

Personal, Social and Health Education Policy

Reviewed: August 2023

Next review: August 2024 or when new guidance available

Reviewed by: Head of PSHE & Deputy Head - Pastoral

At Bedford Girls' School we provide an environment where students feel safe to assert their own opinions and have a high level of self-respect, as well as being respectful of and kind to others. We encourage their assertiveness and their resilience as well as their confidence to ask for support when necessary. Students are encouraged to reflect on their personal qualities and achievements, and to work towards their achievements; these should mirror the best of each individual's potential. Our SMSC Policy highlights the importance the school places on fundamental British values and how these values are actively promoted in the school.

We encourage our pupils to play a positive role in contributing to the life of the school and the wider community. In so doing we help develop their sense of self-worth. We teach the pupils how society is organised and governed. We ensure that they experience the process of democracy in school through the Student Voice Forum. We teach them about rights and responsibilities and they learn to appreciate what it means to be a positive member of a diverse multicultural society and to have respect for other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the equality act.

PSHE education at BGS encourages students to demonstrate the values of the school: to be bold, imaginative and reflective in a safe and supportive learning environment. We create such an environment by using form tutors in Years 7, 8 & 9 to deliver the curriculum and in Years 10 and above we will have a dedicated team of staff to teach PSHE who will establish ground rules and build trust in the group. In the Junior School, PSHE is delivered through the PYP Curriculum and is taught within each Unit of Inquiry by the class teacher. We ensure that where pupils indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support. This might be via a trusted member of staff who knows the pupil well or the school counsellor.

In the senior school, all pupils except those in Year 9 have a one-hour long lesson of PSHE per fortnight. Year 9 students are taught PSHE by their form tutor during tutorial time and via 3 days off normal timetabled lessons over the year.

The aim of the course each year is to cover topics relevant to the age of the girl and this develops over the years. The aim of the subject is:

- To ensure that young people have the information they need to make sensible decisions in their personal lives and know how to, and where to, find such information
- To ensure that young people know what support systems (in the form of agencies of which the school is only one) are available to them if they face difficulties
- To encourage self-awareness, self-understanding and independence of mind
- To encourage young people to develop their self-confidence to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own actions
- To promote the physical, spiritual, moral and social welfare of the girl through various aspects covered within the sessions
- To foster an awareness and tolerance of others in society and of the interdependence of individuals in society

- To promote the ability to develop successful interpersonal relationships in a variety of contexts, both socially and in the world of work
- To ensure that young people know about careers and work opportunities.

As a result of the work covered over the Senior School years, we hope each pupil will have been provided with

- advice about how to keep themselves safe (including online safety).
- up-to-date factual information about health-related issues such as drugs, alcohol abuse, solvent abuse.
- opportunities for the students to learn about health issues related specifically to women, such as menstruation, puberty and safe sex.
- the knowledge of how to build long lasting relationships and how to manage changes and challenges that face them along the 'road'. This includes how to manage friendships and advice about what to do if they have been subjected to bullying behavior.
- the opportunity for young people to think through moral and social issues by providing sessions for discussion and role play and arranging for experts in particular fields to inform the students.

It is hoped that through the sessions the pupils should have the opportunity to engage in discussions that will:

- influence their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour and how they think, feel and view themselves and their behaviour
- initially develop, with their teachers' help, a sensitivity to the fact that discussions and viewpoints will be influenced by cultural and social factors
- give them an overall awareness of issues surrounding safeguarding including protection from the risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

Key Principles in teaching PSHE

PSHE education will start from where pupils are. Where possible, any new topic will start by enabling pupils to share their prior knowledge. Research shows that attempts to scare young people into making a healthy choice rarely work. Consequences of certain lifestyle choices will be made clear, but we aim to provide balance in the way we deal with the material covered. Staff will help students to make connections between the learning in PSHE and their current and future 'real life' experience. We want the students to be actively engaged in their PSHE lessons and we will give them opportunities through a range of pedagogies to clarify their values and beliefs and rehearse and develop inquiry and interpersonal skills.

Children's questions will be answered after considering the student's prior learning and readiness. A teacher may ask a child to wait for an answer if necessary to give them time to consult with colleagues, the Head of PSHE or the school's leadership team. A teacher may also use an anonymous question box for those pupils who are not comfortable raising questions in an open setting.

The PSHE Curriculum

The PSHE curriculum aims to develop skills and attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, risk-management, team working and critical thinking in the context of learning grouped into three core themes: sense of self, positive

Bold

Imaginative

Reflective

relationships and commitment to care (including economic wellbeing and aspects of careers education). These themes run from Year 3 to 13 and are divided into units. These units are revisited as part of a spiral programme where at each encounter the level of demand increases and learning is progressively deepened. Further details of the PSHE curriculum will be available on the school website.

Pupils will be consulted and feedback sought to ensure that the PSHE curriculum is addressing their needs. The way feedback is gained will depend on the age and level of maturity of the students.

Assessment in PSHE

Assessment is as central to effective teaching and learning in PSHE education as it is in any other subject. It is therefore important to understand the process of, and reasons for, assessing learning in PSHE.

Assessment refers to gauging what has been learned and what still needs to be learned. It therefore differs from evaluation, which is about the process: how well activities worked, how useful resources were, how interesting students found the lesson, and so on.

Learning in PSHE education should be assessed for several reasons:

- It is important for students to have opportunities to reflect on their learning, especially when that learning relates directly to the individual's identity – their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes, achievements and influences.
- It is important for teachers to feel confident that learning has taken place, to be able to demonstrate progress, and to identify future learning needs.
- Assessment increases students' motivation and improves learning, as their increased awareness of their own progress and development illustrates the value of their learning.
- It allows the leadership team, parents, governors and school inspectors to see the impact PSHE education is having for students and for whole-school outcomes, such as Ofsted and ISI judgements on personal development, safeguarding, SMSC development and the promotion of fundamental British values. Without assessing PSHE education all you can do is describe provision; you cannot show its impact.
- The Department for Education (DfE) states in the statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health education that "schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas"

Assessing progress

The learning we wish to assess will relate to the students' attributes and skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding related to the topic. Students' existing knowledge and understanding is often the easiest learning to assess but whilst gauging students' existing skills, strategies, attitudes, beliefs and attributes can never be an exact science, there are activities that provide an insight into their starting point.

At the end of the lesson or series of lessons, students will have opportunities to demonstrate the progress they have made from their starting point assessed in the baseline activity. Possibly the simplest and most effective way of demonstrating progress is to either repeat, or better still, revisit the original baseline activity. Some baseline assessment activities (such as mind-maps, draw and write, explain to an alien), lend themselves very well to a simple revisit where each student uses a different colour pen to add to their baseline activity and make any changes they now want to make. This allows the student and teacher to clearly see how far they have come in their learning. In other cases, students might repeat the activity or carry out a completely different activity.

Assessment ideas will be identified in the PSHE Unit Plans and Lesson Plans.

The use of visitors

Visitors may be used, to bring their expertise or personal stories to enrich pupil's learning. Seeing alternative perspectives is an important learner attribute we want the girls to have and our choice of speakers is designed to help us achieve this. If a speaker has a particular view we look to balance it either with a speaker with an opposing view or debate the issues discussed in a follow up session. We take precautions in inviting speakers and this is outlined in our Policy on handling external speakers at events.

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Confidentiality

Due to the nature of PSHE education, pupil's learning may result in them seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue. Teachers will ensure that students understand what can and cannot be kept confidential, as this is important for everyone's safety.

Link to other policies

This policy complements the following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Positive behavior

Sex and Relationship Education

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy

Drugs Education

Handling External Speakers at Events