

# The Axe Valley Community College



## Sex and Relationships Education Policy

### **The Law**

All maintained secondary schools must provide sex and relationship education as part of the basic curriculum, and must meet the requirements of National Curriculum Science. Governing bodies and head teachers of maintained primary schools must decide whether sex and relationship education, beyond that set out in National Curriculum Science, should be included in the school's curriculum, and if so what it should consist of and how it should be organised.

The Department for Education (DFE)'s popular questions website provides the following information on the current position relating to sex and relationship education (SRE) in schools (Updated 9 October 2014):

Sex and relationship education

- Sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. It doesn't promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.
- Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education if they want.
- All schools must have a written policy on sex education, which they must make available to parents for free.

The Government's Education White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, published in November 2010, stated:

Children need high-quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices. We will work with teachers, parents, faith groups and campaign groups, such as Stonewall to make sure sex and relationships education encompasses an understanding of the ways in which humans love each other and stresses the importance of respecting individual autonomy.

Parents' rights to withdraw a child from SRE

Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 enables parents to withdraw their children from sex education other than the sex education that is in the National Curriculum (such as the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science).

### **What are the Policy's aims?**

The needs of young people and the role of our college

- As a great college gives students self-knowledge, so TAVCC aims to produce self-reflective, confident and articulate young people at ease in the world. We work to make our community safe and welcoming, happy and supportive. We offer education to meet each student's needs. We share a common commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Our students have an ethic of hard work, public service and global citizenship.
- Young people learn about sex and relationships from a very young age. Some of the things they learn are incorrect, confusing and frightening. In a world where sex is used to advertise goods and services and celebrities lives become everyone's business, we should talk to young people to help them to make sense of it all.
- In addition, rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infection in the UK are among the highest of all European countries. The Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and SRE for pupils in both primary and secondary schools is seen, alongside other initiatives, as a key element.
- Our college's approach to SRE is in line with the Government's strategy and guidance given to schools in DfE *Sex and Relationship Guidance 2000*.
- The DfE's *Sex and Relationship Guidance (2000)* recommends that 'Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives'. The college has a key role, in partnership with parents/carers, in providing SRE.
- Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are more likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and to have fulfilling relationships.

### **What is SRE?**

The term sex and relationships education – SRE – is used in this policy rather than Sex Education. This is to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information, to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

According to DfE guidance SRE is: '... lifelong learning about physical, 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 is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health'.

*DfE Sex and Relationship Guidance, 2000*

FGM (Female genital mutilation) is a matter of great concern and many girls become victims of this, totally illegal, surgery pre-puberty. Therefore teaching about it must be introduced from Year 7 via PSHE.

We also need to consider LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [hermaphrodite] and querying) students and the difficulties they may face.

### **Aims**

The SRE programme at TAVCC reflects the school ethos and demonstrates the following values:

- Respecting self
- Respecting others

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- Responsibility for own actions
- Responsibility for others

In addition, TAVCC believes that SRE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every student to contribute.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and caring for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with other health and education professionals.

SRE here at TAVCC has three main elements:

- Attitudes and values
- Personal and social skills
- Knowledge and understanding

The overall aims of the Sex and Relationships Education programme here at TAVCC are to provide balanced, factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our SRE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- Dispel myths.
- Explore a range of attitudes towards SRE issues and reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle. They will develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgments 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.
- Develop respect and care for others.
- Develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations. Examples include communication with and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others.
- 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.

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- 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 and 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.
- 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.

### **Content**

The programme we follow at TAVCC is based on national guidelines provided by the DfE and is sensitive to the age and experience of our pupils, especially those with SEN. It is delivered mainly through the Science curriculum and Citizenship and PSHE lessons/events, as well as informally through other subject areas and the ethos of the school.

### **Delivery**

As well as a whole college approach to SRE, SRE is also part of our National Curriculum Science Programme. Other aspects are delivered mainly via PSHE and Citizenship lessons/events but may also occur in other subject areas, such as RE. SRE is taught mainly via:

- Year 7 PSHE lessons: relationships and healthy lifestyles units; SRE specific events: relationships; feelings; STIs and contraception; Healthy Lifestyles events and Key stage three Citizenship units looking at relationships, rights, responsibilities, morals and values.
- Key stage three Science
- Key stage four science
- Key stage three and four Citizenship units looking at rights, relationships, morals and values
- Informally through other lessons dealing with relationships, sex and relationship issues and through the ethos of the college.

The College strives to do the best for all pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs (SEN), race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. Accordingly, SRE will be delivered in an inclusive and sensitive manner.

SRE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The college's approach to SRE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints including the diverse views of different faiths and nationalities but will not be based on personal bias. We shall endeavour to have an approach that is educational, rather than one based on propaganda.

The PSHE and Citizenship SRE is taught in the context of relationships using a variety of formal and informal strategies and opportunities. This helps all young people to

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develop their self-esteem and emotional well-being, thus helping them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, which are based upon respect for themselves and for others.

### **Methodology and Resources**

Teaching will be based on an understanding that a variety of interactive and participatory teaching methods will be used to ensure all pupils are fully involved.

#### **Staff Training**

Training events at TAVCC are delivered by trained professionals who look at a range of issues with the pupils and also raise awareness of testicular and breast cancer. All of these staff are provided with adequate training and support to help them deliver effective Sex and Relationships Education and respond to situations with consistency and sensitivity, taking account of religious, social and cultural issues.

#### **Outside Agencies**

As outlined above, outside agencies are used to compliment the SRE programme following the guidelines for working with visitors in schools.

#### **Partnership with Parents/Carers and the right to withdraw**

Most of a pupil's informal sex and relationships education occurs within the family and the college's programme will complement and build on this. We will share responsibility for the education of pupils, with parents, who will be kept informed via sharing of the SRE policy, a letter outlining SRE events, leaflets home/website links on the college website and an SRE evening.

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated 'sex and relationships education' lessons, except from those aspects of SRE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where SRE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas.

Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity and are welcome to review any SRE resources the college may use. We send parents an annual letter outlining the SRE group sessions and give parents the opportunity to withdraw.

#### **Confidentiality and Safeguarding:**

The college takes its role in the promotion of student welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive pastoral support for students in a number of ways. Staff may be approached for help on an individual basis and through the tutorial/ pastoral system. They offer a listening ear and, where appropriate, information and advice. The college nurse offers a health and support service to students.

Safe-guarding pack, Child Protection Policy, *Safer working practise Code of Conduct*, Para. 20.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation of SRE**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall college plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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 college's sex and relationship education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

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Procedures when seeing or experiencing sexist behaviour for students, staff and parents

**Students:**

- tell someone – friend, mentor, cyber mentor, teacher, parent or guardian
- students should look out for each other and be caring if a student is alone or upset
- take advice and seek help
- cyber – save the messages, block on social networking sites, report it
- student volunteers to be mentors (SRE) or cyber mentors
- sre@axevalley.devon.sch.uk
- Learning Platform: sre@TAVCC.int

**Staff:**

- take action, do not ignore it – Be discreet
- support and respect the victim
- listen and help the offer to change, staff to be discreet
- offer the victim a mentor (SRE)

**Parents:**

- look out for signs of verbal / physical abuse
- help and encourage your child to speak to someone at school
- parents to get help and guidance through the school
- What should the policy outcomes be?
- TAVCC is a happier and safer environment
- reliable systems are in place for dealing with SRE abuse
- the offender and the victim get the right help/sanction
- reporting offences is made easier

**Prevention of SRE abuse**

Anybody can tell and be heard by:

- telling someone – Form Tutor, teacher, Child Protection personnel, Behaviour Support, HoY, parent, mentor, cyber-mentor or friend
- putting a note in the anonymous box in the Student Office or sending an email to sre@axevalley.devon.sch.uk
- students should look out for one another and react appropriately
- offenders should be helped to see that their behaviour is not acceptable and that they should stop
- workshops and assemblies should be held explaining about SRE abuse and why our anti-bullying policy is important
- posters such as those from <http://www.sreproject.org/> and Stonewall as well as other information should be displayed around the school
- mentors should be in place.



## **Appendix One Fraser Guidelines**

It is lawful for doctors to provide contraceptive advice and treatment without parental consent providing certain criteria are met. These criteria, known as the Fraser Guidelines, were laid down by Lord Fraser in the House of Lords' case and require the professional to be satisfied that:

- the young person will understand the professional's advice; the young person cannot be persuaded to inform their parents;
- the young person is likely to begin, or to continue having, sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment;
- unless the young person receives contraceptive treatment, their physical or mental health, or both, are likely to suffer;
- the young person's best interests require them to receive contraceptive advice or treatment with or without parental consent.

Although these criteria specifically refer to contraception, the principles are deemed to apply to other treatments, including abortion. Although the judgement in the House of Lords referred specifically to doctors, it is considered to apply to other health professionals, including nurses. It may also be interpreted as covering youth workers and health promotion workers who may be giving contraceptive advice and condoms to young people under 16, but this has not been tested in court.

If a person under the age of 18 refuses to consent to treatment, it is possible in some cases for their parents or the courts to overrule their decision. However, this right can be exercised only on the basis that the welfare of the young person is paramount. In this context, welfare does not simply mean their physical health. The psychological effect of having the decision overruled would have to be taken into account and would normally be an option only when the young person was thought likely to suffer "grave and irreversible mental or physical harm". Usually, when a parent wants to overrule a young person's decision to refuse treatment, health professionals will apply to the courts for a final decision.

## **Governors' Role**

The Governing Body have an overview of the overall strategy and suggest improvements to the policy, and will review the Policy every two years.

**Please note this policy is linked to the Child Protection Policy and Procedures Policy September 2014.**

Next Review Date April 2017