

SEX EDUCATION POLICY

The school's Governors have laid down the following statement, which is included in the School Brochure.

Sex Education The school has no formal programme of sex education at present up to year 5. Where such matters arise in school, questions are dealt with in an open, honest and factual manner, having regard to the provisions of the Education Act, 1986. In year 6, the subject is introduced through health education and science, and material provided by the local health authority through the school nurse may be used, among other sources. Parents will be informed in advance of this, and will have the opportunity to withdraw their child if they wish. All such year 6 provision will be within the terms of the Education Act, 1986.

Year 6 children in particular are at a stage where many of them are increasingly interested in sexual matters and are increasingly aware of sexual matters through television. For girls, the onset of menstruation often occurs at this time. Inevitably therefore, sexual matters arise in the course of discussion with children, and teachers answer the children's questions as above. It is sometimes appropriate to discuss a particular query with an individual child, where the matter may be of an especially personal, rather than a general, nature. This should be done with sensitivity, and the advice that the child should:

- inform the parents that the discussion has taken place
- seek further advice from parents
- assure parents of the availability of the school to discuss such matters with them.

The current generation of children are the first to face growing up with the problem of AIDS and HIV infection. It is the duty of schools to safeguard the well-being of pupils by ensuring that they are aware of:

- the effects of HIV infection and AIDS
- the means of transmission of HIV infection
- behaviour patterns that can lead to HIV infection
- means of preventing HIV infection.

Children will be introduced to this subject as they progress through the school at times appropriate to their needs and development. The moral aspects of this are subjective in nature, and are more fully covered under the scope of Personal and Social Education and also in teaching about Christian and other religious beliefs and codes of conduct in Religious Education. This document seeks to ensure that children grow up aware of the physiological aspects of AIDS and HIV infection.

Ref: SexEd/6
Sex Education

Dear Parent,

Your child has reached the age at the threshold of puberty and over the next few years will experience considerable physical and psychological change as they grow up from children into adults. Children of this age are at a stage where many of them are increasingly interested in sexual matters and are increasingly aware of sexual matters through television. To help them through what can be a difficult time, the school has arranged that a videotape about puberty and its associated changes be shown to your child. This will then be discussed with the children by the school nurse, and by your child's teacher.

The current generation of children is the first to face growing up with the problem of AIDS and HIV infection. It is therefore important that children have correct information so that they can safeguard their well-being. This is in accord with the policy of the Local Education Authority and the school's Governors, as set out in paragraph thirteen of the School Brochure.

You have the opportunity to withdraw your child if you wish. However, doubtless the children will discuss this among themselves later, and we would not be able to prevent a withdrawn child from receiving garbled information as a result. All such provision is within the terms of the Education Act, 1986.

The videotape will be shown and discussed on DATE. If you wish your child not to take part, please inform me in writing before that date. If you would like to discuss this matter first, please make an appointment so that time can be set aside for you.

Yours sincerely.

To Parents of Year 6 children only