

Support of the Curriculum to prepare us for Life Campaign

'A curriculum to prepare us for life' was chosen in the UKYP annual sitting at the House of Commons where members of the youth parliament voted for their favourite out of five issues after listening to and taking part in debates.

Swindon fully supports this campaign; this calls for a complete overhaul of the curriculum which would put the skills and knowledge young people need for an increasingly competitive world at its heart. These include better cultural awareness, financial education, sustainable living, sex and relationships education and community cohesion.

The education system should not be based solely on academic endeavour although of course that has its place. It should give every young person a good grounding for leaving the education system, going into work and getting into a relationship.

The campaign's main purpose is to prioritise subjects outside of the school's national curriculum. Instead of simply pushing our students towards the academics, we feel that they should also be provided with basic life skills. Skills that will lead them into adulthood. Many people felt that although the science behind sex was taught by schools, but they also wanted lessons on relationship issues. This included making the students feel comfortable enough so that they could come and talk to a teacher if they were being pressurised to do something or when to say no to sex.

In order to promote this campaign, our previous MYP attended the SASH meeting, where all head teachers of different schools get together. All principles were very keen with the idea and some even said that were already doing it. We managed to get 8 schools / colleges* to sign up during that meeting. Aside this, we also distributed petition sheets to the school students. All students who agreed with the campaign had put their names forward. We also held a meeting with MP Robert Buckland, who gave us his support.

*Swindon Academy, Isambard, Lydiard Park, Kingsdown, Warneford, Ridgeway, Cirencester College (many students from Swindon) and Swindon EOTAS.

To back up this campaign we consulted with Swindon Youth Forum to break down, exactly where young people would like additional education. The results are shown below:

Education

- Education – How to prepare for exams
- Education – Careers advice that is meaningful
- Education – Options for further and higher education; where to go? personal statements, interview skills
- Education – Options after school

Finances

- Finances - Opening a bank / building society account
- Finances - Handling money effectively - bills, living on a budget
- Finances – Saving for the future
- Finances – Loans and borrowing
- Finances – Benefits; what am I entitled to?

Work

- Work - Work experience opportunities that are meaningful
- Work – CV's
- Work – Interview skills, presentation skills, public speaking
- Work - What hours are you able to work at what age?
- Work - Minimum wage
- Work – Help with finding employment
- Work – Apprenticeships
- Work – Tax and National Insurance

Relationships

- Relationships – Sexual Health & STD's, and the right to say NO
- Relationships – Gender / Sexuality – acceptance & awareness of different types of relationships GLBT, discrimination, homophobia
- Relationships – Family planning & contraception
- Relationships – Pregnancy & abortion
- Relationships – Healthy relationships and respect; coping with emotional difficulties

Travel

- Travel - Learning to drive – theory test
- Travel - Owning a car – tax, insurance, MOT's, keeping a car road worthy
- Travel – Travelling on a budget, most effective ways to get around i.e. Student railcards, bus passes etc..
- Travel - Safety
- Travel – Applying for a passport

Home

- Home – Rents, Mortgages
- Home – Running a home – basic skills; washing, ironing, cleaning etc..
- Home - DIY – basic skills
- Home - Cooking – basic skills; cooking on a budget
- Home – How to set up TV, internet, phone etc..
- Home - Child care – the basics of how to look after a child

Health

- Health - How to register with a doctor, dentist, hospital
- Health - Drugs & Alcohol
- Health – Basic first aid
- Health – Understanding mental health and its effects
- Health – Dealing with stress

Politics

- Politics – how to vote?
- Politics – How do local & national politics affect me as a young person?
- Politics – Where is the money spent? Both locally & nationally

Other

- Where do I go for help? – police, NHS direct, citizens advice, family planning

To get involved or find out more please contact Paul Dobson swindonsteppad@aol.com