

Scott College Sex and Relationship Policy

Introduction

A caring and developmental Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) programme needs to be more than just biology and the fundamentals of reproduction. Young people want reassurance about their body image, behaviour, feelings and relationships. They also need knowledge and skills appropriate to their level of maturity and developmental needs.

In planning and presenting a Sex and Relationship Programme, we need to give students the opportunity to express themselves within a trusted and safe environment. They need to articulate their thoughts, doubts and anxieties in order that they can build the skills needed to make responsible decisions, communicate effectively and develop healthy and appropriate relationships.

Central to the Sex and Relationship Education Programme is the growth of self-esteem and taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions. The development of students' self-esteem is essential to an effective health education programme. If young people feel positive and good about themselves they are more likely to take care of themselves, think positively of other people, and therefore, develop non-exploitive, caring relationships, they are also less likely to be exploited by others.

At Scott College our aim is to work in partnership with the home in order to give our students the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to empower them, so that they may be more in control of the decisions that affect their lives and the lives of people close to them.

Policy Aims

Scott College offers all students a comprehensive, well-planned programme of Sex and Relationship Education at appropriate stages throughout their Key Stages 4 and 5. This programme reflects the aims of the College, particularly those which:

- a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of the society; and
- b) prepare such students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Objectives

- To generate an atmosphere where questions of a sexual nature can be asked and answered openly without embarrassment, and trust and confidentiality are ensured.
- To enable students to develop knowledge, communication skills and understanding in order to facilitate personal decision making.
- To enable students to understand the impact of external factors, such as the media, internet, peer groups etc. and remain independent decision makers.

- To enable students to develop the ability to form positive, non-exploitive relationships.
- To enable students to be aware of personal, psychological, emotional and physical changes in themselves and others.
- To enable students to understand the process of human reproduction.
- To emphasise the role and the value of family life.
- To enable students to know what is said and what is not legal in matters relating to sexual activity.
- To inform students of where they can go for further information and advice.

Morals and Values

Sex and Relationship Education is always taught with due regard to moral and legal consideration and with the explicit values of family life and supportive relationships. It is taught by members of staff who are experienced and have been specifically trained in this aspect of education. Among the values promoted are:

- Respect for oneself and other people
- Taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- Honesty and loyalty in relationships
- The importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members
- Sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- To recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour
- To recognise and accept the differences of others

Content and Organisations of Sex Education in the Curriculum

Sex and Relationship Education at Scott College is planned and delivered through planned enrichment presentations and through Science. Our policy reflects the belief that an effective Sex and Relationship programme is about personal development and relationships as well as biological facts. It embraces the needs of all students, recognising diverse backgrounds and special educational needs. It develops and explores knowledge, skills, attitudes and values around a range of topics. Teaching methods which encourage discussion, participation and the development of empathy are seen as the most effective.

Within these areas there are planned programmes appropriate to the students' needs and levels of development. The following topics are introduced and discussed:

- Identifying level of current knowledge and identifying needs
- Puberty and growing up
- Understanding emotions and feelings
- Different relationships, different pressures
- Decision-making
- The concept of 'family'
- Reproduction

- Birth and needs of a baby
- Raise awareness of health provision with the college and local community

In addition to the topics of contraception, the implications of teenage pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections, there is an increased emphasis on relationships and personal responsibility, parenthood, the consequences of sexual activity, and the transmission of sexually acquired infections including HIV/AIDS.

The programmes stress the importance of acquiring the correct knowledge concerning the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in order that students may recognise ways in which the spread of sexually transmitted infections can be controlled, and to examine attitudes and values in relation to HIV and AIDS in a wider context, SRE programme aims to provide a basis for real understanding on which our students can make wise and informed choices, choices that will have direct and long-lasting relevance in their lives.

Thus the curriculum can be seen as spiral, with each stage building upon and reinforcing the previous foundation of knowledge and skills and understanding. Circular 5/94 confirms that restrictions regarding teaching about lesbian and gay issues do not apply to schools. The College ethos emphasises the importance of counteracting prejudice and victimisation and supports the development of self-esteem and responsibility in all students.

As part of the National Curriculum Science delivers a variety of topics relevant to Health and Sex Education. An introduction to 'Growth and Reproduction', physical and emotional changes in adolescence, fertilisation and the development of the foetus are important facets of the KS3 Biology Schemes of work. By the end of Year 9 students are introduced to the concept of genetics, where the related medical issues and the moral perspectives are discussed. Science teachers give the facts to enable students to make up their own mind on a variety of issues. Whenever possible the associated social, moral, political and economic areas of health and sex-related education are fully discussed.

The Role of Parents

Parents are advised of the College policy on Sex and Relationship Education through this policy. The College appreciates that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from non-National curriculum sex education lessons, and on the rare occasions that this happens alternative arrangements are made for the students.

Dealing With Sensitive Issues

In dealing with matters of a sexual and sensitive nature all teachers need to be aware of the need for ground rules to be negotiated and clearly understood and adhered to by students. These include the respect for confidentiality, the use of appropriate and acceptable language, the necessity of limiting the scope of discussions of a personal nature and the respect of privacy by all parties.

Teachers need to be aware that the giving of individual contraceptive advice to students is not appropriate and that such advice can only be given by a properly qualified health professional. If such advice is requested teachers should:

- Encourage students to discuss their concerns with their parents
- Inform students where to seek such confidential advice e.g. from family G.P., school nurse, family planning, the Zone or young people's advisory services.
- Where a teacher has a concern of a safeguarding or child protection nature, the Designated Teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team should be informed through the stated College procedures. Whilst the student has the right to expect discretion and support, at no time should the teacher promise the student confidentiality in such matters, as parents or another agency may well have to be involved in the child's best interest.