



Code of Conduct for Responsible Adults

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy owner	Executive team
Scope	All responsible adults, staff, Trustees, Governors and clerks
Last updated	Spring 2026
Next planned review	Spring 2027
Status	Approved
Date of approval	07.01.26
Summary of last revision	N/A new document
Related Policies	MAT Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints Policy• Dealing with Abusive Persons policy
Policy control survey	Please complete this survey and provide feedback if you have had to use this policy https://forms.office.com/r/HMeZtB29Si

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Marches Academy Trust (the Trust) is dedicated to ensuring that all children and young people (CYP) achieve their potential and will work in partnership with responsible adults and other stakeholders to achieve this aim. Responsible adults are taken to mean those with parental responsibility for a CYP (these may include parents, carers, kinship carers, corporate parents, or guardians, and other agencies).
- 1.2 The Trust also has a duty of care to both staff and CYP to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The Trust will not tolerate behaviour from responsible adults that is unacceptable and has a detrimental effect on the good order and safety of any of its schools. This policy outlines the behaviours that are unacceptable and what sanctions are available to deal with such behaviour.
- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction the [Trusts' Complaints Procedure](#). If a complaint is repetitious, vexatious or pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner, this will be dealt with in line with the Complaints Procedure.
- 1.4 The principles in this policy also apply to any other family members of CYP or other visitors to a school.
- 1.5 If a responsible adult is acting in a voluntary capacity, for example as a Governor or as part of a school's PTA, they are still subject to the scope of this policy as a responsible adult.

2 Key principles

- 2.1 The responsible adult/school partnership is fundamental to securing the success and wellbeing of all our CYP.
- 2.2 The education and wellbeing of the CYP of the responsible adult involved will not be compromised in any way by the application of this policy.
- 2.3 Any decisions will be fully communicated to the responsible adult with clear reasons for the decision taken.
- 2.4 Responsible adults have the right to make representations about the action of the Trust or its schools.
- 2.5 Any restrictions will be time limited and subject to a review.

3 Application of this policy

3.1 This policy covers unacceptable behaviour which is committed by a responsible adult:

- 3.1.1 in any Trust or school buildings or on a Trust or school site
- 3.1.2 by telephone to the Trust or a school
- 3.1.3 by email to the Trust or a school
- 3.1.4 on social media and any other public electronic media platforms (e.g. websites) referring to the Trust or a school or a member of staff of the Trust or school
- 3.1.5 in any other setting which, in the reasonable opinion of the CEO (or any person authorised by them), should be regulated by this policy.

3.2 The behaviours below are considered unacceptable by the Trust:

3.3 **Unacceptable conduct**

- 3.3.1 Unacceptable conduct includes:
 - i. verbal or written threats of violence or harm
 - ii. swearing or the use of other abusive, offensive or threatening language
 - iii. intimidation, coercion or humiliation
 - iv. aggressive or disruptive behaviour
 - v. harassment, bullying or causing distress
 - vi. physical violence, including damage to property or injury to individuals
 - vii. discriminatory conduct or use of discriminatory language (sexist, racist, other)
 - viii. frequent, unwarranted and/or unnecessary correspondence which is hindering the proper running of the Trust or its schools
 - ix. making deliberately false, malicious or vexatious accusations
 - x. consumption of alcohol (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event) or use of illegal drugs on the Trust or a school's premises, or accessing the Trust or a school's premises whilst intoxicated
 - xi. any behaviour that violates the law or school policies
 - xii. incitement of others to do any of the above.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such conduct. It will ultimately be for the school/Trust to determine whether conduct is deemed to be unacceptable.

3.3.2 Any form of communication that threatens the safety or well-being of staff or CYP will be taken seriously and addressed immediately, with the goal of protecting the safety and well-being of all members of our Trust and school communities.

3.4 Covert recordings

- 3.4.1 Unless explicitly agreed in writing, the Trust does not consent to responsible adults making audio or video recordings of any member of staff, Trustee/Governor or school volunteer, including during in-person meetings, remote/virtual meetings or telephone conversations. Making covert recordings without the consent of members of staff is regarded as a breach of the relationship of mutual trust and confidence between the responsible adult and the school.
- 3.4.2 If a responsible adult is found to be recording a discussion, all members of staff have the right to terminate the meeting or telephone call on discovery.
- 3.4.3 A responsible adult that records a member of staff, Trustee/Governor or school volunteer, without consent may be issued with a restricted communication plan (see below).
- 3.4.4 If a responsible adult is found to have recorded any audio or video footage on the school site without consent of any individual, this may result in the responsible adult being immediately banned from a school's premises (see below) and the involvement of external agencies.

3.5 Inappropriate use of social media

- 3.5.1 The Trust encourages responsible adults to approach staff with concerns and to make use of the Trust's Complaints Procedure to escalate matters where necessary. We urge responsible adults to refrain from expressing concerns about the Trust, its schools or its staff on social media sites. Expressing concerns on social media may damage the reputation of the Trust and/or its schools and the integrity of its staff may be unnecessarily called into question. Negative comments posted on social media can cause upset and is often counter-productive to the overall aim of educating CYP. Furthermore, comments made about individual members of staff may be considered defamatory or amount to cyber-bullying.
- 3.5.2 It is a criminal offence to publish information which would likely lead to the identification of a teacher who is subject to an allegation of misconduct until such time as they are charged with an offence or the Secretary of State for Education publishes information about the teacher in connection with a disciplinary case (Education Act 2011). All members of the community need to be aware of the importance of not publishing named allegations against teachers online as this can lead to prosecution and a fine.

3.5.3 Should the Trust become aware that a responsible adult is using social media to target the Trust, any of its school, or its staff, it may (or it may authorise a school to):

- i. report the post(s) to the relevant social networking site
- ii. contact the responsible adult or social media page owner to require the post to be edited or removed
- iii. issue the responsible adult with a restricted communication plan (see below)
- iv. where appropriate, inform the police or other relevant agencies.

4 Procedures

- 4.1 The Trust has a range of strategies to employ with any responsible adult who engages in unacceptable behaviour. Whilst these sanctions are set out in the policy by way of a sequential process, they can be initiated at any stage if, in the reasonable judgement of the CEO (or any person authorised by them), the severity of the behaviour warrants such a level of intervention.
- 4.2 Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or others, the matter will be referred immediately to the police and/or the Trust's legal team for action.

4.3 Verbal warning

A responsible adult who displays any of the behaviour as described above will be asked to desist and offered the opportunity to discuss the matter in person.

4.4 Mediation meeting

Where appropriate, the responsible adult may be asked to meet with the CEO or the Headteacher of the school (or a person authorised by them) to discuss the matter in person.

4.5 Formal written warning(s)

A formal written warning will be sent to the responsible adult by letter to their home address. This letter will be signed by the CEO or the Headteacher (or any person authorised by one or more of them) and circulated to relevant internal parties to ensure that an informed and consistent approach can be adopted. This letter will be retained for a period of twelve months and then in line with the Trust's Data Retention Policy. Where appropriate, more than one formal written warning letter may be issued.

4.6 Legal sanctions

If a responsible adult commits serious or repeated breaches of the expected standard of behaviour as set out in this policy, then the Trust may consider implementing one or more of the sanctions listed below (or may authorise a school to do so):

4.6.1 Restricted communication plan

The responsible adult may be issued with a communication plan. This will restrict the manner in which the responsible adult can communicate with the Trust and/or a school. This may include:

- i. Requiring contact in a particular form (e.g. in writing only)
- ii. Limiting contact to one member of staff or a specific email address
- iii. Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times
- iv. Restricting communication to in writing only

4.6.2 Ban from a school's premises

A responsible adult's common licence to access a school's premises can be removed or restricted for a specified period. In such circumstances, responsible adults may need to make alternative arrangements for bringing their child into school. Any entry onto the site in contravention of such a ban and where a nuisance is caused would be a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Any responsible adult in breach of the ban will be removed from the premises by the police or an authorised member of staff.

4.6.3 An injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Trust may seek an injunction requiring the responsible adult to desist from behaving in the manner in question.

5 Monitoring and review

The CEO and Headteachers will report to staff from time to time and to the Board of Trustees (and the local governing bodies if appropriate) annually, or earlier if the Chair of Trustees so determines, on the number and type of incidents involving unacceptable behaviour displayed by responsible adults, how these matters were handled and their outcomes.

6 Records

A record will be kept of any correspondence, action or decisions for a period of at least twelve months and then in line with the Trust's Data Retention Policy. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual matters will be kept confidential except where:

- 6.1.1 access is requested by the Secretary of State
- 6.1.2 disclosure is required in the course of a school inspection
- 6.1.3 an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation
- 6.1.4 under other legal authority.