

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2002

COUNCIL GUIDELINES ON SEX & RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report seeks Committee approval for a policy statement on Sex & Relationship Education.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee approves the contents of the proposed policy statement (Appendix) and authorises me to ensure that it is implemented systematically and sympathetically.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 25 January 2000 when the Scottish Executive's initial proposals to repeal Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986 were discussed (Article 1 of the minute of the meeting refers), and to the meeting of the Education Committee on 23 January 2001 when a Council response to a consultation exercise conducted by Learning & Teaching Scotland on Sex Education was approved (Article 7 of the minute of the meeting refers).

2.2 On completion of the aforementioned consultation exercise, Learning & Teaching Scotland published a range of documents on Sex Education which were accompanied by SEED Circular No 2/2001. That circular provided specific guidance in the light of the contents of Section 56 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 on the conduct of Sex Education in schools.

3 PROPOSED POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Since the publication of SEED Circular No 2/2001 on 22 March 2001, the Council's Guidance Steering Group (a group of teachers drawn from both the primary and secondary sectors) has been examining the various sources of advice along with existing Council policy.

3.2 The enclosed policy statement has been developed principally by the Council's Guidance Steering Group and its contents are now being brought before the Committee for approval.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS

There are obviously huge areas of overlap between Human Rights and Sex & Relationship Education. However, in approving the contents of the enclosed policy statement, the Education Committee will be endorsing advice which is entirely consistent with Human Rights legislation.

5 CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and the Director of Law & Administration.

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

APPENDICES

JAA/MMM

ANGUS COUNCIL - EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SEX & RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

1 RATIONALE

- 1.1 In February 2000 Scottish Executive Ministers appointed a Working Group to review the range of curricular advice and support available to teachers on Sex Education specifically in the light of the repeal of Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986.
- 1.2 The Group concluded that existing guidelines, advice and support information were adequate but they could usefully be complemented by the development of additional materials to support teachers in developing their programmes and consulting with parents.
- 1.3 The following documents were issued to local authorities and schools
 - Health Education 5-14 National Guidelines (Learning & Teaching Scotland 2000)
 - A Guide for Parents and Carers (Learning & Teaching Scotland 2001)
 - Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers (Learning & Teaching Scotland 2001)
 - Summary of National Advice (Learning & Teaching Scotland 2001)
- 1.4 Reference is made within these documents to Local Authorities having clear policies on Sex Education. It is therefore appropriate now for Angus Council to review its policies, and specifically the section on Sexuality within the Tayside Regional Policy (adopted by Angus Council) "Putting People First" (TRC 1993).
- 1.5 The advice contained within "Putting People First" remains relevant and should be read in conjunction with this policy statement.

2 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Sex Education can be defined as a process whereby children and young people acquire knowledge, understanding and skills and develop beliefs and attitudes about their sexuality and relationships. Given the importance attached to understanding sexuality in the context of relationships, school programmes in this aspect of the curriculum would be more accurately entitled "*Sex & Relationship Education*".

- 2.2 Sex & Relationship Education should be integrated within a comprehensive programme of Personal, Social and Health Education including Education for Personal Safety. There should also be clear links with Science and Religious & Moral Education.
- 2.3 Sex & Relationship Education should be set within the health-promoting ethos of the school.
- 2.4 A Sex & Relationship Education programme for children and young people should have regard to the value of commitment in relationships and the value of a stable family life.
- 2.5 Sex & Relationship Education should be non-discriminatory and sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of all young people. It should provide opportunities for young people to consider and reflect on a range of attitudes to gender, sexuality and sexual orientation, relationships and family life. It should help young people to make informed choices about their lives, their relationships and their contribution to society.
- 2.6 Angus Council is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. This partnership acknowledges the cultural, ethnic and religious influences within the home. School policies and approaches to Sex & Relationship Education must take account of these influences.
- 2.7 Sex & Relationship Education programmes should be relevant in content to the ages and maturity levels of pupils, and should foster in pupils of all ages self-awareness and self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves and others.

3 PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

3.1 Sex & Relationship Education Programmes

Schools are expected to provide Sex & Relationship Education for all pupils from P1 through to S6. The programme must take account of each child's age and stage of development and build on what children already know. It should be an integral feature of Health Education and links to other curriculum areas should be identified. A whole school approach will ensure continuity and progression from age 5-14 and beyond.

To support the development of continuity between Primary 7 and Secondary 1 relevant information on the coverage of Sex & Relationship Education by the end of P7 should be shared between primary school and secondary school staff. Ideally the whole programme for P1 through to S6 should be reviewed jointly by primary and secondary staff within each cluster group.

Materials and activities must be appropriately differentiated to take account of age and maturity level.

3.2 Partnership with Parents and Carers

It is essential that parents/carers are fully informed and consulted about the content and purpose of Sex & Relationship Education in schools. There are many ways to involve parents/carers and to provide them with an opportunity to express their views. The document issued by Learning & Teaching Scotland "Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers" provides a number of suggestions eg

- Parents' evenings
- Health education working groups
- Question and answer booklets
- Surveys
- Outline programme for each year group.

The leaflet produced by Learning & Teaching "A Guide for Parents and Carers" can be ordered in quantity for distribution to parents and carers.

Many parents/carers may find it difficult to talk to their children about sex and relationships; it should be recognised therefore that they may need support. The contact procedure for parents and carers is provided in each school's handbook. Strategies should be identified to seek parents' and carers' views on the content of the programme. It would be appropriate to involve School Boards and/or other parents' groups (eg PTA) As well as being a "link with parents" such groups could also assist in the organising of relevant events.

There may be occasions when a parent/carer wishes to withdraw her/his child from Sex & Relationship Education. In these circumstances the parent should be encouraged to discuss concerns with the Head Teacher beforehand. The parent/carer and school must also take account of the child's views given the child's statutory right to education. However, in the event of a parent/carer concluding that he or she wishes to withdraw a child, arrangements should be made for that pupil to have alternative positive educational provision.

3.3 Support Agencies

Health professionals and appropriate voluntary agencies also have a part to play in delivering Sex & Relationship Education. They can work closely with teachers and complement the role of the teacher. They can help schools work in partnership with parents and make links between the school and other relevant professionals and services.

Health professionals and other agencies who are involved in delivering programmes are expected to work within the school's policy. The pamphlet on "Confidentiality" issued by Angus Council Education Department (1999) should be consulted by school staff and shared with other agencies involved in the delivery of the programme. Further information involving outside agencies can be found in "The Role of Specialist Agencies" (Angus Council 1996) and "Putting People First" (Tayside Regional Council 1993).

Aspects of confidentiality may impinge on the teaching of Sex & Relationship Education. However the pamphlet on confidentiality mentioned above should be used to help to decide the extent to which confidentiality can be maintained. Where a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of - for example - sexual abuse, she/he should refer to and follow the school's child protection procedures.

3.4 Teaching Methodologies/Training and Support for Teachers

Sex & Relationship Education should be integrated within a comprehensive programme of Personal, Social and Health Education. Pupils should therefore receive education about sex in the wider context of relationships which will prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Research into what makes Sex & Relationship Education effective shows that discussion, as well as structured activities and tasks, are enjoyed by pupils. Learners should be given opportunities to identify the information which they need and to access and make use of it. Opportunities to practise decision-making in different contexts should be provided, for example through role-play. This type of learning will be most effective if there is a climate of trust. Strategies for building and maintaining this climate will therefore be important.

Teachers may wish extra support in the form of training or team teaching in order to deliver the programme confidently. Schools should recognise this need and seek to identify appropriate opportunities for staff development. Multi-agency training allows good practice to be shared across agencies.

3.5 Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The individual needs and stage of development of SEN pupils are paramount in ascertaining the nature and content of learning and teaching within the programme of Sex & Relationship Education. Where appropriate and of positive value those pupils with Special Educational Needs should be integrated into mainstream programmes for Sex & Relationship Education. Every pupil should be assessed on an individual basis and in conjunction with the child's parents/carers in order to ensure that the most appropriate programme is agreed.

3.6 Roman Catholic Schools

Roman Catholic schools should refer to additional publications available from Learning and Teaching Scotland.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Schools

Head Teachers and other members of the senior management team require to undertake monitoring and evaluation of Sex & Relationship programmes within the wider context of Health Education. The publication 'A Route to Health Promotion : Self-evaluation using Performance Indicators' (SEED 1999) provides a framework for schools to undertake a structured audit and evaluation of health promotion. In addition the Angus Council Evaluation Strategies linked to "Putting People First" will allow schools to consider how the programme links into "The Health Promoting School" concept.

4.2 Authority

Regular reviews of this Authority policy statement will take place alongside reviews of school policies.

Appendices

- 1 Checklist for Schools
- 2 Supporting Policies

APPENDIX 1

Checklist for Schools

- There is a policy on Sex & Relationship Education
- A programme for each age/stage is in place
- Resources are available
- Links to other curricular areas are identified
- Strategies are in place to consult parents regularly
- Guidelines on the use of specialist agencies have been agreed
- Procedures to respond to parental concerns are in place
- Staff development needs have been identified and addressed
- Consideration has been given to SEN requirements

In Place	To be Addressed

APPENDIX 2

Supporting Policies/Guidelines

Putting People First	Tayside Region 1993
Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures	Tayside Region 1995
The Role of Specialist Agencies	Angus Council 1996
Anti-Bullying Policy Statement	Angus Council 1999
Inter-Agency Guidelines for Professional Staff (Angus Child Protection Committee)	Angus Council 1999
Sensitive Issues - Teachers and Confidentiality	Angus Council 1999
Promoting Personal Safety in the Curriculum	Angus Council 1999
Health Education 5-14 National Guidelines 2000	Learning & Teaching Scotland
Sex Education in Scottish Schools - A Guide for Parents and Carers 2001	Learning & Teaching Scotland
Sex Education in Scottish Schools - Effective Consultation with Parents and Carers 2001	Learning & Teaching Scotland
Sex Education in Scottish Schools - Summary of National Advice 2001	Learning & Teaching Scotland