



The Maria Montessori Training Organisation
trading as
The Maria Montessori Institute

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

We define sex and relationship education as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development'. We recognise that today's family unit comprises of many different elements and we promote a stable and loving relationship, celebrating the commitment of those participants towards their family life. 'It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health'. It will involve teaching knowledge about reproduction, growth and development, developing positive attitudes and respect and the skills of making good relationships and responsible choices.

Children are presented with images of sex everyday from television, newspapers, magazines, popular music and advertising which have little to do with reality. Children need to come to terms with these while learning from planned activities in school.

It is important to emphasise the positive aspects of feelings children have about changing and growing up, while providing opportunities to clarify what they know, to learn more, and for exploring areas of concern. Sensitive issues need to be dealt with either as they arise or built into programmes of work.

The importance of friendships and relationships, feelings and emotions, and families of different kinds needs to be given much thought and consideration at every age group. Children should be aware, from an early age, of their rights to their personal space.

Children's questions should always be answered appropriately according to their stage of development. The role of the teacher is to guide the natural interest of children and provide factual and unprejudiced information bearing in mind equal opportunities.

While we use sex and relationship education to inform children about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. We do not use sex and relationship education as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

Teachers must be aware of differing cultural and religious views on some aspects of sex education and take account of these differing views whenever possible.

Aims and objectives

We teach children about:

- The physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults;



- The ways humans reproduce;
- Respect for their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship;
- The importance of family life;
- Moral questions;
- Relationship issues;
- Respect for the views of other people;
- Sex abuse and what they should do if they are worried about any sexual matters.

Context

While sex and relationship education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach sex and relationship education in the belief that:

- Sex and relationship education should be taught in the context of committed couples and family life;
- Sex education and relationship is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process;
- Children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- Children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
- It is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
- Children need to learn the importance of self-control.

Organisation

We teach sex and relationship education through different aspects of the curriculum, through subject areas (for example, science and PE), where we feel that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and how it is changing and developing.

We teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues that arise spontaneously. We teach about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.



In science lessons, teachers inform children about puberty and how a baby is born. We teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. We teach children about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

We always teach with due regard for the emotional development of the children (as stated earlier in this policy).

The role of parents

The school is aware that the primary role in children's sex and relationship education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Inform parents about the school's sex and relationship education policy and practice;
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the sex and relationship education of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or steering committee about this policy or the arrangements for sex and relationship education in the school;
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to sex and relationship education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct sex and relationship education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that s/he may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the headteacher. The headteacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals and follow the school's child protection procedures. (See Child Protection Policy)



The role of the head teacher

It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about the sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the head teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The head teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex and relationship education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework.

The head teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to steering committee, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

Monitoring and review

The Steering Committee of the steering committee monitors our sex and relationship education policy on an annual basis. The Steering Committee will give serious consideration to any comments from parents and children about the sex and relationship education programme.