

Sex and Relationships Policy



Acorns is a primary GLD school with 74 pupils

Our School Improvement Plan makes a commitment to developing the learning and personal relationships of pupils at school. The key steps include: using praise more often than behaviour sanctions; allowing pupils as much scope as possible for making choices and decisions during the school day; and allowing pupils to take on responsibility wherever possible.

Sex and Relationship Education and the school ethos

The governors believe that learning about sexual development, together with an awareness of relationships with others, can greatly enhance the pupils' ability to lead their lives competently and with fulfilment. We also expect other learning outcomes to be enhanced by the increased self-esteem and confidence which a good sex education programme can bring about. Our School Development Plan makes a commitment to developing learning and relationships in the school through encouraging autonomy and the taking of responsibility. At Acorns School we value all staff and pupils as individuals worthy of dignity and respect.

The values of the Sex and Relationship Education programme

We believe that the basis of moral behaviour is that each of us feels valued for what we are, and of worth to others. Our pupils, with a variety of disabilities and from a range of backgrounds, need first to experience self-esteem before they can form satisfying relationships with others. For many of them marriage and parenthood are unrealistic expectations, but this does not mean that they are to be excluded from forming loving and caring relationships during their lives. Our aim is to give our pupils the skills to conduct such relationships with dignity and assertiveness and to avoid being exploited.

Our aims for Sex and Relationship Education:

- To provide knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled;
- To clarify/reinforce knowledge pupils have already acquired;
- To raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their personal relationships;
- To help pupils to understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so that they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;

- To develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) which are necessary in a range of situations;
- To promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in public and private situations.
- To give practice of strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse;
- To provide the confidence to be an active member of society;
- To support access to information and facilities available in the school and from other agencies;
- To advise parents if requested.

General Guidelines

- Treat every pupil as an individual, with dignity and respect;
- Relate our language and behaviour to the chronological age of the pupil;
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not excluded from the programme.
- They will experience most of the basic content: self-awareness, gender awareness, body parts recognition, privacy and dignity.
- Reinforce the 'private' concept in all situations: avoid touching 'private' areas of pupils' bodies as far as possible;
- Discourage older pupils from age inappropriate behaviour: for example, sitting on laps; Hugging and kissing in greeting adults;
- Personal care to be carried out by an adult of the same sex whenever possible;
- It is important that all adults and visitors, including professionals, who come into contact with the pupils are aware of the school's policy; on language (for example, using correct names for body parts); on increasing independence and choice; and on guidelines about personal care and touch.

Organisation of Sex and Relationship Education

In order to offer accessibility to all our pupils, lessons are differentiated to reflect the level of understanding that pupils are demonstrating.

Sex and Relationship Education sits within SEAL and the PSHE framework which with citizenship forms an integral part of Acorns Curriculum and is modified to take into account the needs of all pupils, encouraging progression as the pupil moves through the key stages.

Foundation stage,

- Ourselves
- Change and Growth

Key Stage 1

- Homes and families

Key Stage 2

- Living Things
- Ourselves
- Health and Growth

A partnership with parents

We place the utmost importance on sharing equal and joint responsibility with parents for their children's education and sexual matters. We will give due regard to religious or cultural views that parents may have which may affect the sex education they wish to be given to their children, although we would consider carefully any request which compromised our equal opportunities policy.

We are aware that some parents find it hard to cope with their children's sexual development, and are happy for the school to take the initiative.

We will take every opportunity to inform and involve parents and carers:

- By making our commitment clear in the School Prospectus;
- By raising personal development issues at Annual Review meetings;
- By responding to parental requests for resources to be reviewed and their uses explained;
- By welcoming parents to discuss any of these matters with the Headteacher.
- Through Governors Annual Report to Parents

Parents' right to withdraw their children from sex education

By working with parents in these ways, our experience has shown that we have convinced them of the value of sex education for their children. We are optimistic that this situation will continue.

Parents now have the right to withdraw their children from sex education, although not from those elements which are in National Curriculum science. If a parent wishes

to withdraw a child, they are asked to discuss it with the Headteacher. We would like to make it clear that if pupils who are withdrawn from sex education lessons ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly and appropriately by staff.

Resources

The most valuable resource in the education of our pupils is to be found in the understanding, experience, skills and creativity of our staff, both teaching and non-teaching. We have a range of age appropriate, commercial schemes, videos, books and photocopied worksheets available for use throughout school in the Resource room. To avoid confusing pupils some explicit resources will be needed such as slides and other illustrative material; cut out bodies and body parts and anatomically correct models. Senior management alongside the designated PSHE co-ordinator and staff whom lead SRE education including the school nurse attend regular training courses and updates. The relevant aspects of the courses are fed back at staff meetings and INSET days. We ensure that whole school staff are made aware of and kept up to date with current issues and initiatives. This supports staff to demonstrate appropriate attitudes and use appropriate language.

Sexual abuse

We acknowledge that some young people with learning disabilities may be vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation and it is because of this that we need to help our young people to cope. We do not accept that this is a reason for avoiding education about sex and relationships. Indeed it makes it more essential: such teaching may help pupils avoid some abusive situations.

Monitoring the Sex and Relationship Education Policy and programme

The school will need to assess how effective are the aims, content, and methods in promoting pupils' learning. Feedback from staff, parents and pupils will help to judge this. The Science co-ordinator will be responsible for developing ways of collecting this information, and for presenting it, via the Head teacher to the Governors.