



NEWLAND SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Pride **Aspire** **Excellence**

SEX & RELATIONSHIP POLICY

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Sex and Relationships Policy

Introduction

Newland School for Girls believes that sex and relationships education makes an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing and preparation for adult life in society. It is an integral part of the SMSC programme under the umbrella of the Healthy Schools Scheme. The students in our school come from diverse backgrounds, expressing a spectrum of beliefs and values. Together with our IEB, we have developed a familiarity with the beliefs and attitudes which our range of families have about issues such as sex and relationship education, abortion, contraception, homosexuality and sex outside marriage. The stage of development and the experiences of any group of young people of the same age will be diverse and varied. This fact has clear implications for curriculum content, teaching approaches, and the creation of an appropriate learning environment based on the need to develop in young people respect for each other's differences. The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

Aim of SRE education

The aim of this policy is to communicate to staff, governors, parents/guardians, visitors and students the manner in which SRE will be delivered and supported at Newland School for Girls, in accordance with the *Secretary of State's 2000 guidance on SRE*.

What is effective Sex and Relationships Education?

It is part of lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. Promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society. As well as preparing them at school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In our view, effective sex and relationships education incorporates:

Attitudes and values

Pupils are helped to examine their own and other people's attitudes and values, particularly related to sexual matters, and to respect the rights of others to their own opinions. SRE can help pupils to develop a good self-image and high self-esteem, responsibility and the ability to make informed decisions.

Personal and social skills

SRE encourages the acquisition of skills so that pupils' relationships with others may be positive, fulfilling and respectful. It helps them explore how to be themselves in terms of beliefs, culture and traditions and to respect others. It provides opportunities to develop communication skills, assertiveness within a range of different situations. Emboldening the students to recognise opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Knowledge and understanding

SRE provides information on puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships, gender issues, conception and birth processes, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, prejudice and stereotyping and sex and the law. Thus giving an understanding of the nature and diversity of relationships and sexuality. It can provide an objective and balanced view of sexual matters, correcting any misinformation pupils may have gained. It can give them the information and understanding they need, in accordance with the pupil's background and beliefs.

What is the moral and values framework of Sex and Relationships Education?

SRE is taught within and confirms the moral and values framework of the whole school. This draws on the statement of values by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community contained within the National Curriculum.

- We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.
- We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and to the good of the community.
- We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular, we value families as a source of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.

It is expected of teachers that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not influence their teaching of SRE. They will address pupils' questions with due regard to the beliefs and values of the child's family. The teaching of SRE respects and refers to the beliefs of the child's home background. SRE is also part of the school's provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. It encourages each student to develop confidence and a clear awareness of their own beliefs and values and to develop mutual understanding and respect between students for their diverse beliefs and values.

How is Sex and Relationships Education organised?

SRE is not an isolated subject: it permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, the pastoral system and is informed by the role models given by teachers. Opportunities should be used as they occur for answering pupils' questions and exploring issues as they arise.

All subjects, but particularly Science, Religious education, English and Drama provide a focus for exploring some elements of SRE. Alongside withdrawal days from external speakers and the school nurse team.

The Assistant head alongside the pastoral team and DOLs jointly co-ordinate Sex Education; the assistant head is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme.

How does Sex and Relationships Education relate to equal opportunities?

The school's policy for equal opportunities also underpins the teaching of SRE. Sex and relationship education can act as a basis for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It necessarily involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-esteem and self-worth in a learning environment that recognises and respects difference. We work to ensure that our sex and relationship education is relevant and accessible to all our pupils and that it is appropriate for all levels of understanding and maturity. Catering for all pupils and is respectful of how pupils choose to identify themselves, their sexual orientation and gender identity (emerging). This means that sex and relationships education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may evolve and adapt over time.

How is Sex and Relationships Education taught?

The school recognises the need to begin with pupils' own experiences, beliefs and values and, therefore, places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure atmosphere where they can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about sex and relationships. In order to do this, teachers:

- Establish ground rules with pupils
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect
- Require no open personal disclosures in a class setting
- Use distancing techniques
- Provide opportunities for anonymity by using strategies such as a question box (this also gives the teacher time to consult with colleagues on how to answer unexpected questions from pupils)
- Encourage reflection

The school also draws on a range of teaching methods in order to encourage exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, using active learning methods which involve pupils and help them to personalise information. This also increases the likelihood of the learning being relevant and effective. The school includes activities where pupils' can practise and develop confidence in using communication, negotiation and decision making skills. Student Voice discusses the issues they wish to explore, how they wish to work together, how well lessons are going and what changes need to be made.

The school recognises that some aspects of SRE are a whole school concern and that some aspects can be covered by subject teachers across the curriculum. However, there are aspects which need to be taught separately, including those specifically relating to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Not all teachers are best suited to teach some of these. The school draws on the expertise of the School Nurse and other specialist agencies. Pupils are given a choice about their participation in learning activities related to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Resources are chosen from agencies which represent diverse beliefs, which are appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and religious and cultural background.

Right of withdrawal

Sex and relationships education is part of all students' education and it is hoped that all will participate. However, the school acknowledges that, under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationships education programme except for that part which occurs in the National Science Curriculum. Parents need to be aware, however, that sex and relationships education can occur at any time if it arises naturally from class discussion. They also need to consider whether they want their child withdrawn from all sex and relationships education or just that part which deals explicitly with sexual intercourse and related issues. Discussions on feelings, values and relationships may well not be of concern. Parents wishing to exercise that right are asked to make an appointment to meet the PSHE co-ordinator to discuss their concerns. The school recognises that they are under no obligation to do so, however. The school will provide alternative arrangements.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints about the Sex Education and Relationship programme should be addressed to the Headteacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Sex Education and Relationships will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher – houses and SMSC. She will:

- ensure that the basic entitlement is delivered;
- liaise, observe and discuss with staff any elements of the course which are felt to be potentially contentious;
- ensure that pupils' opinions are considered when planning the programme;
- oversee the work of visitors, speakers and health professionals;
- adjust the programme as is felt necessary.

Appendix A

Policy on Confidentiality

This policy forms an appendix to the school's sex and relationships education policy and its drug education policy and, as such, will be made available to parents. It sets out guidance for all staff about pupil information that they can regard as confidential and that which they cannot. Any visitors to the school who are teaching or working with groups of pupils must also abide by this policy.

1. Any information that a pupil discloses to a member of staff or visitor should not be passed on to other colleagues indiscriminately but should be passed on a "need to know basis."

2. Members of staff should not offer pupils, or their parents, blanket or unconditional confidentiality. Any information concerning the pupil's behaviour that is likely to cause harm to themselves or to others should be passed on to the Headteacher, Child Protection Co-ordinator or HoH. Every school should make known to every parent and child, (if of sufficient age to understand), their confidentiality policy and it should be made clear when and with whom information will be shared.
3. When embarking on a lesson, or a programme of lessons, that may well touch on sensitive and / or controversial issues teachers should clarify with pupils the issue of confidentiality. Teachers should establish ground rules with their teaching groups in order to avoid inappropriate questions and answers in class and group sessions which may lead to personal disclosures.
4. 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 a personal disclosure is made, a teacher should explain that such information can, and should, be kept confidential within the classroom but, that some information may need to be passed on to colleagues, and may well be in the best interests of a pupil to do so.
5. Where a pupil discloses information about physical or sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse the member of staff must pass this information on to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
6. If such disclosed information is to be passed on the pupil should be told of this, know who the information will be passed on to and why and who else in the school, or externally, will have access to the information. The pupil should also be reassured that they will be offered appropriate, ongoing support. However, if this will prejudice the welfare of the child, or hamper an investigation under Section 43 or 47 of the Children's Act, the situation should be discussed with Social Services and / or the legal section should be consulted.
7. In the case of illegal activity of a non-child protection nature, any action that the school takes will always be in the best interests of the pupil. This does not always mean that the police will be informed. In such circumstances the City Council's legal department can be consulted, as can the school's police liaison officer. Hypothetical situations are best discussed with the police liaison officer before they occur rather than as they happen.
8. Some visitors may be working in the school on behalf of an external agency and offering specific advice and support directly to individual pupils. If this is the case their professional code of confidentiality must be shared with the school and any deviation from the policy must be agreed formally with the school and shared with the pupils concerned. When working in a classroom situation, they are bound by relevant school policies. Confidentiality must not be permitted where there are child protection concerns.
9. If such a visitor is working in the school and following a different code of confidentiality in line with their professional protocols members of staff may wish to refer pupils to them before they disclose information to them in order to maintain pupil confidentiality.
10. Members of staff are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. However, it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a school would be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. The reasons for not

informing the parents should be recorded in writing. If a teacher believes a pupil to be in moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage her to tell her parents and seek support from them. The Headteacher or the Child Protection Co-ordinator should always be informed before parents are contacted.

11. Hull Safeguarding Children Board guidelines should be followed in respect of cases concerning child protection. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then s/he should always refer his / her concerns to the Social Services department. While professionals should seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Social Services, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.
12. Pupils should also be informed about where they might seek confidential help, eg the School Health Co-ordinator, their GP.