

**West Walker Primary School**  
**Sex and Relationships Policy**

At West Walker we recognise the importance of providing learning about physical, moral and emotional development. To give children an understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex and relationships.

**Introduction:**

PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) is one of the subjects in the National Curriculum, which pupils have an entitlement to experience throughout their education. The Governors see 'Sex Education' as a major component of the school's comprehensive programme of Personal, Social and health Education. In drawing up the school's policy due regard has been given to:

- Consultation with parents, governors, teachers, school nurse and others in the Local Community.
- The issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate.)
- Encouraging pupils to have regard to moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to have responsibility in sex relationships matters.

Copies of this policy have been made available to all concerned parties including the LEA, teachers and parents.

**Specific Aims:**

The following aims reflect those of the school and PSHE and show how Sex Education is delivered within the context of a moral framework.

1. To provide a broad and balanced Sex Education Programme which:
  - Offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Needs;
  - Operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas.
2. By exploring moral and sexual issues and values to:
  - a) Endow the pupils with positive pro-active attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships, e.g.
    - An understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters.
    - The skills to identify resist and report any unwanted sexual experience.
    - To foster self-esteem, self awareness and a sense of moral responsibility
3. To give pupils knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices in later life.
  - The physical and emotional aspects of an individual's development as a male or female, responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour.
  - Family life - the value and importance of the family as a social institution; its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others.
4. To give pupils an elementary understanding of human reproduction and to approach Sex Education by an active/creative process of enquiry and investigation

through projects, discussions, and role - play etc. Observation and analysis are central to this process.

**Offering Advice:**

The Governors and staff believe that the school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour. However, sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. If the offering of outside expert advice is not taken up, then a teacher may only give such advice after receiving written permission from the headteacher and the parent/guardians - clearly this would be done if the pupil did not wish it. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, it also acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice.

**Teachers cannot:**

Give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters to a pupil (either individual or within a group) if a parent has withdrawn that pupil from sex education.

**Teachers Can:**

Provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential advice and treatment, e.g. the school nurse or their GP. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of factual information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupils through the class teacher or headteacher.

**Explicit Questions:**

It is unlikely to be appropriate to deal with a pupil's explicit questions by dealing with it in front of the whole class e.g. questions on oral sex and anal sex. In practice this means that teachers have to "I'm sorry but the school policy and legislation does not allow me to answer that question". The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's concerns with the parents - a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it. Answers to the 'questions in a box' approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

**Confidentiality:**

Having considered all available advice and guidance the governors and headteacher state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse (e.g. moral or physical) or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately in writing to the headteacher in compliance with the LEA procedures for Child Protection. The headteacher will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling. Although there is no legal duty on a teacher, or a headteacher, to inform parents of matters which a child has confided to them:

- Teachers must not promise confidentiality even though they cannot be made to break it once given.
- Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the headteacher and possibly to parents.
- Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential - the pupils can then decide whether to proceed or not.

N.B. Failure of staff to adhere to this statement may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

**Withdrawing Pupils from the Sex Education Programme:**

Relevant sections of this policy are made available to parents in the school prospectus together with details about the parents right to withdraw their child from the non-biological aspects of sex education. Parents will always be provided with a full copy of this policy following a request to do so. The biological content of the Sex Education Programme is deemed to be that described in the National Curriculum.

N.B. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

**What we do if a request for withdrawal is made by a parent:**

- We discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent and if appropriate attempt to reassure them.
- We consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents; care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the Sex Education Programme and the entitlement of the other pupils e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the sex Education Programme.
- We attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education.
- We point out that pupils who have been withdrawn are vulnerable to teasing - we therefore attempt to cause minimal embarrassment to the pupil and minimal disruption to the programme.
- We also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers.
- We offer the parents access to appropriate information and resources.

N.B. If the pupil does not agree with the parents desire to withdraw their child from the Sex Education Programme the pupil can challenge the parents under the section 8 of the Children Act - the child has to apply to the court for a 'specific issues order'.

**Using Visiting Speakers and Others:**

We believe that most of the Sex Education Programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors such as nurses can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of sex education.

Care is taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of the Sex Education policy. After gaining approval from the headteacher for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the Sex Education Programme. Issues to consider are:

- The degree of explicitness of the content and presentation.
  - Will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?
  - Will the staff take an active role in the visitor's activities?
  - How will the visitors be prepared for the visit?
  - How will the visit be built upon and followed up? ^
1. Visitors should be given advance notice of the composition of the audience/target and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
  2. In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the

- experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.
3. A written acknowledgement of their contribution should be sent to the visitor and appear in the school newsletter.

**N.B.** The Health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can **provide a** link between the school and support services.

#### **Lesbian and Gay Issues:**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for the society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that homosexuality will be discussed during a programme of sex education.<sup>7</sup> Teachers do not avoid teaching about homosexuality although teachers take care not to advocate homosexual behaviour, present it as the norm, or encourage homosexual experimentation. One for/the many advantages of exploring gay and lesbian issues is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice.

#### **Equal Opportunities Issues and Special Needs:**

The nature of work undertaken must be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates the Sex Education Programme is a 'spiral system' in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity.

Children with learning difficulties may need more help than other in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may need support identifying what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. Some parents find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their child (special needs or not) will some day become sexually active.

#### **INSET:**

All teachers **involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts'** on the issues concerned. **However, they do require sensitivity to the** needs of the group, an ability to deal with **questions openly/honestly and a** preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary. Areas that have been specifically addressed by Training are:

- An examination of the school's Sex Education Policy.
- **An examination of the timing of the different elements** of the Sex Education Programme.
- Developing **skills related to managing group work and** discussion.

#### **Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the Sex Education Programme:**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. This will be achieved by the methods outlined in the separate policy 'Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the PSHE course'. Specifically important to the Sex Education Programme are:

- Pupil feedback.
- Staff review and feedback, particularly at staff meetings.
- Parental feedback.