

Harrogate Ladies' College

Sexual Health Policy



1. **Policy Statement**

Harrogate Ladies' College believes that sex education is part of the educational entitlement of all pupils. All young people, whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally and need to be helped to understand their bodies and their feelings. Sex education helps our pupils' overall development, confidence and self-esteem, and is taught as part of a balanced, cross-curricular Personal, Social and Health Education programme supported by the Christian ethos of the College.

We intend this programme to compliment and support parental responsibilities and we see it as an integral part of each individual pupil's emergence into adulthood.

We affirm in our teaching traditional Christian values and seek to promote a Christian understanding of marriage and family life. At the same time we recognise the diverse religious and social conditions to be found in a pluralist society.

2. **Aims**

The sex education curriculum is primarily concerned with:

- The provision of factual information and the development of an understanding of it
- The development of a range of appropriate personal skills
- The clarification of attitudes and values

These aims should match the age and maturity of the pupils involved but underpinning all of them will be an understanding of biological, emotional, social, legal and moral aspects of sex and sexuality.

OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the above aims the following objectives should be considered:

- To enable pupils to understand the biological facts related to human growth and development including reproduction and contraception
- To enable pupils to understand the nature of feelings and emotions experienced by themselves and others and the importance of healthy relationships
- To develop an understanding of and a sensitivity to different lifestyles, needs and feelings of others
- To enable pupils to identify and use sources of help and advice within the family, College and community
- To assist pupils in making informed decisions about their sexual behaviour and the consequences of behaviour which carries risks
- To develop an understanding of a range of values and moral issues including the value of family life in its many different contexts
- To enable pupils to know and understand the legal framework relating to sexual activity
- To foster a range of personal skills and qualities such as communication, decision making, negotiation, assertiveness and self-esteem which will enhance their ability to lead sexually fulfilling and healthy lives

We intend that the College sex education policy and programme should accord with other whole school policies such as the P.S.H.E. policy.

We propose that sex education is organised in this College in the following ways;

- appointing a co-ordinator
- be taught in appropriate group size
- be taught preferably by members of both genders to give a balanced viewpoint and health professionals where appropriate

- Allow topics to recur at increasing levels of conceptual complexity with increasing age, taking into account the beliefs, values, language, ability and culture of the pupils
- Be taught in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner set within a clear Christian framework of values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour
- Provide knowledge about healthy relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction having due regard for the moral considerations and the value of family life

CONFIDENTIALITY

The College is not in a position to offer wholly unconditional confidentiality, although the duty of confidentiality owed to young people is the same as that owed to any person. The confidentiality of a pastoral discussion must be respected, as far as possible, unless there are strong reasons not to do so, for example, child protection concerns or the health and safety of others.

A pupil may need the specialist help of a trained counsellor or health worker who has the expertise to deal with sexual health issues and concerns such as sexual orientation, contraception and sexual behaviour. In such cases it may be more appropriate for the College to support the pupil and parents by putting them in contact with the most appropriate service.

CURRICULUM

Many of the issues which are taught and discussed are the same for both genders, however, some should be delivered with a different emphasis and focus:

GIRLS

- Managing the physical changes of puberty including menstruation and masturbation.
- To learn how to be assertive about and within relationships.
- To develop an understanding of attitudes towards body image and how body image can be altered appropriately and safely.

- To develop strategies for managing girl to girl peer pressure.
- To develop an understanding of sexual harassment and how to deal with it.
- To develop an understanding of social and gender stereotyping that adversely affect girls and strategies to challenge, manage and respond appropriately.
- To develop an understanding of how issues of power and control can affect relationships and what this means for girls and boys.

STAFFING

All form staff are involved in the PSHE programme (and hence the sex education programme) right through the College. Most of the sessions are carried out by one of the Health Centre staff who are registered general nurses and have undertaken relevant training on delivering sexual health programmes to children and adolescents.

PARENTS

The teaching offered by the College is intended to be complimentary and supportive to the role of the parents. All parents are encouraged to read and discuss the policy with the staff. This will enable parents to follow through work done in College with further discussions at home.

Parents have the right to withdraw their daughter/s from any sex education taught outside the National Curriculum. This applies to all pupils attending College, including those over compulsory school age, although it is hoped the pupil's wishes would be paramount in the event of any difference of opinion. Parents will not be able to withdraw pupils from the sex education that arises incidentally as part of any curriculum area, provided that such discussion is relatively limited.

If parents wish to withdraw their daughters from the programme, they are invited to indicate their reasons in writing to the Headmistress so that any misunderstandings may be resolved.

A letter will be sent out to parents in advance of any Sexual Health days.