

## **Hall Green School response to RSHE policy consultation**

We would like to thank each of the 105 parents who took the time to respond to the consultation on the Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy. Of those parents, a majority were supportive of the policy.

Some very constructive points were made, which will help us to shape our delivery as we move forward. A few parents sought further clarification or expressed concerns. I hope that the following response will provide clarity and reassurance.

The school is not promoting a particular view about sex, sexuality and relationships and we are not asked to do so by the DFE guidance. We do, however, promote a set of values, which can be summarised as tolerance, mutual respect, individual liberty, democracy and the rule of law. It is therefore important in a comprehensive school, where there is great diversity, that we both show respect for the different cultural backgrounds of all of the pupils and teach them that they must show tolerance to those who are different or who hold different views. We also have a duty to teach pupils what the law says and to fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities should any issues surface.

In particular, in any session on an aspect of sex and relationships, our teachers are expected to show respect for pupils' cultural contexts. Ground rules should be established, such as using appropriate language and not expecting pupils to disclose any personal information. Those sessions which teach directly about sex will be conducted in single-sex groups.

Some parents expressed concern that sex education is taught too young. Our main input is not until year 9, although in year 7, pupils learn about reproduction as part of the National Curriculum in science. Although it is only those sessions which teach directly about sex that are classed as "sex education", we will always inform parents in advance about these. Parents then have a right to withdraw their child (up to an age where they are three terms before their sixteenth birthday, at which point the child may request that they take part in sex education.)

A number of parents stated that they felt that it was the parents' job to teach their children about sex and relationships. We would agree with this. However, our aim is to complement the input from parents and those teachers who will be delivering have recently received training and possess a wide knowledge of technical and legal aspects of the subject that only a minority of parents may have.

We have attempted to contact all of those parents who left contact details for us on the survey to discuss further the points that they raised. (The survey was anonymous, so we do not have that information unless you chose to give it to us.) We normally publish our RSHE materials on the school website and will update this as new materials are produced for the new curriculum. A few of the materials which are used for sex education might not be appropriate to publish on a website that all ages have access to. However, when we send out a letter informing parents of an upcoming lesson on sex education, we could make these available to parents who specifically request them.

I hope that this has provided clarity for those who requested it and some reassurance. However, please feel free to contact us in school if you wish to discuss the policy further.

A. Simson (Deputy Head Teacher) May 2021