

Darlington Children's Trust Sex and Relationship Education Policy (SRE)**Children's Services Department Date of Draft – June 2009****Background**

Darlington's Children's Trust believes that sex and relationships education is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life.

The Trust endorses the World Health Organisations definition of sexual health. 'Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

To achieve this it is expected, as appropriate, that all employees respect and adhere to the following policy.

1 Darlington's Children's Trust believes that, as appropriate, sex and relationships education should:

1.1 Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing through adult life.

1.2 Be set within the widest context supporting family commitment, love, respect, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept and includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.

1.3 Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.

1.4 Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up, and that Darlington Borough Council will universally support them to do this.

1.5 Be approached from a continuity/ partnership perspective, engaging relevant others as needs identify.

2 All employees working to this policy will ensure that, where sex and relationships education is discussed, the following is addressed:

2.1 The importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;

2.2 The value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;

2.3 An understanding of physical development at appropriate stages;

2.4 Signposting to sexual health advice, contraception and support services;

- 2.5 Exploring the benefits of delaying sexual activity
- 2.6 The reasons for having protected sex
- 2.7 The law and how it applies to sexual relationships

3. Child Protection

All employees working to this policy will be aware of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board's Child Protection Procedures (2005) and that they are subject to these regulations. With regards to sexual activity and teenage pregnancy, the procedures state:

3.1 Young people and sexual activity:

Where a young person is sexually active consideration always needs to be given to the ability of the young person to genuinely consent to the act.

3.2 Incestuous relationships, sexual activities that are considered abusive to the child and any suspicion that coercion has taken place, will always require a referral.

3.3 Action will always be taken when a boy under the age of 13 is found to be sexually active and when a girl under 13 is found to be sexually active or pregnant and this is informed by the in house protocols of Children's Services and the Police.

3.4 A Common Assessment Framework will be completed if required to all girls over 13 who are pregnant and referred to specialist support and guidance services dependant upon her circumstances.

4. Confidentiality

Whilst it is the policy of Darlington's Children's Trust to respect a young person's right to confidentiality when discussing sex and relationships education, (including contraception, terminations, sexual orientation and diversity issues), employees must use their professional discretion to balance the young person's right to confidentiality with the need to ensure their safety. In cases of abuse/exploitation and/or risk of suffering harm by themselves or others, where a young person withholds consent to passing on information, the employee may disclose information without the young person's consent but with their knowledge where the intention is to protect the young person. Darlington's Local Safeguarding Board's Policies and Procedures, and Working Together, Inter-Agency Guidance must be followed in these circumstances, including the Under 13 Sexual Activity Protocols.

It is the policy of Darlington Borough Council that employees should always discuss any concerns about young people's sexual activity with their line managers/senior colleagues.

5. Diversity

5.1 Ethnic and Cultural Groups. All workers need to be aware as appropriate of the needs of different cultures and ethnic groups.

5.2 Young People with Special Needs. All young people as appropriate will

receive sex and relationship education addressing their particular needs, taking specialist advice where necessary.

5.3 Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

To Date The Consultation Process Has Involved:

- 1 Darlington Teenage Pregnancy Partnership
- 2 Darlington Healthy Schools Steering Group
- 3 Darlington T3

Date: 4 August 2008

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