

# Sex and Relationships Education Policy

## ***Related Documents:***

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- PSE (LLL) Handbook
- Relationships Policy
- Science Schemes of Work
- Counselling Guidance

## ***National Documents:***

- ‘Sex and Relationships’ Draft Guidance W.A.G. 019/2010



## Sex and Relationship Education

### Introduction and rationale

The objective of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) at Monmouth Comprehensive School is to help and support pupils through their physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development. Effective SRE is also essential if young people are to make responsible and informed decisions about their lives. A successful programme will help students learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. It should prepare them to develop considered attitudes, values and skills, which influence the way they behave.

The Education Act 1996 states that the Governing Body and Head teacher shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered student at a maintained school, it is given in such a manner as to encourage those students to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. Sex education is a statutory part of the basic curriculum for all secondary school aged learners registered at a maintained school. Schools should also make, and keep up to date, a separate written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sex education, and make copies of the statement available for inspection (at all reasonable times) by parents of registered pupils at the school and provide a copy of the statement free of charge to any such parent who asks for one.

SRE is about understanding the importance of stable and loving personal relationships, respect, care, and the building, maintaining and at times repairing of successful relationships with friendship groups and the wider community. Where SRE is given, pupils should be taught about the nature and significance of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up of children. Nevertheless, the Welsh Government recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside of marriage. We live in a diverse society and students come from a variety of family backgrounds. Teachers should take care to approach all students with sensitivity and respect and ensure that there is no stigmatisation of students based on their home circumstances".

(Sex and Relationships Education in Schools, Circular 019/2010, WAG 2010)

Monmouth Comprehensive School actively participates in the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS). The WNHSS National Quality Award provides schools with a framework for the development of personal development and relationships. The Sexual Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for Wales 2010 - 2015 highlights the importance of school based SRE and the role that it plays in a child's sexual health development and behaviour.

The school was awarded the National Quality Award in 2015.

### **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 the decision-making.

### **Personal and social skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for 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;
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay; and
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

## How is Sex and Relationship Education delivered?

Sex and relationship education is a part and parcel of our whole school approach to building positive relationships through meaningful discussions about feelings, and values. Sex and Relationships form an integral part of the Integrated Curriculum that build on skills development at primary phase. Young people learn best when they are known well and have a secure relationship with their teachers. This is particularly important when discussing sex and relationships. The curriculum structure at MCS allows for young people to discuss issues around sexual health and activity within a safe and secure relationship. Form Tutors are supported by our on-site health professional through learning workshops and on-going support.

The skills essential for sexual health are developed and built upon year on year and Progress Leaders evaluate and review the progression of skills each year to ensure ease of continuity and secure development.

The school's commitment to a restorative ethos allows young people to be confident in articulating their thoughts and feelings and expressing their needs and their perspective this develops their relationship with self and therefore be secure in their relationships with others.

The SRE programme is taught in mixed gender group. Involvement of external agencies such as the school nursing team helps to enrich the delivery of SRE but does not replace SRE within the taught curriculum. Outside agencies are made aware of their role within the delivery of SRE and are provided with a copy of the school's SRE policy. At Key Stage 3 the SRE programme will provide learners with the opportunity to understand the importance of keeping the mind and body safe and healthy along with the features of relationships including marriage. Learners will also be provided with opportunities through the context of relationships to learn about contraception, STIs and HIV. National Curriculum Science also offers students the opportunity to study the basic structure and function of cells, tissues, organs and organ systems and how they support vital life processes.

Key Stage 4 the SRE programme will provide learners with the opportunity to accept personal responsibility of keeping the mind and body safe and healthy along with developing a responsible attitude towards personal relationships. Learners will also be provided with opportunities to learn about the importance of sexual health and the risks involved in sexual activity including potential sexual exploitation and the range of sexual attitudes, relationships and behaviors' in society.

At Monmouth Comprehensive School high-quality teaching ensures that the SRE programme meet the needs of all students. The SRE programme and the strategies for learning are adopted to meet individual learning needs. Some pupils will require extra support in small groups or one to one sessions to reinforce SRE learning.

## Use of materials

Materials used in school are in accordance with the PSE framework document and the law. As far as possible Monmouth Comprehensive School ensures that students are protected from inappropriate materials, having regard for the age and cultural background of the students.

Monmouth Comprehensive School also have a filter system to prevent students from accessing unsuitable materials on the internet.

## Details of where Sex and Relationship Education is found

Examples PSE Framework (see Individual S.O.W. for more details):

Year 8 – Self-esteem, Personal Hygiene, Journey of the Sperm, issues surrounding STI and contraception

Year 9 - Body image, keeping safe

Year 10 - Mental Health and relationships sexual health

Year 12/13 - Keeping safe

N/C Science Curriculum:

History – Role of Women

Geography – Social aspects of aspects of population/demographics

## Working with Parents and the Community

At Monmouth Comprehensive School we will work with parents/carers to build positive and supporting relationships in the relation to the teaching of SRE. To promote this we will:

- Inform parents/carers about contents of the SRE policy, curriculum planning and resources via school newsletters, school prospectus
- Consult with parents/carers about the content of the policy and involve them in the reviewing process and
- Discuss any issues that parents may have in relation to this policy or the delivery of SRE

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the SRE programme. However, there is no right of withdrawal from any National Curriculum (science) provision. We at Monmouth Comprehensive School would always wish to discuss any worries or concerns that parents/carers may have, and would encourage them to talk to the head teacher. All requests to withdraw children must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors at the school.

## Additional Needs

All students regardless of learning difficulties are included in sex and relationship education. Teachers may find that they have to be more precise and plan work in different ways in order to meet the individual needs of children with learning difficulties.

## Teaching Sensitive Issues

Some aspects of the SRE programme will be sensitive to students and adults and we will endeavour to lessen any concerns through our well planned programme; with access to balanced factual information. Each class will establish clear ground rules (see Relationships Policy) to create a balance between students feeling respected and safe, and protecting individual privacy. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of SRE and both students and teachers will avoid sharing personal information. Distancing techniques will also be used to help pupils to discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a 'safe' environment.

Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Teachers should deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support.

## Personal beliefs of teachers

Teachers and all those contributing to sex and relationship education are expected to work within the PSE framework. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of their students. They are in a particular position of trust.

## Contraception Advice

Trained staff and Health Professionals are able to give young people full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception and their effectiveness.

Trained teachers and Health Professionals can also give students individually and as a class – additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and where necessary, treatment. However, the key task for the school is, through appropriate information and effective advice on contraception and on delaying sexual activity, to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancy.

## Counselling

Monmouth Comprehensive School provides one to one counselling as part of the school support and guidance for students. Where ever possible students are encouraged to inform their parents or guardians about discussions or outcomes regarding sexual practise. (See Counselling Guidance)

## Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be alarming for girls if they are not prepared. The PSE programme with support from our school health professionals prepares girls for menstruation and supports them through it.

## School Health Professionals

Many schools are already working closely with health professionals in the development and implementation of their sex and relationship education programmes. Health professionals such as doctors and nurses (especially school nurses) have much to offer:

- They can work closely with teachers in supporting sex and relationship education in the school (complementing the role of the teacher);
- They can help schools in partnership with parents and make links between the school and other relevant professionals and services such as local GPs, family planning clinics, Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics etc;
- They can tell pupils about the health services that are available in the area and help them develop the confidence and skills to make good use of them;
- They can give pupils confidential support and advice, perhaps through services such as drop-in sessions; and



- They can provide specific and up-to-date knowledge about sexual health and well being and contraception.
- Instructions of the Headteacher. However, when they are in their professional role, such as a school nurse in a consultation with an individual pupil, they should follow their own professional codes of conduct (this is the case irrespective of who is paying them).

## **Confidentiality**

Teachers cannot offer students unconditional confidentiality. On the rare occasions when a student discloses information to a teacher / member of school staff directly the following confidentiality policy will be followed:

- Remind students that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality;
- Encourage students to talk about any worries and concerns they have with parents/carers;
- Ensure that the student has been counselled adequately by an appropriate member of staff and informed about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access sexual health services
- Always follow the school's Safeguarding Policy if there are child protection concerns.

If a student discloses that they are sexually active or contemplating sexual activity then this is a concern and the school's designated Safeguarding Officer (Mr Andy Williams) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers (Mr Vaughan Davies or Mr Darryl Williams) should be consulted.

## **How is sex and relationship education monitored/evaluated?**

The SRE/PSE curriculum will be monitored and evaluated. Scrutiny of planning, work samples and lesson observations will help to clarify needs such as resources, staff training, and the delivery of SRE through age-appropriate learning strategies. The Pathways Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of opportunities for the students' personal and social development. The relevant Progress Leader will also identify training needs for relevant staff and dissemination of best practice.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed every two years, when the learning outcomes achieved can be properly evaluated. The effectiveness of the policy will be reported to the Governing Body as part of the review process.

## Appendix A

### Teaching Strategies for Sex and Relationship Education

This section looks at some practical strategies for teaching sex and relationship education. Schools may already be making use of these in their programmes.

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.

Some teachers will need training and support, perhaps by teaching or by inviting visitors from outside services or agencies.

### 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, one class worked out this set of ground rules together:

- 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.

### Distancing techniques

Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions. For example role play can be used to help pupils 'act out' situations. Case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, and visits to theatre in education groups can all help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment. Some of these methods are listed below under discussion and project learning.

## Dealing with questions

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are 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, such as a school counsellor, 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 remain 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;
- Practice their social and personal skills;
- Consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics;
- Reflect on their new learning; and
- Plan and shape future action.

Active learning is most effective when pupils are working in groups. Methods include discussion techniques such as the use of circle time, case studies and project work.

Teachers should also assess the usefulness of providing factual information in written form for young people to keep for future reference.

## 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?

## Key Points

- Schools need to help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships.
- Teachers and other staff can use a range of strategies to help them do this, including establishing ground rules, introducing 'distancing' techniques, making use of discussion and project learning, and encouraging reflection.

**This policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body**

Person(s) Responsible: Mr Andy Williams (Deputy Headteacher)

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