



# BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

*The School's motto: "Perseverantia Vincit" meaning perseverance wins through, exemplifies the genuine ethos of striving for success in all aspects of school.*

## **Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

Rationale: Berkhamstead School recognises the entitlement of all pupils to receive Relationships and Sex Education, which is current, meaningful and relevant. Berkhamstead School promotes respect for diversity, promoting our pupils as global citizens. We encourage a sense of compassion and understanding of others, and a deep respect for human worth and dignity. We recognise and respect every member of the school community's ethnic, cultural and religious values and sexual orientation.

We are aware that parents need to know what their children will be taught at different ages. Our sex and relationships programme forms part of the wider Citizenship and Wellbeing education provision.

### **Parents and Families**

Parents are kept informed about the policies through the school's website.

Relationships and Sex Education forms an integral part of the school curriculum, and whilst sex education is seen as part of the wider programme of health education for pupils and students, it is important that these sensitive issues are addressed if pupils are to gain the skills they need to deal with life. Dedicated time is given to this area of the curriculum. The sex and relationship education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and the school recognises that this RSE will need to evolve and adapt over time.

### **Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum**

This is a spiral curriculum in which themes and topics are revisited as the pupils grow and develop. The curriculum taught is appropriate to age and ability.

The School ensures that the relationships and sex education programmes are appropriate and relevant to the children within the school. This entails discussion about sexuality and personal

relationships within a variety of cultural contexts and the presentation of a broad spectrum of belief. The School strives to ensure that the moral framework within which sex education is taught is inclusive of all young people within the school. Young people are made aware of the range of moral and cultural frameworks within society.

It is important that the children are made aware of the diversity of moral opinion in society concerning sexual behaviour and personal relationships. Such moral frameworks are both secular and religious and include religion, the law and equal opportunities philosophies. They are also made aware of the range of cultural frameworks that exist in society. The programme of sex education is presented in a moral framework that recognises the diversity in society. Relationships education is sensitive to values, standards and personal responsibility.

It is important that gender issues in sexuality and relationship education are not excluded in an attempt to teach sexuality and relationship education within a religious or moral framework. An honest exploration of masculinity and femininity is a vital part of sex education.

It is important that staff do not make assumptions about the cultural and/or religious traditions of the pupils. The first step in this process is for staff to identify the needs of young people. It is necessary to distinguish between young people's needs and the needs of those who speak on their behalf. The School also takes steps to communicate with and involve parents and does not assume homogeneity within one community. The School also endeavours to communicate clearly to parents the nature of the programme on sex education.

Self-esteem is an important part of the process by which young people develop their own values and attitudes towards sex and relationships. An approach to sex education that celebrates diversity encourages young people to be aware of the traditions and beliefs of others, promoting mutual understanding and tolerance. As a school we wish to counteract prejudice and to support the development of self-esteem and a sense of responsibility in every pupil, irrespective of sexual orientation. The topic of sexual orientation and same sex relationships should be treated with sensitivity and understanding, acknowledging that we live in a society which encompasses widely differing moral and religious views on the subject. We wish all pupils to live happy, safe and fulfilled lives whatever their sexual orientation and acknowledge that all pupils need support and guidance. The topic fits into our wider relationships programme, which considers all relationships – friends, family and partners.

Parents are notified when particular aspects of relationships and sex education are to be taught. Parents and staff are encouraged to discuss the issues sensitively and openly to avoid confusion at an early age. Due regard is given to cultural and religious differences and parents are encouraged to discuss concerns.

Regular information is given to parents and parents are urged to discuss concerns and issues and learn more of their child's education in all areas of the school curriculum.

All pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of pupils in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The school therefore endorses the national and local guidance given in relation to sexuality and relationships.

### **Can a pupil be withdrawn from sex education classes?**

Under the 1993 Education Act, parents may withdraw their child from sex education classes. Parents are not able to withdraw their child from relationships education. It would need to be pointed out to parents that relationship education is part of the total curriculum; incidental education in this area is as important as formal sessions. If a parent has a concern about sex education they should direct it to the teacher in the first instance. If not satisfied they should then contact the Headteacher. Whilst parents are not required to give reasons for their decision, the school would be grateful if parents would voluntarily indicate their reasons for withdrawal so that any possible misunderstanding about the nature of the sex education provided by the school can be resolved. In view of the context for the teaching programme it is, of course, hoped that no parent will feel the need to withdraw their child.