

Personal, Social and Health Education Policy

Reviewed: August 2025

Next review: August 2026, or when new guidance becomes available

Reviewed by: Head of PSHE & Deputy Head - Student Engagement and Welfare

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 and 8, where possible, to deliver the curriculum and in Years 9 and above we 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 have a one-hour long lesson of PSHE per fortnight.

The aim of the course each year is to cover topics relevant to the age of the student 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 student 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 intend that 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 through discussion and role play and arranging for experts in particular fields to inform the students.

It is hoped that through the lessons 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

relationships and commitment to care (including economic wellbeing and aspects of careers education). These

Bold

Imaginative

Reflective

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 are available on the school website. Some topics such as careers, positive relationships and inclusion are supported through the tutorial programme and assemblies as well.

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

At the beginning of a unit or lesson prior knowledge will be established using recall tasks. This immediate assessment will inform the next steps within the lesson to ensure each student can access the lesson content. Student progress is assessed on a lesson-by-lesson basis through teachers reviewing work and understanding in quizzes and low stakes tests. Some of these occur as tasks recorded in books or on Google classroom whilst others happen live. Assessment tasks are also planned into the PSHE curriculum and reviewed by teachers. The Head of PSHE will monitor books and lesson content to ensure assessment is occurring as required.

We do not ask students to complete formal or high stakes testing in PSHE due to the nature of the subject and the variety of content covered.

Assessment tasks and opportunities are outlined 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. Some topics particularly benefit from outside expert voices. Seeing alternative perspectives is an important learner attribute we want the students 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.

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of PSHE education, students' 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