

Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy



Craighouse School Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy

I. Introduction

At a national level, we have had a sexual education policy for more than a decade; however, the inclusion of emotional development and sexuality education in the classroom has been slow and full of difficulties. Only in the year 2010 was Health Law 20,418 officially enacted in Chile, making it compulsory for state-recognised educational institutions to implement a sexual education programme from Years 9 to 12.

Craighouse School has been proactive and foresighted in taking anticipated action regarding public policies. We have been working on an educational approach on this topic since 2002, with our first Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy. This document encompasses the principles of our Educational Project, promoting our pupils' comprehensive education, and highlighting the development of values such as self-respect and respect for others, tolerance, and making responsible decisions.

On the one hand, this Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy sets out the school's foundations and central values on the subject. On the other, it clarifies the school's position regarding certain issues considered "sensitive", meaning those that are more difficult to talk and think about with pupils, because they are influenced by the values themselves.

In 2017 the policy was revised and updated, with adjustments aiming to respond to current problems regarding

pupils' education in emotional development, sexuality, and gender.

In addition to this policy, since 2004 Craighouse School has been applying an Emotional Development and Sexuality Programme as one of the strands of its Formative Curriculum, from Playgroup to Year 12. This strand considers a set of contents and activities that form teachers and tutors work with in the form period, with different methodologies. Through this work, we want our pupils to develop skills and abilities that will allow them to feel good about themselves and about others, make good decisions, and lead healthy lives.

To develop this sexuality strand within the programme, we have applied surveys to pupils every three years. The aim of this instrument has been to discover changes in their attitudes, knowledge and interests, and the results have allowed us to make the necessary adjustments to the programme.

II. Education in emotional development and sexuality at Craighouse School

As an educational institution, the school is responsible for supporting families in the task of contributing to their children's overall development.

Sexuality is a fundamental aspect of development and it constitutes a right, since it implies the possibility to make responsible, informed decisions and act accordingly in areas that will have a significant impact on people's life projects.

We believe that an appropriate approach to sexuality requires an overall view of the individual. A person is seen here as

an indissoluble whole in their cognitive and emotional processes and in their ethical dimension, and as a social entity that requires and values bonding and the emotional component of human relationships.

An important aspect that must be included in emotional development and sexuality education is the concept of gender. This concept is linked to the attributes that society assigns to what it means to be a man or a woman. According to the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP (2010, cited in MINEDUC 2014), gender refers to:

The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context¹. (MINEDUC, 2014)

Therefore, in coherence with our Educational Project, we wish to help our pupils to develop respectful attitudes towards diversity and towards the different ways of expressing gender. We also want to encourage reflection on gender stereotypes present in society.

III. Bases for emotional development and sexuality education at Craighouse School

1. The school maintains that families hold the greatest responsibility in terms of their children's emotional, sexual, and gender education. However, we believe that it is our duty to assist and complement families in this process.

2. The school believes that the emotional, sexual, and gender education of its pupils must have a solid value-based foundation, which is expressed in the Educational Project and the School Life Guide, known by the whole community. The school also believes that given the diversity of our educational community, each family has its own beliefs as to how to educate their children in terms of sexuality, emotional development, and gender.

3. The school accepts that there is scientific knowledge (psychological, biological, sociological, etc.) with respect to emotional development, sexuality, and gender, which has been accumulated through various investigations, experiences and studies. Consequently, the school deems it relevant to provide pupils with scientific information that is clear, up-to-date, and appropriate for their stages of development.

4. The school believes that within the educational context, values and attitudes should be promoted in the area of emotional development and sexuality, favouring self-respect and respect for others, responsible decision-making, and respect for diversity.

¹ Orientaciones para el diseño e implementación de un programa en sexualidad, afectividad y género

5. The school promotes an ideal of social relationships that prepares citizens who respect differences and human dignity, who are tolerant and responsible for themselves and their actions, who are capable of maintaining positive relationships - both emotional and sexual - and who exercise this right in a respectful, responsible, and informed way.

6. The approach used in the emotional development and sexuality education of our pupils is part of the value context put forward in our Educational Project and in our School Life Guide.

IV. Stages in emotional development and sexuality education at Craighouse School

We have mentioned that the development of this process has been sequential. When the process began, and given the importance of the matter, the Craighouse School Board asked the Head of School, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and the Formative Area, to implement a series of successive actions to ensure that there was an emotional development and sexuality education programme in place in the school. The educational community would play an active role in this process.

Each stage is described below:

- i. Creation of an Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy, approved by the Board in 2002.
- ii. Creation of a learning objective proposal on emotional development and sexuality. This was done by the Department of Counselling and Psychology, together with form teachers and tutors, in 2003.

- iii. Creation of a proposal for an Emotional Development and Sexuality Programme for some levels of the school, in 2004.

- iv. Creation of the emotional development and sexuality strand within the Formative Curriculum, for all levels of the school (Playgroup to Year 12). Publication of the book "Formative Curriculum" in 2007.

- v. First revision and updating of the emotional development and sexuality strand of the Formative Curriculum in 2011, with adjustments in objectives and methodologies, based on the application of the programme.

- vi. Second revision and updating of the emotional development and sexuality strand of the Formative Curriculum in 2014.

- vii. Revision of the Emotional Development and Sexuality Policy in 2017.

V. Craighouse School's position regarding sensitive issues in emotional development, sexuality, and gender

From this general policy for emotional development, sexuality, and gender, specific implications arise for certain issues considered more sensitive. Information, beliefs, and values all come together, and reaching agreements becomes difficult. Therefore, we must clarify the school's position and reflection regarding each of the following issues:

Gender identity and sexual orientation

The school believes that pupils should receive support in the process of

developing their own identity. Sexual identity is defined as the awareness of being a man or a woman, which carries the assignment of certain social roles.

Regarding roles, the school promotes reflection on gender stereotypes, and favours a flexible, comprehensive view of each individual, coherent with our Educational Project and the values that support it.

We will now define a few concepts.

Sexual orientation is defined as sexual tendency or sexual inclination, and it refers to a pattern of sexual, erotic, emotional, or loving attraction to a particular group of people defined by their sex. Within sexual orientation we define heterosexuality: an attraction to people of the opposite sex; homosexuality: an attraction to people of the same sex; and bisexuality: an attraction to people of both sexes.

The concept of **gender identity** deals with a person's internal, individual experience of gender, as she/he feels it deeply. It may or may not correlate with the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression refers to how gender is manifested in its different expressions and to how it is acknowledged by others, through a person's name, clothes, etc., regardless of the sex assigned at birth.

Finally, a concept which has acquired growing relevance is

trans, which refers to people whose gender identity and/or expression does not correlate with the social norms and expectations which are traditionally associated to the sex assigned at birth.*² (MINEDUC, 2017).

In its permanent reflection and in coherence with its Educational Project, the school will accompany all pupils in their identity building processes, respecting diversity and aiming at a full, comprehensive development of each pupil, regardless of their sexual orientation, their identity, and their gender expression.

We seek to find the necessary conditions to provide an educational context that is safe and respectful of the dignity of all pupils.

Dating and first romantic relationships

The school is aware that dating (*pololeo*) is the first stage of commitment within a couple, and that this type of relationship is a vital experience in people's emotional development and a chance to share young people's valuable inner world.

In accordance with our principles and values, we promote romantic relationships which are healthy, equitable, free from violence and abuse of power, and based on self-respect and respect for each other.

Start of sexual intercourse

The school believes that it is not possible to clearly state the appropriate age for the start of sexual intercourse, because

educacional chileno

^{2*} Orientaciones para la inclusión de las personas LGBTI en el sistema

it is a personal decision linked to each person and family's ideological and religious ideas.

However, the school's position is to favour the delay of the start of sexual intercourse until after school age, thus seeking to achieve the following:

- a) That both members of the couple have reached the cognitive and emotional maturity necessary to understand the appropriate significance of sexual experience.
- b) That sexual intercourse takes place in a context of affection, where the person is valued and there is consideration for the other and mutual enrichment.
- c) That both members of the couple have reached the necessary levels of maturity which allow them to make responsible decisions, accepting the consequences that may arise from their acts in terms of sexuality.

Contraception

The school considers that it is necessary for students to have appropriate, updated, and complete information with respect to the existing contraception methods. Young people should be encouraged to consider their use and make responsible decisions, in an area which is closely linked to their life projects.

Sexually transmitted diseases

In line with the previous considerations about the importance of education and information about these issues, the school believes it is necessary to inform students about sexually transmitted diseases and their prevention.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, HIV/AIDS

VIH/AIDS is a sexually transmitted infection; however, we have separated this issue from the others, considering recent data on the increase in the prevalence and infection of this syndrome among young people in Chile. Therefore, the school believes it is vital to inform pupils about HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, in accordance with its Educational Project and the School Life Guide, the school states that in the case of a Craighouse School pupil with HIV/AIDS, the school will facilitate the conditions for the continuity of her/his studies in an environment free from discrimination, encouraging respect, support, and acceptance of the pupil and her/his family.

Teenage pregnancy

In an attitude that is consequent with its value of life, and before the current norms that rule the matter were in force, Craighouse School has always supported pupils - both girls and boys - who find themselves in this situation so that they continue their studies, providing help to face this situation with responsibility, and to contribute to their development and maturity.

Nevertheless, the school considers that teenage pregnancy has consequences which interfere with the development of the present and future life of both teenagers and should therefore happen at a later period in life.

Abortion

The school declares its value of life. Within the current legislation, we respect the personal/family character of such a relevant decision as abortion in

any of the three legally accepted cases. Therefore, Craighouse School always offers accompaniment for pupils and their families, and promotes dialogue as a fundamental tool for making responsible decisions which will be critical for their development and future life.

Masturbation

The school holds that the knowledge of one's own body is an important aspect in the development of a healthy sexuality. Masturbatory practices begin in the first months of life and continues throughout a person's development, providing significant information for self-knowledge. In this context, masturbation in private is one of the aspects in the process of people's emotional and sexual development.

Pornography

The school considers that young people's exposure to pornography is harmful,

because it portrays a distorted - and even violent - view of sexuality, portraying people as objects and reflecting unrealistic expectations about their functioning. The school therefore forbids and sanctions the presence of pornographic material on the premises, and recommends that families of our community take similar precautions, particularly considering how easy it nowadays is for children and teenagers to access this type of content online.

Sexual abuse

The school believes it is essential to provide pupils with strategies that allow them to prevent and protect themselves from possible sexual abuse to which both children and teenagers are exposed. This must be done throughout the school, in accordance with the pupils' stage of development. The school also considers prevention against different forms of abuse, such as those that derive from inappropriate use of the internet.

Note:

This is only a referential document and the valid, official, and legal version in the country is the one written in Spanish.

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