

Sex And Relationship Policy

The Meadows School aims to provide a safe, secure and stimulating educational environment which responds to individual needs, where pupils can develop their self esteem, become motivated and gain a sense of purpose in learning. Within this environment there is the aspiration that pupils will experience progress, achievement and success, and increase their confidence. In this process pupils will be supported in preparing for their adult life at home, work and leisure and as citizens.

It has been our intention to establish a school which has a strong sense of humanity and warmth where pupils are at the heart of our work and all members of the community are treated with respect and dignity whilst being challenged to confront difficulties whether academic, emotional or social. We have a vibrant and purposeful ethos influenced by flexible systems responsive to pupil need and within which adults recognise the importance of achieving potential through excellent relationships and the promotion of high quality teaching and learning.

The Meadows is a mixed secondary school for pupils with SEBD, often with associated learning difficulties and many pupils are low achieving on entry. Rarely have our pupils felt what it is like to be successful in an educational setting. We provide an extended day provision with a wide range of social activities. Our purpose is to address SEN of our pupils improving their abilities in all areas, but particularly literacy, numeracy, social skills and key skills within a secure and supportive environment. Our work is underpinned by the need to address emotional literacy and improve pupil self esteem. We are proud of our positive secure ethos and community spirit that enables our pupils to have a sense of belonging and security. Our work is built upon relationships with the pupils, their carers and our wider community.

'A passionate, committed, resilient and highly skilled staff who work well as a team and are well led by the HT and DHT, and are instrumental in the prevention of behaviour that challenges and the improvement of behaviour overall'

HMI 2004

Our ethos is founded upon:

- A child centred approach where pupils are at the heart of all our work.
- Building positive relationships with pupils, carers and the wider community.
- Providing structure and routine and limitless opportunities to encourage personal and social development.
- Ensuring that the personal development curriculum is central to the work with our pupils.
- A curriculum design which focuses upon literacy and numeracy development, opportunities for WRL and encourages SMSC development.
- Setting suitable learning (academic and behavioural) challenges.
- Responding to pupils diverse needs.

An inclusive school where pupils are respected, valued and cared for and where parents perspectives are taken into account. A listening school.

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“Unless children, whatever their chronological age, are continually being helped to ‘grow up’, that is to make better sense of themselves and their relationships with others, they cannot make best use of the education offered to them by their teachers. Above all the human child seeks to find reassurance and meaning in life...”

Passport Project, Gulbenkian Foundation, 2000

Sex and relationships education (SRE) has a vital role to play in contributing to our young people’s safeguarding, personal wellbeing, and social development.

Sex education is defined as “learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health”. (DfEE Sex and relationship Guidance).

We recognise that our young people are increasingly exposed to conflicting views and images of sex and sexuality in the media, from parents and friends. The national picture is complicated by the rising rates of sexual infections and unwanted teenage pregnancies. Sex and Relationships Education is clearly linked to earlier onset of sexual activity and sexual health problems. We also believe that Sex and Relationships Education should be treated as a positive opportunity for young people to understand and be in control of their developing sexualities. While we use sex education to inform pupils about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility. We do not use sex education as a means of promoting any form of sexual health orientation. The Meadows is an inclusive school which considers it important to consider the diversity of relationships in discussing these issues.

Rationale

The Meadows School acknowledges the importance of a whole school approach to Sex and Relationships Education. We recognise the importance of the school ethos and the part it plays in determining the quality of sex and personal relationships education. The teaching of sex education is most effective when taught within the context of PSHE and building upon the important groundwork of the science curriculum. PSHE as a key strand to improving school standards and plays a vital role in supporting young people to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.

Consultation has taken place, across the school community:

- Including a review of SRE curriculum content with staff and students and
- Consultation with wider school community for example; Claire Hunter, school nurse,

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What Is Sex and Relationship Education?

SRE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

Sex and Relationship Education in The Meadows School has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- Learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- Learning about the nurture of children;
- Learning the value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict;
- Empower pupils with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter).

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;
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

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The aim of SRE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our SRE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity.
- Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex.
 - Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited / unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
 - Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
 - Know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education

The Meadows School specifically delivers Sex and Relationship Education through its PSHE Programme and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4.

The majority of the Sex and Relationship Education at The Meadows School takes place within PSHE lessons. Tutors work closely with their tutees over a number of years and we believe that they are usually the best people to work with the pupils on some of the SRE areas as they are aware of each pupil's individual circumstances. SRE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum is taught in every year.

Any SRE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level

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inappropriate to the development of the rest of the pupils, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

More expert or specialist teachers support tutors who are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. Support is offered with the year team or from the PSHE co-ordinator who will help with planning or delivery lessons if required.

Assessment is carried out at the end of every module and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes. Alternative assessment formulas are continually assessed by staff and pupils to formulate an appropriate assessment for The Meadows School.

Inclusion

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex and Relationship Education

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers are welcome to review any SRE resources the school uses.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

It should be made clear to pupils that teachers in school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality if they have any concerns about the safety and well being of a child. This should be made clear when forming the class Ground Rules or Group Agreement. Staff are aware that the Durham LSCB has resources and guidance and a risk assessment matrix. Staff are aware of the risks connected with sexual exploitation. In an event of any concerns arising they would be shared with the Safe Guarding Lead.

Young People under the age of 13

A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under The Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is very serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child. Cases involving under 13's should always be discussed with the Child Protection Lead, (Sarah Took).

Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under the age of 13 is classed as rape. Therefore, in all cases where the sexually active young person is under 13, a referral should be made to Social Care Direct identifying the young person, and the sexual partner if known. Following this, a

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Strategy Meeting or discussion will be held. The meeting will involve a Team Manager, Social Worker, Police, Health Worker, Education and Welfare and other relevant agencies, to discuss appropriate next steps.

Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. All cases involving under 13's should be fully documented including detailed reasons why decisions were made not to share information.

[Young people between 13–16](#)

Sexual Activity with a young person in this age group is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Act reinforces that whilst mutually agreed, non exploitive sexual activity between teenagers does take place and that often no harm comes from it, the legal age of consent remains 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people is still vulnerable, even when they do not view themselves as such.

Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving 13-15 as to whether a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Safeguarding and Specialist Services. Cases of concern should be discussed with the nominated child protection lead and subsequently with other agencies as required.

When confidentiality needs to be preserved a discussion can still take place as long as it does not identify the child (directly or indirectly).

Where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that significant harm to a child has occurred/might occur, there should be a presumption that the case is reported to Safeguarding and Specialist Service.

All cases should be carefully documented including when a decision is taken not to share information.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct but have a duty to share information with relevant others, if they believe that a child is suffering abuse.

Fraser Guidelines - It is good practice for doctors and other health professionals to follow the criteria outlined by Lord Fraser in 1985, "The House of Lords" ruling commonly known as the Fraser Guidelines.

- The young person understands the health professional's advice.
- The health professional cannot persuade the young person to inform his or her parents or allow the doctor to inform the parents that he or she is seeking contraceptive treatment;
- The young person is very likely to begin or continue having intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment;
- Unless he or she receives contraceptive advice or treatment, the young person's physical or mental health or both are likely to suffer;
- The young person's best interests require the health professionals to give contraceptive advice, treatment or both without parental consent.

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The Durham LSCB website www.durham-lscb.org.uk provides information on safeguarding and specifically risks and processes to protect young people.

[Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education](#)

It is the responsibility of the PSHE Co-ordinator at The Meadows School to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHE programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise.

The Governors Curriculum Staffing and Resources Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's sex and relationship education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

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