

HARRIS ACADEMY MERTON

SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY 2011-12

RATIONALE

The teaching of sex and relationship education at Harris Academy Merton, using an integrated and consistent approach, is an important aspect of students' education. Sex and relationship education includes planned opportunities to support the development of self-confidence and relationships, enabling students to participate harmoniously in the wider community. The policy aims to promote an understanding of the range of family groups and other people who contribute to providing students with the care, love and support they need to grow and develop. While SRE includes the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health, it does not promote sexual activity, or any particular sexual orientation.

The policy has been developed to ensure that staff and parents/carers are clear about the statutory requirements regarding sex and relationship education and that the students receive their educational entitlement. Through its implementation, the school will meet specific aspects of the legal and statutory requirements, which are outlined in Appendix A.

THE MORAL AND VALUES FRAMEWORK

Sex and relationship education is required to be taught within a moral framework. Students will learn about moral values through all aspects of school life and all curriculum areas, not just sex and relationship education. The moral and values framework for the delivery of sex and relationship education therefore promotes the whole school aim: -

"In the context of a multi ethnic school, to firmly oppose racism and sexism; we intend to enable each student to take an informed and responsible part in the adult world, including a part in the economic and social life of the community."

The Legal Framework: The Academy's obligations

The Education Act 1996 consolidated all previous legislation, and key points related to SRE are:

- The sex education elements of the National Curriculum Science Order are mandatory for all pupils of primary and secondary school age. These cover anatomy, puberty, biological aspects of sexual reproduction and use of hormones to control and promote fertility.
- Secondary schools are required to provide an SRE programme which includes (as a minimum) information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.
- Other elements of personal, social and health education (PSHE), including SRE, are non-statutory.
- Governors are also obliged to produce a Sex Education Policy outlining the content and organization of that curriculum and to make copies available for inspection by parents and, if requested, provide a copy free of charge.

“Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any SRE provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the national curriculum for science).” SRE Guidance, (DfE 0116/2000) updated July 2011.

Parents who have concerns about the content of SRE lessons should contact the PSHE co-ordinator for more information about the course.

In the National Curriculum Science Order at Key Stage 3, there is a requirement for all students to be taught about human reproduction and the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence. (A parent cannot withdraw its son/daughter from this).

AIMS OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

The Academy governors believe that sex and relationship education is important to provide knowledge and encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes to allow our students to manage their lives in a responsible and healthy way. Parents/carers have a major responsibility to help children cope with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. The Academy will support parents in this task and ensure that all children are adequately and equally informed.

Taking account of the age, maturity and needs of the students, sex and relationship education aims to:

- Ensure that the Academy Sex Education Programme meets the needs of all young people in the Academy and is developmentally appropriate.
- Emphasise that sex education is an integral part of the Academy’s Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education Programme.
- Provide guidance for all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and outside visitors.
- Include all relevant legislation and Policy Guidelines in this area.
- Ensure that sex education relates to the Academy’s Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies.
- Give clear information, developing an awareness and understanding of the human body.
- Help students to understand and express their feelings by providing the vocabulary, developing confidence and communication skills.
- Develop an understanding and valuing of other people’s beliefs, needs and feelings.
- Equip students with the skills needed to develop a range of relationships and encourage respect and consideration for others.
- Develop an understanding of the individual’s ability to make healthy choices and encourage personal responsibility in all forms of behaviour.
- Provide information about agencies, which can give support and information on health and related issues.
- Encourage self-esteem.

ORGANISATION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

Sex and relationship education will be co-ordinated by the Co-ordinator of PSHE, supported by the Principal, Vice Principal and Directors of Faculty. Aspects of sex and relationship education, addressed through the taught curriculum, will be planned by the teacher with responsibility for drugs, sex and relationship education, and delivered with support from outside agencies including the school nurse where appropriate.

Delivery will be through agreed topics, planned aspects of Science, RSE, and school assemblies. All aspects of SRE will be presented in a balanced way, taking into account the cultural diversity within the school.

a) Knowledge and Information:

Key Stage 3 - Puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships, gender issues/conception and birth, contraception, HIV/AIDS, safer sex, helping agencies/sex and the law, life stages.

Key Stage 4 - Birth processes, abortion, fostering and adoption, genetic inheritance, early parenting, sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS), sexual lifestyles, helping agencies, prejudice and stereotyping, different faiths and cultures.

Issues will be presented in an objective and balanced way, with students being encouraged to consider their attitudes and values within our values' framework. They will be made aware of the difference between fact, opinion and religious belief.

b) Values and Beliefs:

As well as knowledge and information, students will be encouraged to consider the importance of the following values, which are derived from the Academy's value system:

- respect and valuing of themselves and others
- understanding and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- responsibility for their own actions
- responsibility to the Academy, their family and the wider community
- the ability to formulate and discuss their views whilst respecting those of others.

c) Skills and abilities:

Students will be encouraged to develop skills in:

- communication, including the making and keeping of relationships
- assertiveness
- decision-making
- recognising and using opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Sex and relationship education incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships. We seek to ensure that students have access to sound, factual information on these matters. Students' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular teacher review processes will inform discussion about the successful implementation of the policy. Judgments about its success can also be made through gathering evidence from: -

- the wider school staff, on how the policy supports them
- parents and governors, about the clarity of the information provided
- students, and how RSE provision is meeting their needs.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Child protection, sexual abuse

The Academy is legally required to refer concerns regarding child protection issues, including sexual abuse, to other agencies such as Social Services. This will mean that sometimes Academy staff need to support an investigation into the care of individual students attending the Academy. The investigation does not mean that accusations are being made, but that a concern is being looked into.

Confidentiality and Advice:

Students will be made aware that some information cannot be held in confidence and that certain disclosures will lead to certain actions. Staff will adhere to the following procedures:

- Disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse will invoke the Academy's Child Protection procedures.
- Disclosure of pregnancy to any member of staff should be referred to the designated Child Protection Officer, and followed up by the SRE teacher who will contact the appropriate agency.

It is also perfectly appropriate for staff to re-direct a student to a professional with relevant expertise in a particular area such as the school nurse.

Where a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff, and he/she finds the subject matter difficult to deal with, it is not a breach of confidentiality to discuss the matter with a Line Manager.

These guidelines are intended to ensure that staff use their professional discretion, whilst also operating within a legal framework. It is important that staff know that it is not a requirement that they deal with a student beyond the referral stages, as there are designated staff/officers, both within the Academy and within Social Services, who are responsible for implementing investigations and offering support, etc, to students.

Answering difficult questions

If a student asks an explicit or difficult question, staff should use their professional judgment in deciding the best way to answer it. This may be through individual work or discussion with the student. If a staff member is concerned, they can refer the matter to the SRE teacher or CP officer.

Harassment and bullying

Students come from a variety of backgrounds and all are entitled to learn in a supportive environment, free from fear. Some students may use sexually related or homophobic language as a way to harass others. This is unacceptable and will be dealt with as any other form of harassment, through the school behaviour and discipline procedures.

An understanding of human difference, including sexuality, is an important aspect of education and will be addressed as appropriate through the curriculum.

Reviewed by: Deanne Bradshaw-Parr, August 2011

Next review: July 2012.