

Sex & Relationships Education Policy The E-ACT Burnham Park Academy

Department Owner	National Director of Operations
Section Owner	Education
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Academy believes that effective sex and relationship education is essential for young people to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. The aim of sex and relationship education is to support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. A successful programme will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.
- 1.2 This policy is based on guidance from the Department for Education *Sex and relationship education guidance* (DfEE 0116/2000) Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), July 2000.
- 1.3 The Academy's sex and relationship education programme is intended to complement and support the role of parents and carers in educating their children about sexuality and relationships.

2 What is sex and relationship education?

- 2.1 Sex and relationship education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the importance of stable, loving relationships and respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. Although some of the themes covered may remain consistent throughout the age range, some topics, and the manner in which they are taught, will be age appropriate.
- 2.2 Sex and relationship education has three main elements.

Attitudes and values

- (a) Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- (b) Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- (c) Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- (d) Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- (e) Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

Personal and social skills

- (f) Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- (g) Developing respect and empathy for others.
- (h) Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- (i) Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- (j) Managing conflict.
- (k) Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding

- (l) Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- (m) Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- (n) Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- (o) Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- (p) Recognising the role the media and pornography can play in shaping views of relationships and sexuality.
- (q) The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

3 What are the objectives of sex and relationship education?

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

- To explore what pupils know, understand, think and feel and to identify their needs.
- To encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by using appropriate words for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions.
- To create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
- To counteract misleading myths and folklore.
- To provide constant reassurance that change is part of the life cycle and to give help in adjusting to such change.
- To enable pupils to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, social) and in ages when puberty or social activities develop.
- To learn to respect each other as individuals, and to encourage boys and girls to understand and honour one another.
- To recognise the value of loving and caring relationships and the place of intimacy within them.
- To appreciate the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young.
- To understand and respect cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality.
- To help pupils know their rights and responsibilities.
- To promote personal safety and self-esteem so that young people are able to resist unwanted touch or advances and can communicate about such matters and seek advice.

- To develop growing understanding of risk and safety and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe.
- To be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them.
- To be aware of the law as it affects sexual behaviour.

4 How is sex and relationship education provided and who is responsible for providing it?

4.1 Relationships

- Young people, when asked about their experiences of sex education at school, often complain about the focus on the physical aspects of reproduction and the lack of any meaningful discussion about feelings, relationships and values. Sex and relationship education at the Academy will adjust that imbalance and help young people to respect themselves and others, and to understand differences.
- The Government advises that pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage and civil partnerships for family life and bringing up children. However, the Government also recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside of marriage. The Academy will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

4.2 Focus on boys and young men as well as girls and young women

- Traditionally, sex and relationship education has focused on girls, leaving boys feeling that sex education is irrelevant to them and are unable or too embarrassed to ask questions about relationships and sex. Classroom activities will engage boys as well as girls. The Academy will be sensitive to the culture of its pupils, where it may be acceptable to speak about the body only in single gender groups, for example.

4.3 Students with special educational needs and learning difficulties

- The Academy will ensure that pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationship education. Some pupils will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused as to what is acceptable public behaviour. The Academy will help these pupils to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what behaviours are, and are not, acceptable.

4.4 Sexual identity and sexual orientation

4.5 The Academy will ensure that the needs of all pupils are met in the curriculum.

Teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation and sexual identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. The Academy will not tolerate bullying in any form, including:

- sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- sexist - related to a person's gender or gender reassignment

- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic).

4.6 The aim of this policy is not to promote any sexual orientation or sexual identity, but to help to create a safe space for learning.

4.7 Contraception

- Knowledge of and access to the different types of contraception is a major part of the Government's strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy. Effective sex and relationship education in secondary schools has an important role to play in achieving this.
- Trained staff and teachers are able to give pupils full information about the different types of contraception and their effectiveness. They can also give pupils, individually and as a class, additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling, and where necessary, treatment.
- When a teacher learns from an under-16 year old that he / she is having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse, the Academy will ensure that whenever possible, the pupil is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer, that any child protection issues are addressed, and that the pupil is adequately counselled and informed about contraception. Teachers will not give personal, individual advice on contraception to a pupil under 16.
- The Academy will enable and encourage pupils to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer.

4.8 Abortion

- The Academy recognises that abortion is an emotive issue, and that any teaching must present a balanced view which respects a range of views and religious beliefs. Teachers will create a classroom environment where young people have an opportunity to explore dilemmas related to abortion, to understand abortion and the law, and to develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals.
- The Academy will teach about abortion and contraception in accordance with the purpose of sex and relationship education, which is preparing pupils for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life.

4.9 Safer Sex and HIV / AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

4.10 STIs are major causes of ill health which can have long term physical and psychological health consequences. Incidences of STIs continue to rise and the incidence of HIV / AIDS infection remains unacceptably high, particularly for young men. 39% of those with AIDS in the UK are in their 20s, most of whom will have contracted HIV in their teens.

4.11 The Academy will teach the following key messages regarding safer sex, HIV / AIDS and STIs:

- information and knowledge about HIV / AIDS is vital

- young people need to understand what risks are attached to certain behaviours and what is safe and acceptable
- sex and relationship education should inform young people about condom use and safer sex in general
- young people need skills to enable them to avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex (this will link with issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour such as using drugs and alcohol)
- young people need factual information about safer sex and skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex.

4.12 Confidentiality

- Teachers will follow the Academy's policy on confidentiality between themselves and pupils. Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained, but teachers cannot offer or promise absolute confidentiality. Teachers will follow the Academy's Safeguarding policy if a child protection issue is raised.
- The Academy will encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers and support them to do so. The Academy will also inform pupils of sources of confidential help, for example, the Academy nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service.

5 Parents and carers' rights with regard to their children and sex and relationship education

5.1 Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education provided at the Academy except for those parts included in the science curriculum, which cover the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction. The Academy will make alternative arrangements for pupils in such cases.

5.2 The Academy recognises that parents and carers are the key people in:

- teaching their children about sex and relationships
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family
- helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

5.3 The Academy will consult with parents and carers regularly on the content of sex and relationship education programmes and welcomes their active involvement in the determination of the Academy's programme.