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Relationships and Sex Education Policy

2023 – 2024

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Manchester Academy Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Policy Statement

The school is committed to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of every child and young person in its care. To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. The purpose of this policy is to give children and young people

the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need in order to make responsible decisions about their life, to learn to respect themselves and others, to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help and to move with confidence through childhood into adolescence and adulthood.

Manchester Academy (MA) is committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory, in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). This policy is applicable to all members of the Manchester Academy community and is available to all interested parties on the school website. This document is reviewed annually or as events or legislation requires.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the MA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. These policies include how the school challenges the use of homophobic and other sexually discriminating language or behaviour and child on child abuse.

Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education can be described as curriculum content which enables students to learn about:

1. Families and people who care for them, including the nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children,
2. Forming and maintaining caring relationships,
3. The characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships, including online,
4. How relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing, and how to ensure they are safe, and
5. Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

At MA, we believe that Relationships and Sex Education provides students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults. We believe in empowering our students to understand their bodies, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships and sex. We believe that this approach will reduce the risk of unhealthy and abusive relationships and harmful sexual behaviour.

Relationships and sex education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and the religious background of the students receiving it.

Key Requirements

- Following an annual parent consultation, students at MA follow a structured MA PSHE curriculum throughout key stages 3 and 4, which includes delivery linked to RSE topics.
- The programme is integrated into the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and other relevant areas of the curriculum, such as Science.
- Online safety is covered through the Computing curriculum but is referenced in PSHE lessons also. Additional guidance is also shared with parents/carers outlining how young people can be kept safe on-line.
- Parents have been consulted when developing and writing this policy.
- The school will show how Relationships and Sex Education is monitored.
- Pupils are taught Relationships and Health Education as part of a timetabled PSHE programme, where core knowledge is broken down in to manageable, well sequenced units and communicated clearly to pupils.
- Pupils are taught so that progression, relevance and differentiation appropriate to the age and development of all students is ensured.
- The PSHE Lead (Shaila Trivedi) will plan delivery across Key Stages 3 and 4 and arrange appropriate training for staff delivering the strands in this area

Aims and Objectives

The desired outcomes of this policy are to ensure that MA:

- Recognises that aspects of the Relationships and Sex Education Policy are sensitive and call for careful judgement. The policy is complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about such matters.
- Develops understanding and attitudes that are rooted in values, which prepare students to view relationships in a responsible manner based on mutual respect and develop an acceptance of difference and diversity.
- Affirms the value of loving and caring relationships and encourages the appreciation of marriage, civil partnerships, family life and the implications of parenthood, recognising that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage.
- Sets out clearly issues relating to their personal safety more broadly, including how to communicate about concerns and seek advice without embarrassment.
- Makes students aware of their rights and responsibilities in close personal relationships, including helping students to understand what inappropriate behaviour is, both to reduce its incidence and to build confidence to deal with it if it occurs, seeking to reduce violence, particularly against women and girls.
- Instils a respect for the cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality.
- Teaches the legal and moral principles of consent.
- Develops a graduated, age-appropriate programme that is accessible for all, including SEND.
- Ensures that children are prepared for the changes of puberty.
- Fosters self-esteem and self-awareness, and encourages consideration of values, moral issues, sexuality and personal relationships, through the development of communication and decision-making skills.
- Ensures there is no stigmatisation of students based on their home circumstances, sexual-orientation or gender identity.
- Helps students to have a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting peer pressure, as well as a knowledge of how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- Acts in loco parentis so that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers do not unduly influence the teaching of relationships and sex education; and ensures that teaching materials are appropriate to the age and cultural background of the students concerned.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The LGB is responsible for approving a written statement of this policy, drawn up with guidance from the Principal, available to parents.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that Relationships and Sex Education meets the aims and objectives of this policy by undertaking systematic monitoring and reporting the findings to the LGB on a regular basis.
- Staff have a responsibility to take care in counselling and giving advice to individual students and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.
- Staff have a responsibility to attend inset training sessions to highlight the need to avoid and discourage use of sexualised, sexist or LGBTQ+ phobic language.
- The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of relationships and sex. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the sex education programme. In such cases, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and sensibilities.
- External specialists may be brought in to enhance teaching and support the Relationships and Sex Education programme and will be required to conform to the school's RSE policy and the MA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Parental, staff and student involvement regarding the policy

The school has consulted with parents and staff on the formation of the policy, and any changes made to it when it is reviewed, which will be at least annually. This will help to limit the risk of any formal complaints. All topics being taught in PSHE will also be available to parents via the school website to keep parents fully informed of content delivered.

Parental right to withdraw children

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of the sex education provided (except from sex education taught under the science curriculum), but not from the relationship education aspects of the curriculum delivery. Parents cannot withdraw their child from PSHE as a whole subject.

In considering such a request, the school will use the following process:

- The Principal should discuss with the parent (and, if appropriate, the child) to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the content that will be covered.
- The Principal should discuss with the parent the benefits of the child receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including social or emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing from their peers what was covered (and having that content channelled through a child's voice rather than a teacher's).
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should arrange to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.
- For the majority of pupils with SEND, their SEND should not be a consideration in deciding whether to grant a parental request. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Principal will want to take a pupil's SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Complaints

Complaints about the relationships and sex education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure.

