



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY (ORCHARD HILL COLLEGE)

The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies across all OHC centres and settings – 13th December 2019.

Peter Lauener
Chair of OHC Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Lauener".

Relationships and Sex Education Policy (Orchard Hill College)

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. OHC&AT is a 'family' of providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works for mutual benefit. Encouraging an understanding of healthy relationships and the ability to make good choices is a key strand of positive personal development for all our pupils and students.

This policy applies to Orchard Hill College and has been developed in accordance with the current requirements of the law, taking into account the Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and the Education Act 1993 and 2002.

There is a separate Relationships and Sex Education Policy for OHCAT Academies, reflecting the requirement of schools to provide RSE in line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. However, both policies are informed by OHC&AT's belief that clear, relevant and positive relationships and sex education contributes greatly to young people's ability to keep themselves safe and negotiate fulfilling relationships into adulthood.

OVERVIEW

All students have the right to develop personal relationships. Sexuality is part of every adult's life and students have a right to be treated as adults and to have their sexuality recognised and respected in accordance with any individual cultural and/or religious beliefs.

The Human Rights Act 1998 legally recognises that people who are able to consent to sex in accordance with UK domestic law have the right to have sex and sexual relationships. The Act also makes explicit:

- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- The right to have respect for private and family life
- The right to marry

Students at Orchard Hill College are supported to make informed choices and exercise their rights and responsibilities with regard to sexual health and personal relationships. Relationships and sex education at the College is focused on supporting students to understand and respect themselves, respect others and form and sustain healthy relationships.

As a family of specialist education providers, OHC&AT recognises that children and young people with SEND may be especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. All of our working practices are designed to maximise opportunities for our pupils and students: to learn how to be and keep safe; to communicate and be understood through whichever means of communication is most effective for them; to build healthy and enriching relationships; to maximise their potential and achieve ambitious goals within their local communities. Clear, relevant and inclusive RSE is key to enhancing the self-worth and self-confidence of each individual and encouraging mutually respectful relationships and empathy for others. As such, it plays a crucial part in safeguarding children and young people, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities, and thus the delivery of RSE forms part of the universal safeguarding provision detailed in Orchard Hill College's Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer. It also complements and underscores other key strands of delivery, including e-safety, anti-bullying and equality and diversity.

Informed consent is a mainstay of any healthy adult relationship and as such this policy should be read in conjunction with the Mental Capacity and Consent Policy.

AIMS

Relationships and sex education is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, being supported to learn from experience and forming your own beliefs, values and attitudes.

Sexuality is a term used to describe the aspects of a person that are associated with sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It can be considered in terms of:

- physical expression
- self-image
- emotional development
- social circumstances
- sensuality
- spirituality
- personal identity

Unfortunately, adults with learning difficulties/disabilities are often regarded within our society as non-sexual adults and denied this fundamental human right. All people have sexuality. For those with profound disabilities and complex needs it may not be possible to express their sexuality through sexual activity with others or even by themselves.

This means that students should be:

- given the opportunity to develop and enjoy healthy relationships
- supported to express and understand themselves and their feelings
- supported to take informed risks
- supported to access the appropriate services and information to have safe relationships and sex should they choose to do so.

The College is committed to preparing its students for adulthood and to ensuring that students go on to live full lives as members of their communities. Feeling valued, understanding what makes a good relationship or friendship, knowing who to talk to (whether verbally and non-verbally, face to face or online) are all crucial to our students in achieving that aim.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME CONTENT

The Relationships and Sex Education programme aims to:

- develop language, decision-making, choice and assertion skills as part of a wider skill set that will support students to live, learn and work within their local communities
- raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially with regard to relationships
- raise students' awareness of their rights relating to sex and relationships, and of their responsibilities towards maintaining their physical and emotional wellbeing
- help students to understand their sexual feelings and behaviour so that they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives
- develop confidence and skills in communicating, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour in private and public situations
- give practice of strategies which reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse
- develop confidence to become an active member of society
- support access to relevant information and facilities
- support the ongoing development of staff skills across the College.

Partnership with parents/carers and families

Orchard Hill College is committed to working with parents, carers and families.

As a post-16 provider, the right to withdraw students from sex education does not apply. However, parents, carers and families are an important and influential part of the lives of our students. They have a right to want what is best for the person for whom they care and it is best practice to consult and to listen to their views. Ultimately, the student's rights are paramount in any educational situation.

In practice this means that staff should:

- Make parents/carers aware of the policy and support them to understand it and its implications.
- Ensure good communication with parents/carers, including making sure that parent/carer views are heard and treated with respect.
- Take seriously any issues raised by parents/carers with regard to a student's welfare or safety by undertaking the appropriate risk assessment.
- Ensure that parents/carers have access to support, training and resources that may support them in facilitating discussion about mental, physical or sexual wellbeing and relationships.
- Support parents/carers should they feel aggrieved by any decision relating to relationships and sex education, including ensuring access to the Complaints Procedure where necessary.
- Consult parents/carers when making decisions or implementing new or changed services within the policy boundaries.

In the event of concerns about infringement of a student's adult status and/or consent with regard to the College's delivery of RSE, especially if there are potential safeguarding concerns, the College will seek guidance from external agencies (Social Services, advocacy partnerships etc.)

POLICY REVIEW DETAILS

<i>Version:</i>	1.1
<i>Reviewer:</i>	John Prior, Laurie Cornwell, Kelly Phillips
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	13 th December 2019
<i>Due for review:</i>	Autumn 2022

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
E-Safety Policy
OHC Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer
Personal and Intimate Care Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy (OHC)
Mental Capacity and Consent Policy
Student Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy
Substance Misuse Policy