



# PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH & ECONOMIC EDUCATION POLICY (PSHEE)

*'... in which the strong will have ideals to inspire them and the weak may not be frightened away by excessive demands.'* (RSB 64:19)

## **I. Context and Rationale**

This policy covers our school's approach to pupils acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. As part of a whole-school Benedictine approach, Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE) develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. PSHEE equips pupils to live healthy, safe, productive, capable, responsible and balanced lives. It encourages them to be enterprising and supports them in making effective transitions, positive learning and career choices and in achieving economic wellbeing. A critical component of PSHEE is providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes and explore the complex and sometimes conflicting range of values and attitudes they encounter now and in the future.

PSHEE, as part of a full Benedictine education, contributes to personal development by helping pupils to build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem, and to identify and manage risk, make informed choices and understand what influences their decisions. It enables them to recognise, accept and shape their identities, to understand and accommodate difference and change, to manage emotions and to communicate constructively in a variety of settings. Developing an understanding of themselves, empathy and the ability to work with others will help pupils to form and maintain good relationships, develop the essential skills for future employability and better enjoy and manage their lives.

This policy was produced by the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior) through consultation with the Co-ordinator of PSHEE, SMSC and RSE, Head of Theology, Head of Biology, Head of Learning Support and School Chaplain.

The Policy will be reviewed annually by Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

## **2. Policy Availability**

Parents and carers will be informed about the policy on the website. Written copies can be obtained on request.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

Our school's ethos overarching aims and objectives for our pupils are

- To guide pupils and staff to encounter Christ through experience of a Benedictine community of faith
- To be uncompromising in the pursuit of academic excellence
- To foster a culture of unselfish love, integrity, humility and leadership through service
- To develop the character and confidence of young people through sport and co-curricular opportunities

This policy informs the school's overarching aims and objectives by providing a whole-school approach to developing qualities and attributes for the pupils to thrive as individuals and as members of the school community and society, now and in their future lives. This policy fulfils our school ethos and aims to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on and clarify their values and attitudes and enable them to develop their own identity through experience of a community with Christ at its centre.

Our PSHEE programme aims to ensure the effective delivery of the 3 core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the wider world (economic wellbeing, careers and the world of work)

Our PSHEE education programme promotes, and is underpinned by, the school Benedictine values of:

- Welcome and Hospitality
- Listening
- Humility and Reverence
- Concern for the Individual
- Teaching and Learning
- Personal Discipline
- Building Communion
- Stewardship of Gifts

### **4. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment**

We will create a safe and supportive learning environment by establishing "ground rules" and positive teacher/pupil relationships. We will ensure that where pupils indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support by direct help from school staff, signposting and/or referral to other agencies and monitoring through MyConcern.

This policy is informed by the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy available from the School website.

## **5. Entitlement and promoting equal opportunity**

We promote the needs and interests of all pupils, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or personal circumstance by referring to the Accessibility Plan. Teaching will take into account the age, ability, readiness, and cultural backgrounds of our pupils and those with English as a second language to ensure that all can fully access PSHEE provision.

We promote diversity and inclusion and will consider all pupils' needs by reference to the EAL and Learning Support policies and we expect our pupils to consider others' needs by listening, having empathy and developing positive relationships.

We will use PSHEE as a way to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by recognising and celebrating differences.

## **6. Intended outcomes**

We recognise the right for all pupils to have access to a PSHEE which meets their needs. We will ensure that pupils with SEND receive access to PSHEE through differentiated teaching and learning and, if necessary, in class support.

The learning outcomes of our programme will be that pupils will:

- Engage actively with the PSHEE programme to gain a comprehensive and balanced education which will inform their present and future choices.
- Have a good understanding of the 3 core themes: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the Wider World.
- Develop self-esteem, resilience and confidence and have a better understanding of themselves and empathy with others.
- Identify and manage risk and live happier and safer lives.
- Develop the essential skills for future employability.
- Be better placed to enjoy and manage their lives now and in the future.
- Have an understanding of the virtues which reflect our Christian tradition as well as fundamental human virtues which are universally shared.

## **7. British Values**

At Downside, we uphold and teach pupils about fundamental British Values which are defined as:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance and acceptance of those of different faiths and beliefs

These values are taught explicitly through the PSHEE and Tutor Programme. We also teach British Values through the planning and delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum, academic enrichment opportunities and a rich co-curricular programme.

## 8. British Value Statement

**Democracy** is an important value at our school. We believe that the voice of everyone should be heard. Pupils have the opportunity to have their voice heard through our School Council and House Councils. Representatives from the councils meet regularly to discuss issues, rules and school needs. Student Voice is recognised as a powerful force for good at Downside. Curricular lessons encourage active pupil discussions and the Abingdon Society holds regular debates.

**The Rule of Law** - We believe that everyone needs to understand that all the people living in Britain are subject to laws and that rules need to be followed both in and out of school. Pupils know and understand that there are consequences should these laws and rules be broken and that laws are there for our protection. School rules are established, explained and enforced consistently. Agreed rewards and sanctions are in place to bring about positive behaviour.

**Individual Liberty** – Pupils are encouraged to make correct choices at Downside, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. We believe that pupils should be empowered through the development of their self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence. Pupils are able to show independence in learning and are encouraged to think for themselves. Pupils are able to exercise their rights, personal freedoms and responsibilities and are encouraged to express their ideas freely.

**Mutual Respect** - As a rights respecting school, mutual respect is at the heart of our values, reflected in our Benedictine values of Concern for the Individual, Listening and Humility. Pupils learn that their behaviours have an effect on their own rights and those of others. All members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect

**Tolerance and acceptance of those of different Faiths and Beliefs** - We aim to achieve this through enhancing students' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving pupils opportunities to experience diversity in our local community and through delivery of our topics such as Religious Studies lessons which teach about different religions and include visits to local churches, mosques and synagogues.

## 9. Learning and Teaching

The programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods, including classroom based learning, specialist talks and tutoring. We will ensure that sessions, including those on risky behaviours, remain positive in tone by actively promoting healthy lifestyle choices and discussing positive consequences of good choices.

We will help pupils make connections between their learning and 'real life' behaviours by allowing time for reflection. We will make links to other areas of the curriculum through departmental input into the A5 document.

## **10. The PSHEE Curriculum Provision**

At Downside School PSHEE is delivered with a whole school approach, which includes:

- timetabled tutor and PSHEE periods (2 for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Form per week on Monday) delivered by teachers and tutors with additional use of specialist staff when required;
- delivery of PSHEE through other subjects and curriculum areas eg. RS, Biology;
- through external speakers;
- through involvement in the life of the school and wider community; and
- through pastoral care and guidance
- through Hymn Practice and house assemblies

## **11. Teaching responsibility and staff training**

The Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior) has particular responsibility for the overview of Tutorial Programme. The Co-ordinator of PSHEE, SMSC and RSE has responsibility for the overview of the PSHEE and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Programme.

Both the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior) and Co-ordinator of PSHEE, SMSC and RSE will conduct Quality Assurance to ensure the effectiveness of PSHEE delivery. The Head of Sixth Form is responsible for the Sixth Form PSHEE programme.

Teachers deliver the PSHEE programme and tutor programme to 1<sup>st</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> Form. Sixth Form tutors share the delivery of the Sixth Form PSHEE programme, along with other specialist staff. The Co-ordinator of PSHEE, SMSC and RSE is responsible for planning and resourcing the programme. RS teachers and school nurses in addition to curriculum teaching in Biology by subject teachers supplements this teaching. Fundamental British Values form part of the school-wide tutor programme. Careers is delivered through the tutor programme. In addition, external speakers, school debates and the sixth form lecture series may be used to help deliver PSHEE topics.

We will ensure that sessions, including those on risky behaviours, remain positive in tone by actively promoting healthy lifestyle choices and discussing positive consequences of good choices. We will help pupils make connections between their learning and 'real life' behaviours by allowing time for reflection. We will make links to other areas of the curriculum through departmental input and a whole school approach.

Within a classroom environment, teaching methods will engage the pupils actively, using appropriate methods for the aim of the lesson. All teachers are encouraged to develop a repertoire of flexible, active learning methods which allow students to explore issues through school and community involvement and in a way that is challenging and relevant to their lives.

Effective teaching and learning approaches used at Downside include:

- Shared learning and ground rules.
- Values clarification.
- Information gathering and sharing.
- Peer teaching and presentation.
- Consensus building and debating.
- Problem solving.

Training can be accessed as part of a teacher's CPD in addition to staff INSET.

## **12. Answering Difficult Questions**

Sometimes an individual pupil will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed later. This school believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and refer to the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior) should additional support be necessary

## **13. Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues**

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience. Teachers will be prepared to handle personal issues arising in the classroom, to deal sensitively with, and to follow up appropriately, disclosures made in a group or individual setting. Issues that we address that are likely to be sensitive and controversial because they have a political, social or personal impact or deal with values and beliefs including: family lifestyles and values, physical and medical issues, financial issues, bullying and bereavement.

Teachers will take all reasonable, practical steps to ensure that, where political or controversial issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation or opposing views. Teachers will adopt strategies which seek to avoid bias on their part and will teach pupils how to recognise bias and evaluate evidence.

Teachers will seek to establish a classroom climate in which all pupils are free from any fear of expressing reasonable points of view that contradict those held either by their class teachers or their peers.

## **14. Confidentiality and handling disclosures**

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made. Where it is clear that a pupil would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek consent of the pupil to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the student. Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/guardian.

An underlying principle in supporting pupils in our school is that all students are listened to sensitively and objectively.

Although Downside School cannot guarantee confidentiality students will be informed of national and local helplines, if appropriate, where confidentiality can be maintained. Worries and Concerns notices are posted in all houses and throughout the school.

Tutors and teachers will establish ground rules allowing pupils to listen to each other, to allow a balanced discussion of views and ideas and accept views and opinions different from their own. Pupils will have opportunity to have an individual discussion or ask questions with their tutors at times other than tutor or PSHEE lessons.

Pupils can also raise confidential concerns through MYVOICE on their desktops, through extensive pastoral and medical support mechanisms, including the school therapist and independent listener. Pupils have access to advice sign-posting where to report and seek help.

## **15. Links to other school policies and areas of the curriculum**

PSHEE will link to, and complement, learning in ICT lessons, Religious Studies, Tutor periods, Science Lesson, General RS and the Lecture Programme

- Child protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- E-Safety and social media
- **Equality Opportunity Policy**
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement**

Access to the policies listed above are available from the School website here: <https://www.downside.co.uk/downside-school/parent-information/policies/>

## **16. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

The aim of relationships and sex education is to equip the students with knowledge and understanding about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health in order for them to make informed choices.

This occurs not only within PSHEE but also in other curriculum subject areas (e.g. RS and Science). It is taught through PSHEE and the tutor programme by a combination of tutors, specialist teachers and the school nurses.

All our teaching about love and sexual relationships is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and it is presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue. The school uses a programme and resources from Ten Ten for First to Sixth Form.

## **17. Role and responsibility of parents**

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provided as part of PSHEE and to do so must inform the Head in writing of their wishes.

The Head will then discuss the reasons for the withdrawal and implications of doing so with the parent.

The parents are not obliged to state the reasons for seeking withdrawal. In this instance it is the responsibility of the school to make alternative arrangements in such cases.

**Downside School Policy Approval Record****Reviewed by** Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of PSHEE & RSE**Date** February 2026**Authorised by** Chair of the Board of Governing Body**Date** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026**Next Review** November 2026**Circulation** Governors / all staff / [volunteers] automatically  
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