



---

# Sex and Relationship Education Policy

**Approved:** September 2016

**Reviewed:** September 2018

## Introduction and Aims

Abbey Park Academy is committed to helping children and young people develop loving and respectful relationships and a responsible attitude to relationships. The programme for sex and relationships education in Abbey Park Academy will aim to take into account the expressed needs of the children and young people.

The aims of the sex and relationships education policy are:

To clarify the provision of sex and relationships education to all children;

To set out the statutory provisions;

To ensure that the sex and relationships education provided by the Academy supports the personal and social development of all students;

To explain the responsibilities.

Abbey Park Academy has a written statement of the policy available to parents (in this policy the term 'parents' refers to those with parental responsibility for a child).

The statement must be drawn up in consultation with the Principal.

The Principal must ensure that any sex education in Abbey Park Academy uses teaching materials which are appropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of children and young people concerned.

Parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the Academy's sex education programme without giving reasons.

It is Abbey Park Academy policy that the views of parents must be borne in mind when developing a sex and relationships education policy. The Academy will ensure that parents are invited to comment on the extent to which the Academy's policy reflects their wishes and the culture of the community served by the Academy.

### **The Purpose of the Policy**

Sex and relationships education will be delivered through the PSE curriculum. Abbey Park Academy's guidance on the content is contained in Appendix 1.

## **The Academy's Sex and Relationships Education Programme**

It is Abbey Park Academy policy that the Academy should have a sex and relationships education programme which supports the personal and social development of all children, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility free from any abuse.

The objectives of the Academy's sex and relationships education programme are:

- i. To explain what children and young people know, understand, think and feel and to identify their needs;
- ii. To encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by using appropriate words for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions;
- iii. To create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on relationships and sexual matters can take place without embarrassment;
- iv. To counteract misleading myths and folklore;
- v. To provide constant reassurance that change is part of the life cycle and to give help in adjusting to such change;
- vi. To enable children to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, social) and in ages when puberty or social activities develop;
- vii. To learn to respect each other as individuals, and to encourage boys and girls to understand and honour one another;
- viii. To recognise the value of loving and caring relationships and the place of intimacy within them;
- ix. To appreciate the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young;
- x. To understand and respect cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality;
- xi. To help children and young people know their rights and responsibilities;
- xii. To promote personal safety and self esteem so that children and young people are able to resist unwanted touches or advances and can communicate about such matters and seek advice;
- xiii. To develop growing understanding of risk and safety and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe;
- xiv. To be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them;
- xv. To be aware of the law and sexual behaviour.

The sex and relationships education programme will teach about relationships, love, care and responsibilities.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people and because teachers therefore act in loco parentis, parents need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationships education.

Children need to be taught to behave responsibly towards sex and relationship issues and be able to make informed decisions.

In order to help children make informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. The participation of children in lessons is essential in order to encourage them to learn from others and help them to use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. This requires the use of a balanced range of teaching methods. The Academy will ensure that a structured approach will be used to inform children at reception and through the various key stages.

### **Teaching Methods**

Sex and relationships education will be carried out in a variety of different ways and by different specialists as well as teachers.

The programme of study for sex and relationship education will demonstrate:

- i Progression: This extends from Reception through the Key Stages with age appropriate language, concepts and content increasing in depth and complexity as the children mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- ii Relevance and differentiation: Teachers come to know the levels of development of their children; they are able to draw out existing knowledge and needs and build on them appropriately.
- iii Integration: Sex and relationships education will be integrated into the competency-based curriculum and into other relevant areas of the Academy curriculum.

Sex and relationships education will not be isolated, taken out of context or overemphasised in anyway.

A sex and relationships education programme is not just what is 'taught' in the classroom. Children and young people learn much from the overall ethos of the Academy – from the attitudes of staff, from relationships, from gender and other issues. It is important that all staff, whether directly involved in the programme or not, discuss the Academy's approach to sex and relationships education in the broad sense. With increased understanding and support, most teachers will feel able to make some positive contribution to the 'whole' curriculum.

It is an essential part of Abbey Park Academy's policy that the following ground rules are observed in all teaching about sex and relationships:

- no-one (teacher or child/young person) will be required to answer a personal question;
- no-one will be forced to take part in any discussion;
- only the correct scientific name for body parts will be used ; and
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual manner.

### **Pastoral Support**

Sexuality is an important part of living and learning but it may present some individuals with worries and tension at certain times in their lives.

The quality of support available for individual children and young people worried or disturbed by some aspect(s) of their development, relationships or environment is of prime importance.

Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of children and young people.

Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual children, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It will require skilled judgement to know when to counsel and when, and how, to refer for specialist counselling and support.

### **Morals and Morality**

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of sexuality and relationships. The programme will respect individual difference – inspired by cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds – and it will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life which are common to all faiths and societies.

### **Relationships**

Relationships have an important part to play in sex education. Friendship, making relationships, valuing friendship, friendship breakdown and loss will be topics in the early part of the programme. Assessing personal qualities, friendships together with relationships within the family, will be considered together with roles, avoidance of stereotyping and acknowledging different attitudes and influences.

### **HIV/AIDS/Sexually Transmitted Infections**

The publicity in public health campaigns and strong media attention has put AIDS into the language of even very young children.

Children and young people in all age groups need to know about the dangers with HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, basic hygiene and risky behaviours (for younger children and young people for example, picking up discarded needles or any skin piercing).

All need to learn that there are no risky groups, only risky behaviours, and that there is no danger from persons with HIV or AIDS in any normal social contact.

### **Aspects of sexual behaviour raised outside the sex education programme**

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the Academy's sex education programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education as such, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect student' and parents' views and sensibilities.

The Northern Education Trust Board expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that they will be conversant with this policy document and act accordingly.

### **Homosexuality and LGBT**

The Northern Education Trust Board requires the Academy to take account of the anti-discrimination provisions in the Sexual Orientation Regulations, and to ensure that any information about sexual orientation is fair and balanced.

### **Sexuality and physical development**

The awareness of self and physical changes that occur are important in sex education, including development and puberty (physical/mental and social development) and acceptance of the nature of the sexuality of others together with the pressures imposed by such as peers and the media.

### **Visiting Speakers**

Appropriately qualified visiting speakers may be used to help enhance the sex and relationships education programme. Where they are used, they will be required to conform to this policy statement. Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual students.

### **Confidentiality**

Teachers are required to adhere to these procedures with regard to confidentiality between themselves and children and you people.

Teachers understand that they cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality to children and young people seeking advice on matters relating to relationships and sexual relations. The Academy recognises that because the parent's role is central they must be informed of any matter regarding a child's sexual health. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the Academy would handle information without parental knowledge. In these circumstances it is likely that the Academy Child Protection procedures would be followed.

Children and you people should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. IF confidentiality has to be broken, the child should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed.

Children should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so. If there is evidence of abuse, the Academy's child protection procedure should be adhered to, ensuring that students are informed of sources of confidential help.

### **Equal Opportunities**

In developing and implementing programmes of study under this policy Abbey Park Academy will take into account its equal opportunities policy.

### **Responsibilities**

The Northern Education Trust Board is responsible for the statement of the ethos underpinning the policy and for making and keeping under review Abbey Park Academy's policy on sex and relationships education.

The Sub Committee is responsible for agreeing and periodically reviewing the Academy's sex and relationships education programme which will take into account Abbey Park Academy's policy and the governor who has special responsibility for sexual health and relationship is Michael Goddard.

The Sub Committee will ensure that the Principal, staff and young people and parents are consulted before the programme is determined. The Sub Committee will periodically review the programme and before making amendments will consult the Principle, staff, parents and children and young people as appropriate.

The Principle will advise the Sub Committee on the policy and programme and its implementation in the Academy. The Principle will ensure that the Academy's policy and programme are coordinated by a senior member of staff.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that any teaching on sex and relationships or any advice and guidance they may give to children and you people is in accordance with this policy, current health guidelines and best education practice.

## Appendix 1

### Guidance for Staff

- 1.1 This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. (In this policy statement, “parents” means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)
- 1.2 It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents.
- 1.3 It is natural for caring adults to want to protect children and young people from information, attitudes and lifestyles which they themselves find distasteful. However it is important to recognise the power of confusion caused by ‘informal’ learning from television, radio, magazines, newspapers, gossip, jokes and various other sources.
- 1.4 Education within the curriculum can do much to dispel myths, reduce fear and anxiety, clear up misunderstanding and counteract prejudice.
- 1.5 It is important that our children and young people develop understanding and attitudes based on values which prepare them to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.
- 1.6 Sex and relationships education will be part of the curriculum but will not be taken out of context or overemphasised in any way. Sex and relationships education is not intended to encourage unlawful sexual activity.
- 1.7 The policy is based on the belief that sex and relationships education:
  - Is an integral part of the learning process, beginning in childhood and continuing into adult life;
  - Should be provided for all children and young people including those with physical, learning or emotional difficulties;
  - Should encourage consideration of values, moral issues, sexuality, personal relationships and the development of communication and decision-making skills; and
  - Should foster self-esteem, self-awareness, the skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experiences and a sense of moral responsibility.