**THAMESMEAD SCHOOL**

**POLICY FOR SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION**

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<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Peter Rodin</th>
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<td>Governors Committee</td>
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What is sex and relationship education?

‘It is life long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.’

Sex and relationship education guidance
Ref DFEE 016/2000

Sex Education is included in the curriculum for all students in such a manner as to encourage them to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. The main aims are the provision of knowledge, the development of caring attitudes and the acquisition of skills for informed decision making.
**Sex Education at Thamesmead**

The ultimate aim of the school policy on sex education is to promote pupil wellbeing and develop a well-informed, responsible, caring generation of the future.

The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. The School recognises that parents are key figures in helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by schools should be seen as complementary and supportive of the role of parents.

The purpose of Sex and Relationships education is to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction. At the same time it should lead to the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare students to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

At Thamesmead School we aim to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner. It will be set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law regarding sexual behaviour. Students will be encouraged to appreciate the value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood.

Sex and relationship education at Thamesmead is delivered in three main ways: through the whole school ethos, through the school curriculum, and through specially focused curriculum provision. Pupils identify and articulate feelings and emotions; learn to manage new or difficult situations positively and form and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of people. Details of this integrated approach are provided in this document.

**Through the ethos of the school**

Thamesmead has earned the reputation of being a caring school, and particular consideration is given to the emotional needs of the students. The House System and the Tutor Group structure promote a sense of belonging so that each student feels valued. The whole school ethos encourages close working relationships between staff and students and the development of an atmosphere of mutual respect and personal responsibility. The learning environment created offers pupils an opportunity to consider their own sexuality and to learn to value themselves and others. Through the tutorial system, PSHE and assemblies students are encouraged to discuss sensitive issues, to understand peer pressure and to recognise that if they value themselves they will take responsibility for themselves and not make decisions that are harmful to them. Thus the pastoral system supports students in
understanding themselves and their development as responsible people and in
promoting a positive attitude towards personal behaviour.

Through the curriculum
Teachers at Thamesmead recognise the important role they play in the personal and
social development of the students in their care. The PSHE programme is delivered
primarily across subject areas and through Citizenship and RS lessons, not as ‘add-
on’, but as an essential part of the school curriculum, and matters relating to sex and
relationship education are also dealt with in this way. Through subject areas
students are enabled to understand a range of social and cultural issues and they are
actively encouraged to consider personal relationships. When features of such
education occur in the curriculum they appear in a coherent and planned manner in
a form which ensures continuity and progression.

This can be seen when, in Year 7 PSHE, students are encouraged to reach an
understanding of the rights and responsibly of a child, building healthy friendships
and recognising the effects of stereotyping. In science lessons they are taught the
basic biology of human reproduction and the hormonal changes in puberty.
In Year 8 pupils learn more about personal safety.

In years 10 and 11 students look at topics from a different approach or emphasis
reflecting their greater maturity, so that through science they understand more
deeply the ethical aspects of human reproduction, and they are given information on
preventative health care. In Religious Studies students recognise and discuss
sensitive and controversial issues such as HIV, AIDS, sex within and before marriage,
celibacy, and abortion. These involve a deeper consideration of attitudes, values,
beliefs, and morality. Texts studied in English literature promote a deeper
understanding of personal feelings and relationships, and encourage sensitivity and
empathy. Hence throughout the years sex and relationship education in the
curriculum has progressed from the basic biology of human reproduction and
physical change at puberty to a deeper understanding of the physical, emotional,
and social changes that take place in adolescence and students have been given the
opportunity to examine personal feelings and recognise influences which affect the
decision-making processes.

Underpinning all this work is the belief that sex and relationship education is not just
about facts, but it is about relationships, attitudes and feelings, and the way people
live and work together. The importance of self and mutual respect is emphasised
and students are helped to accept their sexuality as part of their whole personality
and to understand that sexuality is part of what a person is and not what they do.

Specially focused Curriculum Provision
In Year 9 all students follow a course of ‘Education for Parenthood’ course during the
academic year. This revisits the importance of healthy and supportive relationships,
and the potential effects of teenage sexual activity and pregnancy on relationships, health and future plans are discussed. The right to say ‘no’ is discussed and being assertive in certain situations and relationships is discussed and rehearsed. The nature of consent and the law regarding consent is taught. Pregnancy, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases are investigated and discussed. Details of the topics covered are available for parents on request.

**Advice to individual students**

It is important to distinguish between the provision of general education about sexual matters, and counselling and advising individual students on such issues. Our visible pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of our students means that that often turn to us for advice and we are aware that we must exercise particular care in relation to such advice. A teacher approached by an individual student for specific advice on contraception or other aspects of sexual behaviour will encourage the student to seek advice from their parent or carer, and when appropriate, from the student’s GP or the school nurse.

If a teacher feels that the student has already embarked on a course of action which places him or her at risk the teacher has a responsibility to ensure that the student is aware of the implications of his/her behaviour and seeks professional advice. Once again the student would be urged to discuss the matter with his/her parents, and in some cases the teacher may feel it necessary to ensure that this happens. In cases relating to child protection issues, guidance for the action to be taken may be found in the school’s Child Protection Policy and information should be passed immediately to one of the team of trained for Child Protection issues led by Lisa Chambers.

**Sensitive Issues**

Sex education should aim to present facts in an objective and sensitive manner, which within a clear framework of values and showing an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Teachers also need to be aware of the different backgrounds from which children come and they need to show sensitive consideration of different ethnic and religious groups. There will be occasions when teachers will have to use their discretion about how to deal with explicit issues raised by individual questions. One such issue may be homosexuality. Teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.

**Informing Parents – The Right of Withdrawal**

Representative parents, staff and Governors have taken part in the evaluation of the ideas submitted in this document. The section on Sex Education in the school prospectus makes parents aware of this policy document and of their right to withdraw their children from any part of this educational programme. This is in line with section 241 of the Education Act 1993 which gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school’s programme of sex education other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order.
Parents of Year 9 students will be issued with a letter informing them of the content of the Education for Parenthood course and encouraging them to support the school in this as well as reminding them of their Right to Withdrawal. These letters will be emailed at the start of the course by the subject teacher. From 2015 parents will be asked to consent to Sex and Relationship Education as part of their other consents at start of Year 7.

**Teaching and Learning**
The 2015 annual subject review of Citizenship showed that the teaching and learning in Education for Parenthood was graded as good.

**Materials used**
In addition to school textbooks, the only leaflets used in lessons and which are available to the students are those published by recognised Health Authorities. A selection of these are available for parents and governors to see on request. Thamesmead students are protected from accessing unsuitable materials on the Internet. Individual students may have their access to the internet removed if it is found that they have been trying to access unsuitable sites.

**Future Planning**
Lisa Chamber, Student Support has arranged for outside agencies, including the School Nurse to provide information sessions as part of Curriculum Enrichment days where students have been able to gain information and ask further questions. These guidelines are produced using the PSHE Association Programme of Study (2014)

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<td>Member of staff responsible</td>
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