

Reading Girls' School



Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Status: Statutory (to be reviewed every 3 years)
Level of approval: School Governance Committee
Date written: October 2017
Date of most recent approval: October 2017
Date of next review: October 2020

CONTENTS

1. Rationale
2. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)
3. Skills
4. Delivery
5. Teaching Approach
6. Sensitive Issues
 - 6.1 Homosexuality
 - 6.2 Abortion
 - 6.3 HIV/AIDS
7. Confidentiality
8. Advice to Students
9. Information to Parents

Policy Aim / Statement

To support the personal and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive and appropriate ways, and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility.

1.0 Rationale

- 1.1** Reading Girls' School supports the personal and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive and appropriate ways, and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility. Students need to be **safe, healthy** and given information, and opportunities for discussion, which will enable them to be able to explore their own feelings and to make informed choices as a result.
- 1.2** The Sex and Relationship Education Policy and all teaching programmes employed are guided by the Learning & Skills Act 2000 which amended the Education Act 1996; Sex Education in Schools, which sets out the legal powers and duties of school governors and staff with regard to the content and methodology of Sex & Relationship Education in schools.
- 1.3** This policy has been written to take into account the revised National Curriculum and the need for guidance arising out of the new Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework.
- 1.4** The objective of relationship education at Reading Girls' School is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, helping young people to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood, based on our ethos and values.

2.0 Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)

The Sex and Relationship Education Programme at Reading Girls' School aims to:

- Provide a programme which is tailored not only to the age, but also the understanding of students;
- Present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, which demonstrates an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour;
- Use young people as peer educators;
- Link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol;
- Ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships;
- Provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction;
- Teach the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and the taking on of responsibility, including parenthood;

- Build self esteem
- Allow students to examine the physical, emotional and moral implications of sexual behaviour, and to appreciate the need for both sexes to behave responsibly in sexual matters; develop awareness of sexual identity, and to challenge sexism and prejudice in society; and
- Encourage the development of social skills and strategies which should reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse.

3.0 Skills

3.1 Students at Reading Girls' School will develop the following skills:

- Emotional Skills – managing emotions confidently, developing empathy for others, developing independence of thought and behaviour;
- Social Skills – developing and maintaining relationships with others, taking responsibility for their own and others' emotional and sexual health;
- Communication Skills – learning to participate effectively, to listen and ask questions, express emotions, give opinions;
- Negotiation Skills – resisting peer pressure and ensuring that they get what is best for them, managing and resolving conflict;
- Practical Skills – caring for self and others; and
- Decision Making Skills – managing real life dilemmas, assessing risk and making informed choices.

4.0 Delivery

4.1 Reading Girls' School believes that learning about sexuality and relationships is a lifelong process and that this will occur both in school and the home settings, in both formal and informal ways. Sex & Relationship education will be delivered using a variety of activities.

4.2 Sex & Relationship Education is much too important to be left to chance and therefore it must be well-planned, coherent and relevant. Tutors and Pastoral leaders will be the ideal personnel to deliver Sex & Relationship Education owing to their knowledge of the students' backgrounds. Students will be taught Sex & Relationship Education through the National Science and RE curriculum topics in mixed ability groups, unless it is deemed inappropriate.

5.0 Teaching Approach

5.1 DVDs are used to provide information and to trigger discussion point. They are also useful in putting across a range of different viewpoints which may not otherwise be expressed. All videos used are viewed by teaching staff beforehand, to ascertain their suitability and relevance. It is recognised that discussion, either as a whole class or in groups, may cause embarrassment amongst some students. All staff are aware of the need to allow students to excuse themselves from discussions which they find threatening or uncomfortable. The confidentiality of the information shared must be stressed before controversial topics are tackled.

- 5.2** Occasionally, theatre groups & outside speakers may be invited into school, particularly to deal with the area of AIDS/HIV and STI's. Staff always take the opportunity to attend briefing sessions on these activities, and are aware of the need for careful vetting of such productions. Similarly, any leaflets which may be issued to students are examined by the Tutors and Pastoral Leaders before they are used. All visitors to the school abide by the school's SRE policy.

6.0 Sensitive Issues

6.1 Homosexuality

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which prohibits the promotion of homosexuality, does not apply to schools. It does not therefore prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality.

6.2 Abortion

Any discussion of abortion should involve the views of different faiths, and both medical and ethical considerations. However it is important through appropriate information and advice on contraception and on delaying sexual activity to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies.

6.3 HIV / AIDS / STI

Informative discussions covering the transmission of the HIV virus will, by the very nature of the subject, cover sexual acts and practices, helping students clarify their knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STI's teaching them assertiveness skills for negotiating relationships and enabling them to become effective users of services that help prevent/treat STI's and HIV.

Teachers will deal sensitively and objectively with information of this kind, at the same time trying to avoid bias and prejudice. Staff are also aware that they may be dealing with students who are HIV positive, or who may have close links with others who are.

It may be the case that the teaching of apparently unrelated topics will occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. When such discussion is relatively limited and placed within the context of the subject concerned, it will not necessarily contribute to a part of a programme of sex and relationship education. Teachers will endeavour to answer students' questions honestly and sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account.

7.0 Confidentiality

Teachers are aware that effective Sex & Relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Any worries or fears students bring into the classroom should not go unnoticed by teachers.

If a member of staff suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or they have a reason to believe that the student is at risk of abuse, they should report their concerns following procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Teachers cannot promise confidentiality. Students will be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and possibly their parents. Teachers make a professional judgment about confidentiality having heard the information and decide at which point the information must be passed on. This judgment should be shared with the student so that a decision can be made whether to proceed or not using the referral system as laid out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

8.0 Advice to Students

Designated teachers may provide information about contraception but not personal advice. It is important to realise that giving students' advice on their personal sexual behaviour may not be appropriate in the view of the DfE. Teachers may, however, encourage individual students to seek professional health advice when appropriate.

On the specific question of the provision of contraceptive advice, the general rule must be that giving an individual student advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent, would be deemed an inappropriate exercise of a teacher's professional responsibilities.

A teacher approached by students for advice on these, or other aspects of sexual behaviour, should therefore, wherever possible, encourage them to seek advice from their parents/carers and, if appropriate, from a relevant health service professional. Where circumstances are such that the teacher is led to believe that any student has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him/her at moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, the teacher has a general responsibility to ensure that the student is aware of the implications, and is urged to seek advice. In such circumstances, the teacher should inform the Principal and Pastoral Leader and where the student is under age, the parents/carers should be made aware, preferably by the students themselves in the latter case, the Pastoral Leader should check that this has happened.

9.0 Information to Parents

Under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from either part, or all, of the Sex Education provided by the school. In order to exercise this right, and to make an informed decision about whether to withdraw their children, the list of the Sex Education topics covered in all areas of the curriculum is available on the website for parents. Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their children from all, or part, of the Sex Education Programme, should inform the Pastoral leader of their decision. Parents/carers are very welcome to meet members of staff to discuss their decision and to view materials about which they may be concerned, but they are under no legal obligation to do so. Students who are withdrawn from Sex & Relationship Education

lessons will be provided with alternative work. The situation will be handled sensitively, in order to avoid embarrassment or comments from their peers. Parents/carers who are concerned will be given an opportunity to view DVDs and other materials used in Sex & Relationship education lessons, and other subject areas where matters of a sensitive nature are addressed.