

# **NORTHWICK PARK PRIMARY AND NURSERY ACADEMY**

## **POLICY FOR SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION**

### **Policy Aims and Objectives.**

At Northwick Park Primary, the belief is that the child is the focus for learning. Learning about sexuality and relationships is a lifelong process and occurs in both formal (e.g. the classroom) and informal settings (e.g. the home, the playground, the community). Self-esteem and respect for others are the cornerstones of good personal, social and health education and therefore of good sex education. The aim is to equip children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to develop meaningful healthy relationships throughout life. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on home circumstances. It is important to make sure that the needs of all pupils are met in the programmes presented. Young people, need to feel that sex and relationships education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs.

Contained within this policy are aims which endeavour to satisfy a number of groups (acceptability to parents, to governors and for the classroom teacher to be completely comfortable and at ease with any element of the subject material). Reference to specific health related issues (such as diet, safety, behaviour, exercise etc.) are incorporated in the PSHE Policy, although references to these issues will naturally and rightly 'overlap' and be found within this policy.

### **What is sex and relationship education?**

It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, 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 – this would be inappropriate teaching. It has three main elements:

#### **Attitudes and values:**

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
- Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- Learning the value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

#### **Personal and Social Skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;

- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict;
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

### Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

Sex and relationship education should be supported by a school's wider curriculum for personal, social and health education. In this way, schools can ensure that pupils:

- Receive their sex education in the wider context of relationships;
- Are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

### At Northwick Park Primary School

PSHE at Key Stages 1 and 2 is developed through seven broad themes and makes clear what is appropriate in the early primary years and the transition year. The present requirements set out with National Curriculum Science and shown below should be delivered through these seven broad themes and within the context of the National Healthy School Standard to ensure effective provision.

#### Key Stage 1

That animals including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce.

To recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans.

That humans and animals can produce offspring and these grow into adults.

To recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity.

#### Key Stage 2

That the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction.

About the main stages of the human life cycle.

#### The Seven Themes are:

- New Beginnings
- Getting on and Falling Out
- Say no to Bullying
- Going for Goals
- Good to be Me
- Relationships
- Changes

At primary school level sex and relationship education should contribute to the foundation of PSHE by ensuring that all children:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships;
- Are able to name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work;
- Can protect themselves and ask for help and support;
- Are prepared for puberty.

### **Teaching Strategies for Sex and Relationship Education.**

It is essential that children and young people are facilitated to develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships. Partnership between school and parents is the key to success.

There are a number of teaching strategies that can help this, including:

- Establishing ground rules with their pupils;
- Using ‘distancing’ techniques;
- Knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from pupils;
- Using discussion and project learning methods and appropriate materials;
- Encouraging reflection.

Ground rules might be developed as part of the school’s sex and relationship education policy or individually with each class or year group.

For example, one class worked out this set of ground rules together:

- No-one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question;
- No-one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- Only the correct names for body parts will be used;
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

### **Distancing techniques**

Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils’ privacy by always depersonalising discussions.

### **Dealing with Questions**

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.

For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, parent, school nurse, helpline or an outside agency or service.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been

treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information.

- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

### **Discussion.**

Research into what makes sex and relationship education effective shows that discussion encourages learning.

- Draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding.
- Consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics.
- Reflect on their new learning,
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

### **Reflection**

Reflecting is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers can help pupils reflect on their learning by asking questions like these:

- What was it like doing this discussion today?
- What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

### **Working with Parents.**

Partnerships with parents are a high priority for the school. This is essential to effective sex and relationship education.

The teaching of some aspects of sex and relationship education might nevertheless be of particular concern to some parents. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and because teachers therefore act in loco parentis, parents may need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education with the PSHE framework. Teachers and all those contributing to sex and relationship education are expected to work within an agreed values framework as described in the school's policy which must be in line with current legislation.

### **Why Parents are so Important.**

Parents are the key people in:

- Teaching their children about sex and relationships;
- Maintaining the culture and ethos of the family;
- Helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up;
- Preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

## **Consulting Parents.**

Consulting parents, and working in partnership with them regularly on the content of sex and relationship education programmes is important. Parents need to know that the school's sex and relationship education programme will complement and support their role as parents.

## **Parents who withdraw their children**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of lessons involving sex education (as stated in the Education Act, 1993) which naturally extends to seeing the videos and hearing the respective commentary from their teacher/the school nurse, etc.

In the Summer Term, Year 5 parents will be informed by letter about the overt sexual health elements of the curriculum. These will cover issues including bodily hygiene and menstruation. DVDs and other resource/supporting material that will be used with the children will be made available for parents to view so an agreed format for discussing sexual health issues can be formed. Parents will have the opportunity to raise questions, and/or clarify the approach the school will be taking. The Year 5 children are taught this specific part of the curriculum later that term only after parents have been informed.

In the Summer Term, Year 6 parents will be informed by letter about the overt sexual health elements of the curriculum. This will be to continue the work started in Year 5 covering more specific aspects relating to puberty. DVDs and other resource/supporting material that will be used with the children will be made available for parents to view so an agreed format for discussing sexual health issues can be formed. Parents will have the opportunity to raise questions, and/or clarify the approach the school will be taking. The Year 6 children are taught this specific part of the curriculum later that term only once parents have been informed.

## **Working with the Wider Community.**

Delivery of sex and relationship education is not the sole responsibility of schools. Elements of sex and relationship education are also provided by a range of people in the wider community including health professionals, and visitors. People in the wider community have much to offer at all levels of planning and delivering sex and relationship education, bringing a new perspective and offering specialised knowledge, experience and resources.

## **Health Professionals**

The school works closely with the School Health Advisor and an experienced school governor in the development and implementation of the sex and relationship education programmes. Health professionals (especially school nurses) have much to offer:

- They can work closely with teachers in supporting sex and relationship education in the school (complementing the role of the teacher).
- They can help schools work in partnership with parents and make links between the school and other relevant professionals and services such as local GPs.

Health professionals who are involved in delivering programmes are expected to work within the school's sex and relationship education policy. However, when they are in their professional role, such as a school nurse in a consultation, they should follow their own professional codes of conduct (this is the case irrespective of who is employing them).

### **Inclusion/Equal Opportunities**

All children have an opportunity to access education on Sex and Relationships regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual bias, special educational needs or disability. Where necessary, teachers make special provision to ensure that all have access (see Special Needs Policy) and have any individual needs or sensitivities respected (see Child Protection Policy).

Listed below are the policy objectives for pupils attending this school.

1. To encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by providing appropriate vocabulary for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions.
2. To generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
3. To counteract misleading myth and folklore, and false assumptions of 'normal' behaviour.
4. To enable pupils to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, social) and in ages when puberty commences – often within older aged juniors.
5. To provide constant reassurance that change is part of the life cycle and to give help in adjusting to these changes.
6. To recognise the value of loving and caring relationships
7. To understand the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young.
8. To help children affirm their rights and to communicate about personal matters.
9. To develop awareness of sexual identity, to challenge sexism and prejudice in society and to introduce the way we promote equal opportunities.
10. To be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them.

Specific areas to be taught follow in sections appropriate to year groups.

Much of this is within the PSHE curriculum of this school.

### **Foundation Stage/Reception**

An analogy of a pyramid can be used when considering sex and relationships education and the foundations for this pyramid needs to commence as early as possible. Adult existence requires the skills of negotiation, problem solving and a sense of high self-esteem. We need these to begin to develop at an early age.

Some young people will have younger siblings or their mothers may be pregnant. Children of this age may be asking questions about where they or their siblings come from. They may be asking questions about what is happening to their mothers or equally likely offering their teacher explanations of their own.

With any health issues we can find ourselves responding to children's spontaneous questions or comments.

Because the formal lesson on a topic is planned for the future this should not inhibit a teacher from offering an appropriate response to a child's spontaneous question.

Within the broader context of PSHE the discrete Sex and Relationship Education will promote children to know and understand:

- That people live in family groups or networks; each of us belongs to more than one group/family/network and these are different sizes and have different people in them.

### **Key Stage 1, Years 1 and 2**

During these years the programme continues to focus on the broad range of PSHE. Much of the work is reinforcement from previous years. Children will continue to ask questions about where they and others come from. At this age it is likely that they will continue to offer explanations of their own.

Children's explanations are based on their limited understanding of the reproductive process and are usually highly logical if inaccurate, ("I grew from a seed in mummy's tummy"). Explanations offered by adults are usually less so ("You were brought by the fairies"). We need to remain sensitive to this since parents and other relatives who mean well and are trusted by their children will have offered some of these explanations.

To know and understand:

- What the term love means to them.
- That animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- That humans can produce babies and these babies grow into children and then into adults.

### **Key Stage 2, Years 3 and 4**

Years 3 and 4 continue the broad PSHE approach. Years 5 and 6 are usually the time when primary schools target their overt sex education. During these years, a good foundation of concepts can be established or reinforced that will underpin this later work.

To know and understand:

- That there are life processes, including nutrition, movement, growth and reproduction common to animals, including humans.
- The main stages of the human life cycle including death.

## **Key Stage 2, Years 5 and 6**

At Northwick Park Primary Academy these are the years within which 'sex education' takes place. In Year 5 an introduction to overt sexual health education relates to bodily hygiene and menstruation. In Year 6 we will be building upon these lessons and broadening our understanding of puberty. It is important to be sensitive to the concepts and language that young people bring to the learning and relevance to the young people of any health education work. These can only be found through investigation with young people.

For many children the school's programme will simply confirm what they already know or clarify misunderstanding or gaps in knowledge. For others this will be relatively new and their existing concepts may have to be rebuilt. Some children may find this process difficult. We need to give young people space to ask questions safely. We also need to recognise those young people who may wait for some time before they feel able to ask their questions. It is vitally important to inform and ideally work with parents.

### **Year 5 – to know and understand**

- A sound understanding of the menstrual cycle
- That we are likely to experience strong feelings towards others as we grow older and that this is normal.
- Methods of maintaining personal hygiene and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- The human reproduction system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation.

### **Year 6 – to know and understand.**

- The physical and emotional changes that will take place as we approach puberty.
- That the emotional changes that take place as we pass through puberty can be confusing, not everyone will feel the same at the same time and that this is okay.
- Some people, including the media will give us messages and images about sex that may be true or untrue.

### **References.**

- The Social Curriculum – Sex and Relationships Education Guidance for Schools 1999 – Essex CC Learning Services.
- Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DfEE 2000.

### **Review**

This policy was reviewed in December 2014 and will be reviewed again in 2017

