

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Aims and Objectives

Alec Hunter Humanities College aims to provide all students with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to learn 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.

Key Points

Attitudes and values

- Learn the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
- Learn the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relations for the nurture of children;
- Learn the value of respect, love and care;
- Explore, consider and understand moral dilemmas;
- Develop thinking skills as part of decision-making.

Personal and social skills

- Learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Develop self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learn to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- Develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Manage conflict;
- Learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding

- Learn and understand physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understand human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Learn about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- Learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- Avoid unplanned pregnancy.

The other policies that are related to this are:

Child Protection
Teaching and Learning
Every Child Matters
Healthy Schools
Anti-bullying

Statutory Provisions and DfES Guidance

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 requires teaching about SRE (including education about HIV and AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections - STI's)

DfES Guidance 016/2000 provides clear guidelines about all aspects of SRE.

Guidance 0116/2000 makes it clear that SRE should be 'firmly rooted in the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)'. SRE features clearly in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Citizenship and Science, and in the Guidance for PSHE. It is one of the specific themes which make up the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS)

The College whole SRE programme includes:

- Teaching on relationships, love and care;
- Teaching about the responsibilities of parenthood;
- An equal focus on boys and girls, with separate sex lessons where appropriate;
- A concern to build self esteem;
- Teaching on taking responsibility for one's actions and the consequences of actions in relation to sexual activity;
- The provision of information about different types of contraception (including natural methods), safe sex and local sources of further advice and treatment;
- An understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure;
- Ensuring that students understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

All students have a timetabled PD lesson, every fortnight in years 7 -11. Where possible outside agencies like the school nurse or Drugsline are invited in to support these lessons. In year 8 these lessons are integrated with UEO (Understanding Each Other). This is a pilot scheme set up by the Ministry of Parenting which uses the services of mothers and their babies. The aim is to reduce the numbers of teenage pregnancies by making sure the students are aware of all of the implications in bringing up and supporting a young child.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Moral and Values Framework

Purpose:

It is important that students have their confidence and self-esteem supported whilst being made aware of the responsibilities that attach to sexual activity, the reasons for and benefits to be gained from delaying such activity and of the importance of marriage and stable relationships in family life and the raising of children.

The College is committed to the importance of educating young people to reflect upon their own feelings and values and to understand and respect the feelings and values of others.

The Policy

It is the policy of the College that students in Years 7 – 11 will receive, as part of their curriculum, lessons which foster a knowledge and understanding of:

- the clinical and emotional aspect of human sexuality and reproduction;
- relationships and the nature of marriage in family life and in respect of raising children;
- contraception and sexually transmitted infection.

The College believes it is appropriate that pupils of both genders consider these issues jointly in order to gain a more complete understanding of the processes, emotions and values involved. It is also important that students are given the opportunity, from time to time, to explore and discuss the issues in single gender groups. Consideration needs to be given to the different learning styles of students, especially the difference between boys and girls, in order to ensure that all students can access this important area of the curriculum. All SRE provided in College will be both appropriate and inclusive for all students.

The Rationale

Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. Sex and relationship education goes beyond the biological and addresses the emotional, moral and ethical issues as well as explaining the physical processes and changes that take place. It is important that young people are helped to learn respect for themselves and for others and are able to move with confidence through adolescence into adulthood.

Guiding Principles

Thought needs to be given to the needs of pupils from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds and diverse family units and to those with particular educational needs. Particular care needs to be taken to ensure that all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality, feel the sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Whilst there should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation, staff may deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support where this is needed.

Staff Training

All teachers and other members of staff who are required to teach SRE will have the relevant training and resources.

Teaching strategies and content

Where possible, teachers will provide an interactive learning environment which is motivating and allows pupils to practice relevant skills and make informed decisions based on gained information and knowledge.

Consideration must be given to the different learning styles of children, to ensure that all students can access this important area of the curriculum. Materials used to support learning must be in accordance with the law and should take account of the PSHE Framework whilst giving due consideration to the age, maturation and cultural beliefs of all the students concerned. Images and materials used must not be explicit, where this is not directly related to explanation and should always be managed sensitively. Particular care must be taken if accessing information from the INTERNET in order to prevent students gaining access to inappropriate material.

Organisation of SRE

The main delivery of the SRE programme will be through the developing PD programme. National Curriculum Science topics, such as the mechanics of human reproduction and hormones, are dealt with in Science lessons, but still within the broad College policy.

Continuing Professional Development will be provided on the teaching of SRE where required and external agencies will be used as appropriate. From time to time some aspects of this work may also form part of a themed curriculum day, or part of an assembly programme, linked with charitable or world events.

Whilst teachers have the main responsibility for teaching about SRE in the classroom, liaison with outside agencies and specialists ensures that our students receive an up to date, balanced programme.

PD lessons cover work on relationships in all five years. These are supported by a school nurse wherever possible.

Years 7 and 8 – This is us topic-covering relationships-peers, family, emotional and physical and sex education

Year 9 – Sex education-accidental pregnancies, birth control, STI's, relationships and abuse

Year 10 – Sex education-forming healthy relationships, different kinds of relationships e.g. same sex, disabled etc., contraception, STI's and abuse

Year 11 – Different types of marriages, divorce and impact, abortion, teen challenges, abuse.

Science lessons cover physical and biological changes of puberty in year 7, pregnancy and development of a baby.

There are three main elements of SRE:

- Attitudes and values
- Personal and social skills
- Knowledge and understanding

All schemes of work involving SRE will clearly develop each of the above elements and record them in appropriate detail.

The key aims of SRE at the College are:

- To provide students with clear, up to date and accurate information;
- To enable students to be aware of the needs and sensitivities of individuals and families;
- To enable students to develop healthy and positive relationships as they grow older;
- To raise students' awareness of the responsibilities of individuals and society;
- To help reduce unplanned or irresponsible pregnancy.

Sensitivity is therefore needed at all times to ensure that there is no offence to, or stigmatisation of, any student and that all members of the College community are able to feel of worth and value.

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

The College aims to support parents and carers as the key figures in helping young people to cope with the emotional and physical changes of the growing up process.

The College recognises that it works in partnership with parents and carers as sex educators and seeks to develop this role through consultation with parents and carers about changes to policy and through making available materials used in College.

Parents and carers have a right to withdraw their children from any or all aspects of SRE, except those which form part of the National Curriculum Science programme. It is hoped that few will wish to exercise this right, but should parents or carers choose so to do, the College will offer a copy of the government information pack produced for such situations.

External Agencies and the wider community

The College will make full use of the range of health professionals and other key people who might assist in the delivery of SRE. The College nurse will play an important part in providing individual and group advice to students and staff.

All those who work within the College are expected to work within the College policy and adhere to its ethos. All advice given should be independent of personal views. However, when health professionals are in their professional role, such as giving advice to an individual student, they will follow their own professional codes of conduct.

Confidentiality

Clear ground rules should be set at the start of all SRE sessions, emphasising that no one, including staff, should be asked to divulge highly personal information. Teaching will make clear what is and is not appropriate to discuss or ask of each other.

All staff should make it clear to students they cannot offer or guarantee complete confidentiality of information.

The policy to be followed is:

- to assure students that at all times their best interests will be maintained;
- to encourage students to talk to their parents or carer and give them support to do so (if necessary through setting up an in-school meeting);
- to re-assure students that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate;
- in any case of suspected child abuse, or disclosure, to follow the Colleges' Child Protection Policy;
- to set clear ground rules (as above) at the start of all lessons;
- to ensure that students are informed of a variety of appropriate sources of confidential help.

Should, exceptionally, a teacher learn that a student under the legal age of consent is having, or considering having, sexual intercourse, s/he should seek to persuade the student to talk to their parents or carer. S/he should also ensure that the student has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception, including advice about where to access contraceptive advice and services. Any Child Protection issues should be addressed in the usual way. Should the College have to handle the situation without parental knowledge, the Headteacher should be informed and should monitor, along with the Governors, the frequency of such cases. Health professionals in the classroom are bound by the College's Confidentiality Policy, but in one-to-one counselling by their own professional codes of conduct.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Assistant Headteacher (Healthy Schools) will oversee the whole monitoring and evaluation of the SRE policy and programme. S/he will be supported by the Heads of Science and RE and Pastoral Managers.

The programme will be reviewed annually, in the spring term, in preparation for the coming year and in the light of the current year. Pupils, staff and parents will be consulted concerning their experience of the programme. Lessons will be observed during the year and student attitudes observed and surveyed. These findings, along with informal oral comment from all who have taken part, will inform the review.