

Relationships and sex education

Woodcroft School pupil policy 01.11.25

Introduction

Sex education is part of the lifelong process of learning, acquiring information and forming attitudes. Where appropriate the approach adopted at Woodcroft has regard to the statutory guidance *Relationships education (primary)* and *Relationships and sex education (RSE) (secondary)*. It is recognised that as all pupils mature, both physically and emotionally, sex education is an important aspect of their educational development. Pupils have a right to knowledge about sex appropriate to their particular stage of personal development, subject to the informed consent of their parents to the content of the relevant curriculum.

Throughout their school life pupils are encouraged to learn how to make choices and decisions, to develop autonomy and to take on responsibilities wherever possible. Learning about their own physical and emotional development and developing an awareness of their relationships with others is also a way to develop and reinforce these skills.

It is possible that some pupils may not experience marriage or parenthood, but this does not exclude them from forming close relationships with others during their lives. The sex education policy and programme aims to provide pupils with the skills to conduct such relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited.

Parents are invited to discuss any matters that they are concerned about with the child's teacher or with a senior member of staff. Parents have a right to withdraw their child from sex education at any stage, but not from those elements of relationships education which are contained within the National Curriculum syllabus (see *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education ((RSE)) and Health Education, 2019*). Parents wishing to withdraw their child should discuss their concerns with the head teacher.

Pupils with special educational needs

This document has been prepared recognising pupils' special educational needs. Consideration has been given to the needs of pupils when planning the programme (using the Equals semi-formal and formal schemes of work *My relationships and sex education*) and defining the teaching strategies used to ensure that no pupil is denied access to sex education, if the appropriate stage of their education occurs at Woodcroft and parents have been consulted and approval sought. The programme of sex education offered to pupils is commensurate with their age, cognitive ability and developmental level. It is recognised that in order to be effective, information needs to be presented in a clear unambiguous way and that repetition and reinforcement will be necessary. The language used must be understood by the pupil and supported wherever possible with visual materials. Pupils with special needs may well experience difficulty within the areas of abstract thought. To help avoid confusion some resources will necessarily need to be explicit (such as educational videos, resource packs and anatomically correct models). Working closely with parents is essential in this important aspect of the pupil's curriculum. The school welcomes the involvement of parents in discussing the pupil's sex education programme and in sharing the responsibilities to help the pupil assimilate the concepts and skills involved.

The sex education programme

At the appropriate developmental stage, the relationships and sex education programmes aim to:

- Provide knowledge and information to which pupils are entitled.
- Clarify and build on the knowledge that pupils have already acquired.
- Help pupils recognise and understand their feelings.
- Promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in public and in private.
- Encourage pupils to behave in a responsible way towards themselves and others.
- Provide pupils with a range of strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse.
- Raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others.
- Help pupils form positive relationships with others.
- Develop skills such as communication, decision and choice making and assertiveness.
- Provide and support access to further information as required.

All pupils up to the age of ten and a half are offered the opportunity to participate in a programme of relationship education and personal development appropriate to their needs. The approach may include individual, group and class sessions. The outline of the programme is integrated into the whole curriculum.

Stream one (primary relationships education)

Knowing my body

- Body parts
- What these parts do (their functions)
- Age differences
- Gender differences
- My clothes (on top and underneath)
- Hygiene

Knowing me

- What I like and what I don't like
- Who I like and who I don't like
- What I am able to do and what I find difficult
- Trusting somebody (who can I trust?)
- Me, you and us
- Developing a positive image and high self-esteem

Private and public

- Where on my body is private?
- Where on my body is not private?
- Where can I be by myself?
- Where can I spend time with other people?
- My room

As pupils progress, the areas outlined above will continue to be reinforced. In addition, knowledge within some areas of stream two learning, such as menstruation or masturbation, may be deemed appropriate for some primary pupils in some circumstances on a case-by-case basis. If this is the case, school staff may advise on the introduction of some additional parts of the Equals semi-formal curriculum following consultation written and approval from parents.

Stream two (secondary sex and relationships education)

Parts of the Equals curriculum in regard to forming relationships and sexual intimacy with another person may be deemed appropriate for some pupils when they reach Key Stage 3. If this is thought to be the case, then a programme will be proposed and parents consulted.

Implementing the programme

Relationships and sex education may be taught by members of the teaching staff and some members of the classroom teams. Each pupil's programme is carefully structured and organised to ensure continuity and consistency and to maximise the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Lessons will sometimes take place on an individual basis and sometimes in small groups according to the maturity and developmental level of the pupils. Working closely with parents is essential at all stages. Parents are welcome to meet the staff who will be involved in the teaching to discuss the programme, see the resources to be used and to advise of any religious or cultural views which will need to be taken into consideration. By working together with parents, it is anticipated that an appropriate relationships and sex education will become a valuable and essential aspect of the young person's curriculum. Feedback from all involved, received both informally and formally, will help towards assessing how effective the aims, content, methods and resources have been in promoting the pupil's learning.

It is not anticipated that people from outside the school will be involved in the actual teaching of sex education, but it is recognised that where relevant, visitors to the school may need to be made aware of the school's policy regarding associated issues, such as:

- Language/terminology (*body parts, addressing pupils, etc.*)
- Giving opportunities for furthering independence and choice
- Guidance about personal contact and touching
- Reinforcement of concepts such as 'private'
- Treating pupils with respect
- Expectations of appropriate behaviour (*sitting on laps, hugging, kissing, etc.*)

Sexual abuse

It is recognised that children and adults with special needs remain vulnerable members of society and that incidents of exploitation and abuse do occur. This accentuates the need for pupils to receive information about sex and personal matters. Should a member of staff become concerned about a pupil or a pupil makes a disclosure, this will be progressed through the school's *Safeguarding children policy*. Pupils and parents should also be aware of the school's approaches to the development of pupils' skills for self-advocacy.