

Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson



Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

Sex and relationships education 2017-18

The school's position is one where sex is part of an adult safe, consensual, equal and mutually respectful and caring relationship. The school also believes that developing and embedding wider positive core values and a healthy character as a young person are essential to being safe and happy in one's sexuality and sexual behaviours; if you learn to be authentically empathetic and respectful and show kindness as a person you are likely to bring those qualities to your intimate relationships.

Always in a context of safe and respectful and compassionate behaviours we embrace diverse and different orientation and families as positive and "normal" and encourage and promote tolerance and understanding of others in our increasingly complex and diverse society.

There are particular challenges in our specialist setting and in our times where for example;

- Homophobia has steadily been eroded but there is no room for complacency and there are challenges and risks to fairness and kindness and equality for people who do not fit neatly into traditional notions of gender and sexuality;
- There is the huge challenge of our young people accessing pornography and how it can bend and put out of shape emerging sexuality and damage rounded and healthy attitudes and behaviours and so deny young people healthy expectation and future happiness;
- Awareness of sexual abuse is greater but we are still coming to understand and have not addressed as a society calculated and widespread child sexual exploitation;
- In a school still wholly populated by boys and young men (the school can accept girls) attitudes to women and sex can be and are frequently ignorant and misinformed and sometimes hostile;
- In a school where a significant minority of students have experienced domestic abuse this risk of misogyny is tangible and this includes unhealthy and unbalanced views about sex and relationships.

These particular and powerful risks and challenges are most effectively challenged and healed in the context of safe and positive relationships with staff and real life modelling that means inclusive and respectful and compassionate values, attitudes and behaviours are being authentically lived out and we will return to this later in the document.

In our conversation about best and most influential practice we know we impact most and embed securely healthy and inclusive attitudes, values and behaviours when we teach and support them skilfully, discipline them with compassion and fairness and take an authentic interest in them and their lives.

Staff who do this relentlessly and authentically are trusted and respected by the children and the active listening between adult and youngster is strong. This context, this positive climate in which children and young people both listen and are heard is critical to authentically promoting their safety and happiness and emergence as adults with their sexuality and respectful of others.

In short skilled staff have respect and influence and therefore can help the children and young people to be knowledgeable, discerning and safe and this true throughout our work; everything is both underpinned and driven by the adult's skill and good practice.

Another significant nuance is seeking and securing specialist support for our children and young people when resources are so stretched and benchmarks for access both high and often hard to reliably know and or navigate; for example the drop in service for our school nurse.

In this nuanced and challenging context sex and relationship education has the following elements and we want the young people in our care to become increasingly fluent in the following.

Attitudes and values

- Considering what our beliefs and values and morality are around sex and relationships and how they influence our behaviour?
- Exploring the morality and issues around sex and relationships and becoming a critical thinker and an informed decision-maker; one who knows how to be respected and stay safe and offer respect and safety to others.
- Understanding the value of commitment, stability, respect and love in relationships and their importance in parenting and in being a part of a wider cohesive community and society.

Personal and social skills

- Dealing with our own complex, powerful and nuanced feelings and our interactions with others with growing self-awareness, confidence and sensitivity and respect.
- Understanding and accepting and respecting difference and making informed, independent choices without fear of prejudice and where it exists developing the strength to still be oneself.
- Seeing and understanding the consequences our choices bring.
- Dealing with dispute and difficulty and recognising when you are treated badly including being groomed and exploited.

Knowledge and understanding

- Understanding your physical development in a safe and appropriate way
- Understanding and feeling comfortable about diverse sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Being aware of contraception, health advice and the support available to you.
- Learning about the reasons for and benefits from delaying sexual activity
- How to avoid unplanned pregnancy

It should mean that they are prepared for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour and keep them and others safe and happy;
- understand and value and respect their own and others' diverse and different sexuality;
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- understand the reasons for having protected sex;
- understand the consequences of their choices and actions and behave responsibly in their relationships;
- have robust confidence and self-esteem and are therefore able to make sound judgements about the kind of relationships they want;
- make themselves understood;
- protect themselves and others from unwanted pregnancy, STDs and HIV;
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others in their relationships;
- avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex;
- can access suitable support, advice, help and if necessary treatment and understand how the law applies to sexual relationships