearing in mind the age, religion and culture of the child in dialogue with parents.

Communication and Safeguarding:

In cases where a child needs or seeks guidance, discretion is essential from those involved. Explicit and personal issues must be dealt with in a sensitive, confidential manner – i.e. not in the context of a classroom situation. Teachers must inform the head teacher of such a conversation and the matter will be reviewed by the Head

Teacher who will contact the parents to clarify their wishes on how to deal with the matter. The child's wellbeing is paramount: in exceptional circumstances, where a teacher has reason to believe that a child is distressed or in danger, it may be appropriate for the teacher to speak individually to the child before consulting the parents, in order to clarify their immediate concerns. Parents would be informed of this by the Head Teacher. Effective sex and relationship education brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship and there is a possibility that this may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue: the Designated Safeguarding Lead would consider this in line with the school procedures for Safeguarding. A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

Pupil Welfare:

Parents are encouraged to discuss any worries and concerns with relevant members of staff. Girls reaching puberty may want to consult a female member of staff. In cases of emergency, sanitary towels are available from the first-aiders: in such cases, the appropriate help and support would be available from the teaching staff and parents would be notified. It is important that any child who is questioning their own sexual identity is supported and feels nurtured in the school community.

Provision:

Sex Education is taught within the context of relationships. The aims and objectives of Sex Education is to provide children with age appropriate information; explore attitudes and values and develop skills in order to empower them to make positive decisions about their relationships within families; provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled ; clarify/reinforce existing knowledge; raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others; help pupils understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives; develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle; develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media ; to encourage young people to respect and care for their bodies and be prepared for puberty and adulthood. Through the PSHE Scheme of Work, all children at school develop their knowledge and awareness of growing up and developing their bodies: specific Sex Education is only part of the curriculum for Upper Juniors (Years 5 and 6)

The school is conscious of fulfilling its responsibilities in promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of its pupils. Underpinning these considerations is the school's commitment to family life, marriage and stable relationships, respect for ourselves and others and the need to develop responsibilities for ourselves and those affected by us: these values are essential components of maturity and adulthood - they are desirable and the ideal to which we aspire. It is essential that this is all delivered in an inclusive climate and that respect for others is encouraged. It is the school's duty to encourage children to accept that love can be experienced in same-sex partnerships but no stage is any specific or sexual detail given.

This policy is to be implemented throughout the school and will be assessed annually for its effectiveness and revised if needed.

See also related policies on Child Protection, PSHE and Intimate Care.