

HANGING HEATON C.E. (VC) JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY

It is with the Christian foundation of our school in mind that this policy has been written and agreed.

The governors believe that schools have the responsibility to meet the educational needs of all pupils. All children have the right to know what physical changes are and will take place within their bodies and how these may affect their development and attitudes. Sex education is about understanding the importance of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. Throughout our teaching we acknowledge that our children come from a variety of backgrounds and take care not to make comments or judgements that may cause personal hurt or offence.

Rationale

Although it is not statutory to have a Sex and Relationship education programme, the Department of Education and Skills recommends that all primary schools should have such a programme 'tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children'. They also say:

"Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It should not be delivered in isolation. It should be firmly rooted in the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education and the National Curriculum."

DfES SRE guidance 2000

Governors have re-affirmed (2006) that sex education should form part of the school curriculum for all our pupils. They also recognise that the Education Act 1996 provides that:

If the parent of any pupil in attendance at a maintained school requests that he/she may be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at the school, the pupil shall, except so far as such education is comprised in the National Curriculum, be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

Details of how pupils may be excused are included at the end of this statement.

Aims for Sex Education

Much of the concern about sex education in the primary phase arises from a narrow interpretation of it; a belief that it is simply about teaching the facts of reproduction. In its widest sense, sex education permeates spiritual, moral, emotional and physical spheres and explores what is most intimate in our relationships, our values and attitudes, from childbirth to parenthood. In our teaching we aim to:

- create an atmosphere where questions about personal relationships and sex can be asked and answered without embarrassment.
- help develop powers of communication.

- stress the value of family life, and the importance of caring for the young of all animals, including human babies.
- explain the nature of reproduction and how a baby is born.
- dispel myths and folklore.
- help children accept, understand and respect differences, especially physical differences.
- explain pubertal changes and the reason for these changes.
- provide reassurance that body changes and their physical, emotional and social effects are normal and acceptable and give emotional support to the children during these changes.
- provide an acceptable vocabulary for parts of their body.
- enable children to build up their confidence and self-esteem.
- ensure our teaching is in accord with our school aims and our equal opportunities, inclusion and race equality policies, in particular ensuring that boys are as involved as girls and that children from minority ethnic groups are fully and appropriately involved.

Context

The philosophy of our school draws on the view that our teaching should be set in a wide cross-curricular context. Sex education should therefore be part of that cross-curricular thematic approach – e.g. as part of the religious, health/family life or environmental elements of our themes. This fully concurs with the DfES guidance.

Young children come to school with some understanding of their sexual identity – i.e. what it's like to be male or female. This is usually gained from their close association with adults, but the media and their friends also contribute, rightly or wrongly, to their expected gender-role behaviour.

Children of this age are extremely curious about their own bodies, with some children having more information than others about how bodies work. In the early years of schooling teachers need to establish an acceptable vocabulary for use in school.

In work with children we should aim to create an atmosphere where children can ask questions about sex and personal relationships without embarrassment and we can deal with these questions in the context of a caring family situation. Inevitably, particularly with the youngest children, these questions will develop from the child's own experiences, family babies, pets etc. Study developed from an integrated curriculum should examine the issues in greater depth as children become older and move through school.

Curriculum Content

Reception/Year 1

Children coming into the reception class are beginning to learn about making choices and developing responsibility. Themes such as 'You and Me' are often introduced to reception children. This can lead to thinking about relationships, an awareness of others for example. In planning sex education we would want to develop the following ideas in reception classes:

- a concept of male and female gender roles
- an awareness of stereotyping
- safety, good touches and bad touches – 'Saying No'
- friendship and respect
- similarities and differences
- developing positive self images
- the beginning of life (me, animals, plants)
- loss and grieving

Year 1 and Year 2

In planning sex education we would want to develop the following ideas for Y1 and Y2 classes:

- Be able to talk about emotions
- Skills of listening, discussing, sharing
- Naming of main external body parts
- Understand the concept of male and female
- Understand the idea of growing from young to old
- Know that humans develop at different rates
- Know that babies have special needs
- Acquire skills of caring for young animals
- Know there are different types of family and be able to describe the roles of individuals within the family

- Know about the rituals associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved
- Appreciate ways in which people learn to live and work together
- Know about personal safety – e.g. know that individuals have rights over their own bodies

Years 3, 4, 5, 6

Many children will begin their pubertal changes during this time and it is reassuring if they can all learn about the stages their bodies will go through and how these may affect their emotions, physical appearance and relationships. Children should:

- be confident in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- know the basic biology of human reproduction and be able to name parts of the body associated with this
- know about and have understanding of the physical, emotional and social changes at puberty
- understand the importance of good parenting and the value of respect, love and care
- understand what is meant by 'relationships' within families, between friends and in the community
- know that there may be many patterns of friendship and learn skills of dealing with relationships
- learn to respect themselves and others and to understand difference and diversity
- be able to talk about friends with significant adults
- know about helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different circumstances
- know there are differences between good and bad touch and how to protect themselves

Scheme of Work and Teaching Approach

The school may use a range of resources to teach the above objectives including Channel 4 'Living and Growing'. Teachers will ensure that the content is suitable for the children they are teaching and meet the age-appropriate objectives. Here are suggested guidelines as to which modules to work on with which year groups:

Reception/Year 1/Year 2	Differences
Year 3	Growing up
Year 4	How did I get here? Changes
Year 5	How babies are born How babies are made Girl talk
Year 6	Boy Talk Let's talk about sex

The structured teaching of sex education needs to take place in a supportive classroom environment where good relationships have been formed with class teachers and peers. Specific teaching materials used with children in Years 4, 5 and 6 will be discussed with parents prior to their use with pupils and teachers of these children will be given guidance on teaching strategies, how to manage pupil groupings and how to deal with questions appropriately, honestly and with sensitivity.

Should parents wish to withdraw children from sex education the following procedure should be followed:

- Discuss concerns with class teacher/Headteacher
- A simple letter expressing a parent's wish for a pupil to be excused should be submitted to the Headteacher.

References: 'A Guide for the Development of a Whole School Policy on Sex Education' SCC May 1994. 'A Christian Angle on Sex Education' Hereford Diocesan Council of Education. 'Sex Education in Primary Schools' Health Education Department, Shropshire. 'Sex Education in Schools' Circular 5/94, National Curriculum 2000. 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' DfES guidance July 2000.

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