



# ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre

## SEX & RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

### ETHOS

At ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre we believe that sex and relationship education is part of the educational entitlement of all students. As a Lifeskills Learning Centre, we are concerned with educating the whole child and recognise that sexuality development is an integral part of a student's personal development.

The nature of autism means that our students may be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers. The social understanding and interactional difficulties of students with autism can lead to very specific difficulties around personal relationships and sexuality. Some students with autism may be confused about what is acceptable public behaviour. They may need to be taught the skills that other young people acquire incidentally. These young people need help to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable. They may need help and guidance around making and maintaining personal relationships.

The law says that a compulsory programme of sexuality education, including teaching about sexually transmitted diseases must be provided for all students of secondary age. This law also gives parents the right to withdraw their children from sex education at any age, except those parts which are in the National Curriculum science syllabus. These include naming body parts, puberty and human development.

Schools must keep up to date a written statement of their policy on sex education. Copies of this policy are issued on request to parents.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre believe that the basis of moral behaviour is that we all should be respectful of the beliefs of others so each person feels valued for who they are. We aim to provide an environment where each member of the Learning Centre community is treated with respect and where dignity is paramount. Students will be encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, and the responsibilities of parenthood. We aim to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, respecting the values of the Learning Centre population, with awareness of the law on sexual behaviour and safeguarding.

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

As a secondary provision we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

However, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this, unless there are exceptional circumstances where it is agreed with parents and school where this would not be in the best interest of the student at this time.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

At ASPIRE: Lifeskills, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:**

We strive to make the sexuality education programme relevant and accessible to all students regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or social class. <sup>[SEP]</sup>The resources we use reflect the multicultural society in which we live and we will not reinforce stereotypes. We will challenge prejudice.

## **AIMS**

The aims of sex and relationship education are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- To enable cross curricular and holistic opportunities that empower students to effectively communicate, problem-solve and engage with the wider world.
- Give students information, help them acquire the skills and offer them the support they will need to meet the challenges and demands of life in the community
- Improve self-esteem among our young people. We believe that a major part of human dignity is about feeling good about oneself. As people with autism often have low self esteem we consider this element of sex education vital if young people are to develop caring relationships and not exploit or be exploited by others
- Support all students to extend their skills in communicating about sexuality issues; to help them access information and to enable them to express themselves most appropriately

- Improve the students' awareness of their own body, how it changes at different times of life and how these changes can best be dealt with
- Support the students to identify and understand their emotions and help them develop the skills to manage them
- Help the young person develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships
- Support students to foster an understanding of and a healthy attitude to human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework
- Help the young person to understand how relationships are formed, maintained and sometimes ended
- Establish an awareness of the importance of stable family life and the responsibilities of parenthood
- Develop a respect for diversity and the need to avoid prejudice and discrimination

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

ASPIRE: Lifeskills Directors' responsibilities:

- Ratify and regularly review this policy to ensure it conforms to relevant law and guidance

The Head Teacher's responsibilities;

- Ensure all relevant staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate professional development; and ensure that local procedures are followed
- To inform parents of this policy, curriculum content and their right to withdraw their child
- To engage outside agencies to support the teaching of sex and relationship education in the Learning Centre

Responsibilities of Staff;

- To enable and support students to understand the content of the curriculum
- To provide a safe and secure environment where students feel able to discuss and seek support on issues relating to sex and relationships

Responsibilities of ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre's Students;

- To treat others with respect and follow agreed rules

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers;

- To work in close partnership with the Learning Centre and their child to address key issues relating to sex and relationship education

## **ORGANISATION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMME:**

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The subject will be taught in conjunction with colleagues from external agencies. Students respond well to specialist input and we value greatly the health care team's contribution to sex education. We ensure that all visiting speakers are familiar with the Learning Centre's Sex and Relationships Education Policy and that their philosophy is compatible with that of the school.

Within the curriculum students are taught about safeguarding in school. The following areas are among those addressed in Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and in the wider curriculum-

- Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Peer on peer abuse, including sexual abuse and harassment
- Drugs, alcohol and substance misuse (including awareness of County Lines and the Criminal Exploitation of children where appropriate)
- Online safety
- The danger of meeting up with strangers
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy Relationships / Consent
- (so called) Honour Based Abuse issues e.g. forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Sexual exploitation of children (CSE), including online
- Child criminal exploitation (including cybercrime)
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Emotional wellbeing

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

## **GROUPINGS**

Sex and relationships education will be taught mainly in mixed classes of boys and girls, although certain issues, such as personal hygiene, will be discussed in single - sex groups. Boys and girls generally need to be taught the same material to encourage greater understanding, appreciation and respect for each other, as well as to ensure that important information is provided for all, irrespective of gender. Work within smaller groups or individuals may be required for students' specific needs. Staff will judge when students are ready to move on to more specific work on sexuality and sexual relationships. Some of these areas may be dealt with on a 1:1 basis. These include:

- Masturbation and the related feelings
- Sexual intimacy and relationships

- Sexual preference<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Pregnancy and birth
- Safer sex and contraception

## **RESOURCES**

Resources for supporting the teaching of SRE are selected very carefully and are only used with the approval from the Head Teacher. Clear and unambiguous images are important when teaching about sexual matters. The resources will be targeted for each key stage and then into topic areas. ASPIRE: Lifeskills has adopted the PSHE Association programme of study to ensure the statutory guidance is comprehensively covered in the following three areas: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships, and Living in the Wider World.

## **SAFEGUARDING AND PROCEDURES:**

As identified in the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019 statutory guidance, which was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, the guidance sets out the legal duties we must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in our School and paragraph 89 (Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding) has been updated to reflect the new requirements for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills adopts an open and accepting attitude towards students as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. Staff encourage students and parents to feel free to talk about any concerns and to see school as a safe place when there are difficulties. Student's worries and fears will be taken seriously and they are encouraged to seek help from members of staff.

In addition ASPIRE: Lifeskills includes in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE / Citizenship / Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse (including online and other contexts children are in), and to know to whom they can turn for help. A pastoral team also supports students in 1:1 wellbeing sessions that are both timetabled and as need arises for each student.

## **Working in partnership with the family and information sharing**

As identified in the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019 statutory guidance, which was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, the guidance sets out the legal duties we must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in our School and paragraph 89 (Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding) has been updated to reflect the new requirements for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

Parents and carers usually know their children best and should be involved at the earliest opportunity when safeguarding concerns are identified to explore any worries that they have so that they can be helped to reduce these to safeguard the child/young person. Parents should be involved at the earliest opportunity unless to do so would prejudice the safety of the child/young person. Information sharing and confidentiality will comply with both Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019 statutory

guidance and GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and comply with the rules for sharing information.

Safeguarding procedures will be invoked if students make disclosures of possible abuse or any other disclosure that raise concerns for the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18. As with all issues surrounding abuse or other matters that raise concern for the child/young person's welfare, staff will follow safeguarding procedures and maintain appropriate confidentiality whilst taking the necessary action to ensure the student's safety to promote the welfare of the child/young person. At the same time students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

### **INVOLVING PARENTS:**

We aim to provide information for parents about the health-related topics covered during each key stage and itemise what is covered with each year group. Where puberty-related changes are being taught parents will be informed about the content to be covered beforehand and they will be invited to the school to review the materials to be used with the students.

At times moral and ethical issues may arise which require clarification for the students. When these questions arise within a National Curriculum subject or at pastoral times, as long as discussion takes place within the context of the subject, it will not be deemed to be part of the sex education programme and therefore not subject to the parental right of withdrawal.

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:**

Any complaint about the sex education curriculum should be made to the ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre's Director, in line with the Learning Centre's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

### **PROCEDURES FOR POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION:**

This policy will be reviewed annually, by members of the SLT, and other key staff (possibly external). Parental feedback will also be taken into account. This will include an evaluation of current resources, staff training and implementation of the programme at each key stage.

### **CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS**

- Policy remains compliant with all law and guidance
- Review of policy and SRE curriculum finds it to be appropriate to the needs of students in the Learning Centre.

### **LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES**

Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfEE 2000) to be updated 2020


Education Act 2011

PSHE & Citizenship Policy

Safeguarding Policy

**POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT**

This policy will be reviewed every year or earlier should legislative change or other event require it.

SIGNED:.... 

POSITION:.....DIRECTOR

DATE:.....25<sup>th</sup> July 2021

REVIEW DATE:....1<sup>st</sup> July 2022

FOR & ON BEHALF OF