

# Sex Education Policy

The Governing Body has adopted  
The Meridian School Sex Education Policy.

Date adopted by the Governing Body: September 2015



Chair of Governors:

Date of Review: September 2016

## **Rationale and Objectives**

### **Rationale:**

Sex education provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. It should encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow students to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

### **Objectives:**

- To enable students to understand the biological aspects of reproduction
- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of family planning in terms of personal preference and their social and moral implications
- To recognise and be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as conception, virginity, birth, child-rearing, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, values, beliefs and morality
- To make students aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society and recognise the importance of personal choice in managing relationships so that they do not present risks to health and personal safety
- To make students aware that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and that people have the right not to be sexually active
- To understand the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact on lifestyles, e.g. the menopause
- To recognise that parenthood is a matter of choice
- To critically analyse moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups
- To understand the concept of stereotyping and to discuss issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effects on individuals
- To understand aspects of legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender and equal opportunities and to make aware the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships

### **Delivery**

Sex education at Meridian School is taught in a cross curricular way through Biology, Religious Studies and Religious, Personal and Social Education. The diverse staffing and the variety of experience contained within this teaching body is seen as a valuable resource for the delivery of sex education. The provision of sex education is seen as progressive in terms of language, concepts and content which increases in depth and complexity as students progress through the School.

Throughout the course of teaching a variety of sensitive issues will inevitably be explored. It is recognised that an individual's sexuality is a highly personal matter.

The teaching of sex education at Meridian School will place stress upon the need for understanding and awareness of a variety of sexual preferences across the spectrum of human sexuality.

It is intended that students will be given up-to-date information on a wide variety of contraceptive methods and whilst general statements about the efficacy of these methods will be given, specific advice and guidance to individuals will not be made without consultation with the parents.

## **Sex Education in the Curriculum**

**Introduction:** Meridian School is concerned to offer an education for the whole person, body, mind and spirit. Part of the make-up of all humans is that they are sexual beings. It would be irresponsible of the school to ignore this. The sex education programme at Meridian aims to be a sensitive and responsible one which is set in a moral and social framework. It also aims to meet the statutory provision which has been outlined in various Government documents.

**Context:** The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. Schools must recognise 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 to the role of parents. In an attempt to achieve this, the 1988 Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that all students should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of sex education during their school careers through a curriculum which:

- "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at school and of society; and
- prepares such students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

It is recognised that sex education is a difficult issue which will place demands on schools and teachers. However, the purpose of sex education should be 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.

The sex education delivered should be tailored not only to the age, but also to the understanding of students. At Meridian School, with its Christian value-system, it will not be value-free, although it will 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. Such matters will be treated with sensitivity and great care will be taken to encourage all children to feel a sense of worth. Particular care will be taken when issues such as marital breakdown and divorce are dealt with.

## **Definition of Sex Education:**

The law does not give a definitive statement as to what sex education is. At Meridian School it is regarded as education about sexual matters within a values framework, focusing upon responsibility within caring, committed relationships. Among the things it will concentrate on are knowledge of the facts of human reproductive processes and behaviour, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and abortion, and a consideration of the broader emotional and ethical dimensions of sexual attitudes.

## **The Parental Right to Withdraw their Son or Daughter from Sex Education Lessons:**

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 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. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their children from this programme. In this case, such parents should write to the Headmaster, stating their objections. The schemes of work contained within this document will enable parents to estimate the point at which specific aspects of sex education will be delivered to their child. The biological element of reproduction remains within the National Curriculum Science Order for Key Stage 3, and is covered in detail during the Fourth Year as part of the IGCSE course. Other issues are dealt with in Religious, Personal and Social Education.

## **Advice to Individual Students:**

It is understood that it is important to distinguish between the School's function of providing education generally about sexual matters and the giving of advice to individual students on these issues. Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of their students. It is also understood that this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It is understood that particular care must be exercised in relation to giving contraceptive advice to students under the age of sixteen, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. It is the general rule that giving an individual student advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be inappropriate.

Where the circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the student has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law, the teacher has the general responsibility to ensure that the student is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice.

## **Aims**

In the attempt to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, responsible attitudes and behaviour with regard to sex education, Meridian School aims to:

Provide a worthwhile educational experience for all its students which will present opportunities:

- to help students to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and for others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity;
- to enable students to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes should behave responsibly in sexual matters;
- to support the personal development and social skills of the students;
- to ensure that students have an understanding of their own and others' sexuality;
- to enjoy relationships based upon mutual respect and responsibility which are free from abuse and exploitation;
- to provide information and knowledge which will counteract prejudice and ignorance;
- to develop an understanding of risk and to promote strategies for personal safety;
- to enable students to be aware of the sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them.

### **Policy Review**

**This policy is to be reviewed annually**