



## **Sex Education Policy**

### **Rationale**

The Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that schools should provide a curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils ... and of society; and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Sex education is the entitlement of each child and is delivered within the context of a broad and balanced programme of health education throughout the school.

It enables them to acquire skills for developing relationships and for making informed decisions.

### **Purposes**

Through this policy we aim to:

- Ensure that Sex Education is fully integrated into the curriculum.
- Foster self esteem and respect for others
- Nurture a partnership between caring adults - governors, staff and parents - to ensure sensitive support for children as they grow and mature.
- Create an environment where children can enjoy relationships based upon mutual trust and respect.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.

As a result the effective teaching of sex education will increase pupils' knowledge of:

- the body
- human growth and development
- families, parenting and life cycles
- safety and child protection

### **Guidelines**

Sex and relationship education should be firmly rooted in the framework for PSHCE.

1. Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It should not be delivered in isolation. It is rooted within the policy for PSHCE and the National Curriculum, which lie at the heart of our policy to raise standards and expectations for all pupils.
2. The objective of sex and relationship education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development.

3. The PSHCE policy will help pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives. It will play an important role, alongside other aspects of the curriculum and school life, in helping pupils deal with difficult moral and social questions.
4. Pupils need to be given accurate information and helped to develop skills to enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others and for the purpose of preventing and removing prejudice.
5. Sex and relationship education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
6. A specific programme for year 6 children will be run each year. Parents will be invited in to discuss the contents of the programme if they wish and to view any resources to be used so that they are able to support their child. Parents have the statutory right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons.

### **Additional Guidance**

#### **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; these must be looked at in the context of primary age children:

#### **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; and  
 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 with 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; and  
 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;

### Issues Considered Whilst Developing the Policy for Sex and Relationship Education

Sex and relationship education is generally delivered through the PSHE and Citizenship framework, therefore is within the policy on PSHE and Citizenship.

Materials used in school must be in accordance with the PSHCE teaching programmes and the law. Inappropriate images should not be used nor should explicit material not directly related to explanation. We will ensure that pupils are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate including those available on the internet, having regard to the age, maturity and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

At Barnby Dun, the views of parents, staff and pupils are taken into account.

Guidance recommends that all primary schools should have a sex and relationship education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children. It should ensure that both boys and girls know about puberty and how a baby is born – as set out in Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Science Curriculum. Section 3 gives further information on what should be taught at these stages and how this should be rooted in the PSHCE teaching.

All children, including those who develop earlier than the ‘average’, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes. In the early primary school years, education about relationships needs to focus on friendship, bullying and the building of self-esteem.

Meeting these objectives will require a graduated, age-appropriate programme of sex and relationship education. Teaching methods need to take account of the developmental differences of children and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

#### Clear parameters on what children are to be taught in the years 5 / 6 include:

Changes in the body related to puberty, such as periods and voice breaking; when these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these; and how a baby is conceived and born.

#### Relationships

Young people, when asked about their experiences of sex education at school, often complain about the focus on the physical aspects of reproduction and the lack of any meaningful discussion about feelings, relationships and values. Sex and relationship education set within the policy for PSHCE across the four key stages significantly redress that balance. It helps young people to respect themselves and others, and understand difference. Within the context of talking about relationships, children should be taught about the nature of family life, loving relationships and bringing up children. Teaching in this area needs to be sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances.

#### Ethnicity

Research with families shows that children cannot always rely on their parents to talk to them about puberty or sex. Some young women and young men from some minority ethnic communities may rely on schools as their main, and sometimes only, source of

sex education. It is important that we seek the views of parents when seeking their permission for their child to receive sex education in years 5 / 6.

### Special educational needs and learning difficulties

Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationship education. Sex and relationship education should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives.

All staff including support staff, physiotherapists, nurses and carers as well as teachers should follow the school's sex and relationship education policy when working with pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties.

### Specific Issues when Teaching Sex and Relationship Education

Parents and pupils may need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education within the PSHCE framework. Teachers and all those contributing to sex and relationship education are expected to work within agreed values, which must be in line with current legislation. It is accepted that some teachers may need support to deliver the programme sensitively and effectively. This would usually be sought from the School Nurse.

### Sex and Relationship Education with PSHCE

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

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

The combined PSHE and Citizenship policy is developed through four broad themes and makes clear what is appropriate in the early primary years and the transition year Y6/7. The present requirements set out within National Curriculum for Science and shown below should be delivered through these four broad themes and within the context of the National Healthy School Standard to ensure effective provision. The four themes are:

- ✓ Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of pupils' abilities;
- ✓ Preparing to play an active role as citizens;
- ✓ Developing a healthier, safer lifestyle; and
- ✓ Developing good relationships and respecting differences between people.

At primary school level sex and relationship education should contribute to the foundation of PSHE and Citizenship 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; and
- are prepared for puberty.

## National Curriculum Science

Key Stage 1 examples from the programme of study:

- 1.b) that animals including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- 2.a) to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans
  - f) that humans and animals can produce offspring and these grow into adults
- 3.a) to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity

Key Stage 2:

1. a) that the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction
2. f) about the main stages of the human life cycle.

### Teaching Strategies for Sex and Relationship Education

It is essential that schools can help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships. Teachers and other staff may need to overcome their own anxieties and embarrassment to do this effectively. 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; and  
Encouraging reflection.

### Ground Rules

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. 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,

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; and  
Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.  
The establishment of an anonymous question box, which would be emptied on a weekly basis and all sensible and appropriate questions would be answered. Children do not need to identify their names on their questions.

### Dealing with questions

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Teachers may be concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground

rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. 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, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;

If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later;

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 promise to 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. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and if a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

### Discussion and project learning

Research into what makes sex and relationship education effective shows that discussion and project learning encourages learning and is enjoyed by pupils. Pupils take part in a structured activity in which they can:

Draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding;  
Practise their social and personal skills;  
Consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics;  
Reflect on their new learning; and  
Plan and shape future action.

### 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 did you learn from the others, especially those who had a different experience or belief from your own?  
What do you think you will be able to do as a result of this discussion?  
What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

### Working with Parents

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; and  
Preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

Parents need support in:  
Helping their children learn the correct names of the body;  
Talking with their children about feelings and relationships; and

Answering questions about growing up, having babies, feeling attraction, sexuality, sex, contraception, relationships and sexual health.

### Consulting parents

At Barnby Dun, parental permission is sought when children are taught specific aspects of sex education, i.e. puberty, menstruation and having a baby. Parents are invited to view the materials and discuss the types of questions that children will ask and the responses that they will receive.

Parents are informed that usually the school nurse will be leading the discussions backed by the class teachers. All aspects are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Parents are able to support the child at home following the sessions on sex education.

### Parents who withdraw their children

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education provided at school except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (The Dfe will offer schools a standard pack of information for parents who withdraw their children from sex and relationship education.)

### Working with the Wider Community

At Barnby Dun, the school nurse is involved in the delivering of sex education. Teachers work with parents both to view the work materials before the teaching of sex education and to discuss the content matter and teaching approach.

### Confidentiality

Staff should ensure that they are familiar with the procedures set out in the Department's Child Protection circular 10/95 – "Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service" and the school's own Confidentiality policy

We must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy should ensure good practice throughout the school which both pupils and parents understand. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

### Child protection

Children cannot learn effectively if they are concerned or frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence in the home. They have a right to expect school to provide a safe and secure environment. Any fears or worries they bring into the classroom should not go unnoticed by staff. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If suspected child abuse is apparent, staff will follow the school's child protection procedures.

There may be rare occasions when a teacher is directly approached by a primary age child who is sexually active or is contemplating sexual activity. This should be viewed as a child protection issue.

In such cases there should be a pathway for dealing with the situation:

The teacher should approach the designated member of staff  
The designated member of staff should make sensitive arrangements, in discussion with the child, to ensure that parents or carers are informed; and  
The designated member of staff should address child protection issues and ensure that help is provided for the child and family.

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