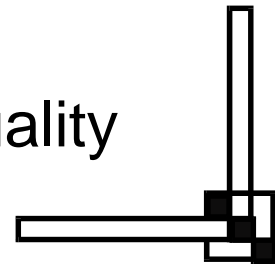


Health Education about Responsible Relationships and Sexuality



Foreword

When the decision was made to repeal Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986, the Scottish Executive stated that safeguards would be put in place. This resulted in the development of three documents offering guidance to schools in relation to sex education:

- Summary of National Advice
- Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers
- A Guide for Parents and Carers

In addition, the key principles and aims for sex education were outlined in the Scottish Executive circular for schools, *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000: Conduct of Sex Education in Scottish Schools*.

The National Review Group emphasised the importance of schools working with parents and external agencies and ensuring that policies and protocols were in place. It also stressed the need for schools to be more active in consulting and involving young people in the education process. Schools can provide the right environment to help young people reflect on what is important to them and what influences their health related behaviours. Fundamental qualities such as respect for self and others and a sense of social responsibility are aspects of personal and social development that are promoted daily. However, sensitive issues such as education about relationships and developing sexuality can cause concern. This paper supports schools in addressing the issue of sex education in schools. It should be read in conjunction with the policy document on the Health Promoting School.

1. Rationale

The following policy guidelines form part of the policy on the health promoting school. They set out the key principles, aims and advice for managers and staff in educational establishments to support them meet local and national requirements in the delivery of health education about responsible relationships and sexuality. Staff should be aware of the contents of the policy guidelines.

These policy guidelines are based on advice given within:

- 5-14 National Guidelines – Health Education – Guide for Teachers and Managers
- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000: Conduct of Sex Education in Scottish Schools (SEED)
- Sex Education in Scottish Schools:
 - Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers
 - A Guide for Parents and Carers
 - Summary of National Advice (Learning and Teaching Scotland)
- Report of the Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools (2000)
- Health Education for Living Project (HELP) (1995)

- Personal Relationships and Developing Sexuality (Strathclyde University and SOEID, 1994)
- Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000

2. Key Principles:

[Extract from the *Report of the Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools and Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000: Conduct of Sex Education in Scottish Schools (SEED)*]

Education about responsible relationships and sexuality:

- will be viewed as one element of health education, set within the wider context of health promotion and the health promoting ethos of the school.
- will contribute to the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development of all young people within the context of today's society.
- will reflect the cultural, ethnic and religious influences within the home, school and community.
- will be non-discriminatory and sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of young people.

- starts informally at an early age with parents and carers, and continues through to adulthood within the home and all stages of school life.

3. *The aims of education about responsible relationships and sexuality are to:*

- establish an awareness of the importance of stable family life and relationships, including the responsibilities of parenthood and marriage
- provide clear, accurate and relevant information about the physical and emotional changes that children and young people will experience throughout their formative years and into adulthood
- provide opportunities for children and young people to develop personal and interpersonal skills that will enable them to make and maintain appropriate relationships within the family, with friends and within the wider community
- enable children and young people develop and reflect upon their beliefs, attitudes and values in relation to themselves and others within a moral, ethical and multicultural framework

- foster self-awareness and self-esteem and a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves and others
- provide opportunities for young people to consider and reflect upon both their own and the range of attitudes to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, relationships and family life
- develop an appreciation of, and respect for, diversity and of the need to avoid prejudice and discrimination
- provide information about the skills for accessing, where appropriate, agencies and services providing support and advice to young people

4. Management

Health education about responsible relationships and sexuality is a key component of the health education programme. It can be best delivered through an effective partnership with parents and close working between Argyll and Bute Community Services and NHS Argyll and Clyde. The Argyll and Bute Sexual Health Strategy Group is the steering group which promotes joint working and organises joint staff development in relation to sexual health and sex education.

The delivery of the health education programme is the responsibility of the headteacher.

Within the service this remit is shared by:

- Headteachers
- The Quality Improvement Officer for Personal, Social and Health Education
- The Heads of Service for Primary and Secondary Education
- Managers with the remit for Health Education

5. Learning and Teaching

Education about responsible relationships and sexuality will be set within the context of the health promoting establishment. It will take account of pupils' age, understanding and stage of development and build progressively from pre-school to upper secondary. To ensure continuity of health education it is essential that establishments liaise with the associated pre-school centre / primary / secondary school.

In primary schools education about responsible relationships and sexuality will be delivered through health education and the personal and social education programme. However, connections will be made with other curricular areas, especially religious and moral education.

In the secondary sector, from S1 to S6 this will be delivered mainly through personal, social and health education. Account should be taken of the roles for other courses, e.g. science and religious education.

Key features central to any programme of health education about responsible relationships and sexuality will help pupils to consider:

- respect and caring for self and others
- respect for individual differences
- ways to express and deal with feelings and emotions
- ways to keep safe
- positive and supportive relationships.

It is important that work undertaken in the area of health education about responsible relationships and sexuality is set within the context of a positive school ethos and a supportive classroom climate. Trust and openness should be developed and children and young people encouraged to ask questions and raise issues. Consideration will be given to pupils needs, age, maturity, values and beliefs. The size and composition of the class and the issue of confidentiality will also be taken into account.

A variety of teaching methods and learning activities will be used to deliver health education about responsible relationships and sexuality. Discussion and participative methodologies, with opportunities provided for pupils to share ideas and reflect on their learning, is encouraged. Equal emphasis will be given to the development of knowledge and understanding, skills and the exploration of attitudes and values.

6. *Working with Parents*

The service is committed to work in partnership with parents and acknowledges the cultural, ethnic and religious influences within the home, the school and the community.

Parents and carers play a key role in their children's education. It is essential that schools have strategies in place for consulting with parents and carers when they are developing or reviewing their programme of sex education. All parents and carers will be given the opportunity in advance to view key teaching material and to ask questions about any aspect of a sex education programme.

In preparing programmes and in consulting with parents and carers and responding to their views, schools will be sensitive to parental concerns and to cultural and religious views which they may hold and

which may conflict with particular aspects of the planned programme.

Where parents or carers wish to withdraw a child from all or part of a planned sex education programme they should be invited to discuss their concerns. Schools may wish to ensure that parents and carers are making an informed decision based on a knowledge and understanding of the programme and relevant materials. Given the child's statutory right to education, the child's views must also be taken into account. However, if the parents and carers decide to withdraw their child from a specific programme of sex education arrangements will be made for the pupil to have alternative positive educational provision. It is recognised that aspects of sex education may be discussed in many areas of the curriculum and it would not be possible for a child to be withdrawn from lessons across the curriculum as this would prevent the child from receiving an education directed to the development of his/her fullest ability.

Arrangements will be in place to respond promptly and fully to any concerns which parents and carers might express about the content or conduct of a sex education programme. They should be encouraged to raise concerns directly with the school as soon as possible so that matters can be resolved promptly.

Where, after consultation with the school, the parents or carers remain dissatisfied, the Complaints Procedures Framework should be implemented. Schools will make clear the arrangements for consulting parents and carers and for them to voice their concerns.

Detailed guidance can be found in *Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities on Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers* and information in the leaflet *Sex Education in Scottish Schools – A Guide for Parents and Carers*.

7. Working with other agencies

The service is committed to working with health professionals and others who can offer establishments expert advice and support in line with this policy.

Young people need information on sources of health advice, appropriate helplines and access to local health services. Schools and partner organisations need to work together to establish a protocol that takes into account the professional ethics of the staff involved and the rights of parents and young people. All staff must be fully aware of the implications of protocols with external partner agencies.

Establishments will use the school handbook to inform parents about protocols and procedures; clarify for parents the issue of confidentiality and external agency involvement. Parents will be informed in advance of any sensitive visit or presentation.

Building relationships and joint working with outside specialists is encouraged as this can provide a valuable addition to sex education programmes. Such involvement will be discussed in advance with the headteacher and time allocated for planning and consultation between class teachers and other professionals. A teacher must be present during this input to sex education programmes and visits from other professionals should not be regarded as an alternative to teacher input.

8. Staff development

Staff will be given appropriate opportunities for on-going training and staff development provided jointly by Argyll and Bute Community Services and NHS Argyll and Clyde. Training and staff development needs will be identified through the career review and development process.

9. Resources

A catalogue of resources to support the delivery of health education programmes is held by Health Promotion at NHS Argyll and Clyde. Resources featured may be borrowed by schools. A list of resources for the delivery of health education will be updated regularly and issued to establishments by Community Services.

10. Framework

An exemplar framework for a sex education programme is provided in *5-14 National Guidelines: Health Education – Guide for Teachers and Managers*; an example of a programme of sex education 5-18 is given in *Sex Education in Scottish Schools – A Guide for Parents and Carers*; a curriculum for Sex Education 5-18, including SEN, is provided in *Personal Relationships and Developing Sexuality*. A model framework for health education about responsible relationships and sexuality, based on national advice, is available from Community Service.

11. ASN and vulnerable pupils

There is a particular need for sensitive and personalised education about sexuality. Advice on issues relating to teaching sex education to vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs is provided in *Personal Relationships and Developing Sexuality*. It is important that establishments work with parents to ensure that the individual needs of young people are addressed.

12. Monitoring

Evaluation of progress against key aims and outcomes is an essential part of the programme. Evaluation will be carried out at different levels. Monitoring and review of the programmes, delivery, methodology and resources used in relation to health education about responsible relationships and sexuality is the responsibility of the headteacher. This will be undertaken using quality indicators in *How Good is Our School*. These are exemplified in *A Route to Health Promotion* and *Taking a Closer Look at Health Issues*.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

This policy will be reviewed in 2006/07

