



Marches Academy Trust

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Sex and Relationships Policy

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*For Headteacher, read most senior member of staff in the school, eg Associate Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, Head of School etc

1. Introduction

The term 'sex and relationships education' is used in this policy rather than sex education. This is to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to also focus on clarifying attitudes and values, and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

According to the latest Department for Education guidance, Sex and relationships education is: "...lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health". Department for Education 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', 2000.

2. Legal Obligations

Academies in England and Wales have a legal responsibility to provide a 'sex education' programme. They also have a responsibility to keep an up to date written statement of the policy they choose to adopt, which is available to parents/carers.

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from 'sex education' lessons which fall outside those aspects covered in the National Curriculum for Science.

Sex education will be a statutory part of the curriculum in primary schools from September 2019, and as such the schools within the Trust will include sex and relationships education within their curriculum.

3. Why we teach Sex and Relationships Education

Children pick up information about sex from pre-school age onwards. They do so through observation, overheard conversations, friends and relatives, the media, other children's and young people's whispers, wild stories, rude jokes and so on. Taken together, these sources provide a hotchpotch of mixed messages which can confuse and mislead children and young people; in some cases, even provoke acute anxiety and guilt. Given that it is impossible to protect children from these sources of misrepresentation, and given every child's entitlement to accurate information, we believe that we have a duty to offer sex and relationships education.

4. The Overall Aims of the Trust's Sex and Relationships Education Provision

- To provide opportunities for all students to learn and to achieve.
- To promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

In each school we aim to:

- provide accurate information about, and understanding of, sex and relationships education issues;
- dispel myths;

- explore a range of attitudes towards sex and relationships education issues and to help students to reach their own informed views;
- develop respect and care for others;
- increase students' self-esteem;
- to develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations.

The Department for Education, 'Sex and Relationship Guidance' (2000) recommends that, "effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives". The school has a key role, in partnership with parents/carers, in providing sex and relationships education.

5. The Morals and Values Framework

Our approach to sex and relationships education is conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships.
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, faiths, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views.
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent rather than coercion.
- The right not to be abused by other people or to be taken advantage of.
- We believe that all of the young people across the Trust should learn about growing up within a well-planned, empathetic framework, which stresses the importance of responsibility, understanding, and the ability to make reasoned, informed choices and decisions.
- We believe that all of the young people across the Trust should learn about the importance of the family, and the crucial role of parents/carers in their moral development.
- We believe that all of the young people across the Trust need the knowledge and awareness of the importance of individual and collective moral responsibility, and the ability to make informed choices about their own moral, emotional, physical and sexual health and development.
- We believe that an important element of their personal, social, and moral education is the question of personal integrity and safety, and an awareness of the importance of the moral and legal framework which must exist in society.
- We believe that sex and relationships education must form an important element of a whole-school approach to moral and health education. It needs to be part of a wider moral framework of encouraging sensible, informed choices in relation to the child's future physical, emotional and spiritual development and well-being.

Sex and relationships education involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong views. The Trust's approach to sex and relationships education will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be biased.

6. Equal Opportunities

Students may have varying needs regarding sex and relationships education, depending on their circumstances and background. The school believes that all students should have access to sex and relationships education that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, the Trust approach to sex and relationships education takes account of:

- the needs of boys as well as girls;
- ethnic and cultural diversity;
- varying home backgrounds;
- sexuality;
- special educational needs.

Through our work on sex and relationships education and growing up, we offer children the opportunity to develop and clarify their attitudes and values relating to gender roles and stereotyping. We aim to develop their self-esteem and to equip them with assertiveness and decision-making skills. We encourage all of our children and young people to be open and honest in order to develop the trust and confidence to talk openly with chosen, trusted adults in our school.

We strive to always teach appropriately so that all children have equal access. It is sometimes appropriate to use mixed and sometimes single-sex groupings for different children at different times.

7. A Whole-School Approach

As a Trust, we understand the value and importance of a whole school approach to learning about growing up, and this policy outlines how we approach sex and relationships education through an integrated curriculum at each key stage.

In each school across the Trust, a whole-school approach is adapted to sex and relationships education, that actively involves the school community.

The Leadership Group in each school endeavours to support the provision and development of sex and relationships education in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.

The designated Sex and Relationships Coordinator maintains an overview of sex and relationships education provision, and has overall responsibility for its development.

Many teachers are involved in each school's sex and relationships education provision. Sex and relationships education is taught through the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme, and (some) through Science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important role by offering support to students.

Non-teaching staff may be involved in a supportive role in some sex and relationships education lessons.

Trustees have responsibility for all school policies and they are consulted about the sex and relationships education provision and policy.

Parents/carers have a legal right to view this policy, and to have information about the sex and relationships provision at each school within the Trust.

Outside agencies and speakers are involved in inputting to sex and relationships education lessons, and as points of referral as support services for students.

8. Teaching Sex and Relationships Education through Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship

8.1 Place in the Curriculum

In our secondary schools, the main sex and relationships education programme is delivered through personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons by tutors, with the support of the Pastoral team. In addition, certain biological aspects are delivered through Science lessons, and other aspects of sex and relationships education arise in Religious Education, History, English and Drama.

In our primary schools the sex and relationships education programme is delivered by the class teachers and outside agencies as appropriate.

8.2 Methodology and Resources

A wide range of teaching methods are used; this includes quizzes, case studies, research, role play, video, small group discussions and use of appropriate guest speakers. Where appropriate, students are divided into single gender groups. Occasional use of drama productions also forms part of the programme.

The specific content of the programme may differ in each school, according to the age and needs of the children and young people.

Full details of the programme for each school can be obtained upon request through the person responsible for sex and relationships education. Requests can be made through Tutors, Pastoral Staff and the Leadership Team in each school.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust recognises the need for each school to deliver their sex and relationships education programme according to the specific needs of their children and young people, and families, in accordance with the ethos of each school. The programme is regularly evaluated in each school by the Sex and Relationships Education Coordinator. The views of students and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an on-going basis. This will be done twice a year through a stakeholder survey in November and May.

Across the Trust, our sex and relationships education programme is delivered within the framework of four strands for effective personal, social and health education and citizenship, teaching and learning:

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of children's abilities.
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens.

- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle.
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

Children and young people are entitled to learn and practise key life skills, which should include:

- emotional skills;
- managing emotions confidently;
- developing empathy for others;
- independent thought and behaviour;
- social skills;
- developing and maintaining relationships;
- nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships and friendships with others;
- taking responsibility for their own and others' emotional, physical and sexual health;
- communication skills;
- participating;
- listening;
- asking questions;
- expressing emotions and opinions;
- negotiation skills;
- resisting peer pressure;
- managing and resolving conflict;
- practical skills;
- caring for self and others;
- accessing support and advice;
- decision-making skills;
- managing dilemmas;
- assessing risk;
- making informed choices and being able to act upon them.

By exploring and challenging attitudes and values, children can be helped to develop a positive attitude towards emotional, physical and sexual health and well-being through:

- developing a positive values and morals framework that will support their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- developing a critical awareness of value systems represented in the media and amongst peers;
- recognising that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable;
- understanding that all rights have responsibilities, and all actions have consequences.

10. Pastoral Support for Families who Experience Difficulties

The nature of support available to students:

The Trust takes its role in the promotion of student welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable, and to provide sensitive and caring pastoral care in a number of ways. The pastoral staff may be approached for help on an individual basis and

where appropriate students are referred to the school counsellor, youth worker or outside agencies.

Confidentiality and informing parents/carers:

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Child protection procedures must be followed when disclosures about abuse are made.

In some situations, judgements must be made about whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- the seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the student may be experiencing;
- the student's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Unless clearly inappropriate, students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer.

11. Dealing with Bullying

Bullying commonly includes inappropriate and hurtful comments and behaviours concerning sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex and relationships issues. The school takes the issue of bullying very seriously, and this is reflected in the school's anti-bullying policy. Staff will challenge and deal sensitively with any evidence of bullying. Students are encouraged to report any incidents. Staff endeavour to investigate any incidents of bullying as soon as possible, and give feedback to students who complain of bullying. The sex and relationships education and personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes consider bullying, and aim to discourage bullying based on sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex and relationships issues.

12. Access to this Policy

All parents/carers have access to the complete policy in school. We encourage feedback from parents/carers on all aspects of our practice. Parents/carers' have a right to withdraw their child from sex education. This policy will be circulated to all members of staff.