

WESTONBIRT SCHOOL

Senior School PSHE Policy

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education in the Senior School

Applies to	Senior School (Key Stages 3–5)
Policy owner	Head of PSHE and RSE
Approved by	Head / Proprietor
Date adopted / last reviewed	September 2026 draft
Date of most recent parental consultation	June 2026
Next review due	September 2027, or sooner if statutory guidance changes
Statutory / regulatory basis	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule 1, paragraph 2(2)(d); relevant statutory guidance

Policy Review and Revision Record

Version	Date	Review / change	Approval status
2026 draft	September 2026	Separated PSHE and RSE policies; retained curriculum and policy structure	Draft for approval
2026 draft	September 2026	RSE statutory knowledge included in Appendix 1 of RSE policy	Draft for approval

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1. Status, scope and rationale

PSHE education is a planned, developmental programme through which pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding, values and skills needed to manage their lives now and in the future. It supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; physical and mental wellbeing; safeguarding; economic wellbeing; citizenship; and preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The statutory basis for wider PSHE is paragraph 2(2)(d) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Independent schools provide health and wellbeing through PSHE; the school uses relevant health education guidance to inform good practice. The separate RSE policy meets paragraph 2A and should be read alongside this document.

2. Aims and intended outcomes

The PSHE programme aims to provide pupils with:

- accurate, balanced, age- and stage-appropriate knowledge, and opportunities to turn knowledge into secure personal understanding;
- opportunities to explore, clarify and, where appropriate, challenge values, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs in a respectful environment;
- the skills, language and strategies needed to live healthy, safe, fulfilling and responsible lives, both on and offline;
- the confidence to recognise risk, seek help, report concerns and support others appropriately;
- personal attributes including resilience, self-respect, empathy, integrity, kindness and responsible decision-making;
- age-appropriate opportunities for character development within the School community;
- effective preparation for life in British society, including active promotion of Fundamental British Values, respect for the law, understanding of Protected Characteristics, democratic participation, individual responsibility and respect for others; and
- the knowledge and critical thinking needed to distinguish fact, law, evidence, opinion and belief, particularly when engaging with online content, political issues and socially contested questions.

Effective teaching supports the prevention of harm by helping pupils identify when something is not right, understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and know how and where to seek support.

3. Curriculum and delivery

Key Stage 3

PSHE is taught through discrete, timetabled lessons delivered by trained staff. Tutor time and assemblies supplement these lessons by introducing, reinforcing and responding to key topics and safeguarding messages.

Key Stage 4

PSHE is delivered through assemblies and tutor time together with planned drop-down sessions, led by appropriately trained School staff and, where suitable, external specialists. This enables sensitive RSE content to be taught with appropriate depth and care.

Key Stage 5

PSHE and careers-related content is delivered through tutor time and assemblies, supplemented by lectures, specialist input and drop-down sessions. Provision prepares pupils for increasing independence and adult life, including intimate relationships and consent, sexual health and access to services, coercive control and domestic abuse, financial capability, employment and workplace rights, digital and media literacy, gambling, alcohol and drugs, personal safety, independent living and civic participation.

Flexibility and responsiveness

The programme may respond to emerging pupil needs, safeguarding trends and current risks. Assemblies, tutor time and drop-down sessions may therefore move within the annual programme where appropriate, provided that statutory content remains coherently sequenced and delivered.

The Head of PSHE and RSE maintains Key Stage delivery plans and the RSE curriculum map. The latter identifies lessons that constitute sex education within RSE and is governed by the separate RSE policy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Head and Senior Leadership Team oversee implementation and the integration of PSHE with safeguarding, personal development, SMSC, Fundamental British Values and wider School provision.

The Head of PSHE / RSE is responsible for curriculum design, sequencing, resourcing, quality assurance, staff support, coordination with relevant subjects, monitoring and evaluation.

Heads of Year support appropriate delivery through assemblies and pastoral structures and identify emerging pastoral or safeguarding needs that may require curriculum response.

Teaching staff and tutors deliver material within their role, maintain appropriate professional boundaries and create a safe, supportive learning environment. Tutors may facilitate planned material without being expected to act as specialist RSE practitioners.

The DSL and safeguarding team advise on safeguarding-sensitive content, emerging patterns of harm and appropriate responses to disclosures.

The School nurse, careers staff, other qualified colleagues and approved external partners contribute specialist input where this enhances pupils' learning.

5. Resources and external contributors

External organisations can enhance the curriculum, but the School remains responsible for the content delivered and the way pupils are taught. Credentials, materials and intended content are checked in advance for accuracy, age-appropriateness, accessibility, safeguarding suitability and balance.

Where an external speaker addresses a political or socially contested issue, the School will ensure that the session does not promote partisan political views and that pupils receive a balanced presentation of opposing views where required. The School's duties on political impartiality apply to external contributions as they do to teaching by School staff.

Arrangements for safeguarding disclosures are agreed in advance and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This section should be read alongside the Visiting Speakers Policy.

Curriculum resources and quality assurance

The School generally uses resources quality-assured by the PSHE Association and may also use reputable specialist organisations. All resources are reviewed before use to ensure they are accurate, age- and stage-appropriate, unbiased, accessible and do not normalise harmful behaviour or stigmatise groups of pupils. Particular care is taken where organisations adopt a strongly partisan position on a contested issue. Resources used for PSHE and RSE are available to parents on request, subject to copyright.

6. Teaching sensitive topics

Teaching is positive, evidence-informed, carefully sequenced, responsive to pupils' needs and delivered in a factual, non-judgemental and age-appropriate manner. Staff establish ground rules, may use distancing techniques and anonymous questions, and use language that neither normalises harmful behaviour nor stigmatises pupils.

Where harmful or discriminatory ideas are expressed, staff challenge the idea and address misconceptions. Where political or contested issues arise, staff distinguish fact, law and evidence from opinion or belief and do not present contested views as established fact. Partisan political views are not promoted.

7. Equality, inclusion and SEND

The School is committed to ensuring that PSHE and RSE promote equality, dignity and respect and are delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Independent School Standards.

Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils will develop age- and stage-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

By the end of their secondary education, pupils should understand that everyone is entitled to dignity and respect and that discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of a protected characteristic may be unlawful. Pupils will be taught the relevant facts and law in an age-appropriate manner and will be supported to understand how prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination can affect individuals and communities.

Teaching about protected characteristics will be planned, progressive and integrated across the PSHE programme, rather than confined to a single lesson or isolated equality topic. Curriculum planning and schemes of work will identify where protected characteristics and associated equality issues are addressed.

The School will ensure that teaching encourages respect for people who share protected characteristics and actively challenges prejudice, discriminatory language and harmful stereotypes, including racism, sexism, misogyny, ableism, religious intolerance, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Teaching will recognise that pupils themselves, their families and members of the wider School community may have a range of protected characteristics, beliefs and experiences. Content will therefore be delivered sensitively and without making assumptions about individual pupils or requiring pupils to disclose personal information.

Where an incident, safeguarding concern, pattern of behaviour or wider social issue involving a protected characteristic becomes relevant to pupils, the School may respond through age-appropriate education, pastoral work or curriculum provision in addition to any safeguarding or behavioural response required.

The School will consider whether particular groups of pupils may experience additional disadvantage or vulnerability and, where appropriate, will make reasonable adjustments or take proportionate positive action. PSHE and RSE will be accessible to pupils with SEND, taking account of their individual needs, developmental stage and communication requirements.

Curriculum monitoring will consider whether all protected characteristics are appropriately represented across the programme and whether teaching is contributing effectively to a culture of equality, respect and inclusion.

The Head of PSHE / RSE will maintain a curriculum map demonstrating where the protected characteristics are addressed across Key Stages 3–5. This will be reviewed periodically to ensure that provision is age-appropriate, progressive and sufficiently comprehensive and that no characteristic is inadvertently omitted.

As an independent school that is not an academy, Westonbirt is not subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, but remains bound by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 that apply to schools.

8. British values and life in modern Britain

PSHE and RSE make an important contribution to the School's statutory responsibility to actively promote the Fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Through PSHE, RSE and the wider pastoral curriculum, pupils are supported to:

- understand and respect the civil and criminal law of England and the principle that the law protects individual rights and the rights of others;
- understand democratic institutions and processes and the importance of participation in democracy;
- exercise individual liberty responsibly, recognising that freedoms operate within the law and alongside responsibilities to others;
- understand rights, responsibilities and freedoms within British society;
- develop understanding of, and respect for, people who share each of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, recognising the relationship between equality, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance and the School's wider responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain;
- recognise and challenge prejudice, discrimination, misogyny, racism, homophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- engage respectfully with different opinions and participate constructively in debate; and
- understand how they can contribute positively to Westonbirt, their local communities and wider society.

The programme also contributes to the School's Prevent responsibilities by developing critical thinking, resilience to extremist narratives, understanding of democracy and law, respect for difference and confidence in challenging intolerance.

9. Safeguarding and difficult questions

PSHE and RSE form part of the School's whole-school safeguarding approach and may lead to an increase in disclosures. All staff follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education. Any safeguarding concern is reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and an appropriate contemporaneous record should be made on CPOMS.

Staff never promise unconditional confidentiality. Pupils are taught how information may need to be shared and where they can obtain help within and beyond School.

Questions beyond planned curriculum content are handled sensitively and professionally. Staff may respond in class, speak with a pupil individually, signpost appropriate support or suggest discussion with a parent or trusted adult, while remaining alert to safeguarding concerns and the risk that unanswered questions may drive pupils towards unreliable sources.

This policy should be read alongside the Child-on-Child Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy where concerns relate to sexual harm between pupils.

10. Mental health and wellbeing

These topics are approached with particular care. Preventative learning includes recognising and talking about emotions, looking after oneself and others, and knowing how to seek help from a trusted adult. More direct teaching is undertaken only by appropriately trained staff using high-quality, evidence-informed materials and taking account of age, maturity and pupils' experiences.

Teaching avoids descriptions of methods, emotive imagery or language, and romanticisation. Pupils are signposted to support and any concern about an individual pupil is managed through safeguarding procedures.

11. Careers and economic wellbeing

Living in the Wider World includes economic wellbeing, financial literacy, careers, citizenship, media literacy, digital citizenship and preparation for employment and independent living. Pupils develop age-appropriate understanding of money, risk, consumer choices, workplace expectations and rights, and the responsibilities associated with increasing independence.

Careers education and guidance form part of the wider personal-development programme. Detailed provision is set out in the School's Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance arrangements. Careers guidance is impartial, up to date, covers a broad range of options and supports pupils to make informed choices and fulfil their potential.

12. Monitoring and review

The Head of PSHE / RSE monitors the quality and impact of the programme through curriculum review, observation, pupil voice, staff feedback and appropriate assessment. Learning may be assessed through baseline activities, retrieval and reflection so that progress can be identified, misconceptions addressed and future learning built securely on prior understanding.

Evaluation considers not only curriculum coverage but also whether provision responds appropriately to safeguarding trends, pupil needs, SEND, equality, Fundamental British Values and preparation for adult life. Findings inform the annual curriculum and policy review.

The proprietor reviews this policy alongside the standalone RSE policy. The RSE policy is subject to parental consultation before adoption or substantive revision and is published on the school website.

13. Related policies and administration

Read with the Senior School Relationships and Sex Education Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, SEND Policy, Careers arrangements and Visiting Speakers Policy. Policy owner: Head of PSHE and RSE. Status: companion draft for approval. Proposed review: September 2027.

Linked policies and controlled documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child-on-Child Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy
- Countering Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Smartphone / Mobile Phone Policy
- SEND Policy
- Careers / CEIAG arrangements
- Visiting Speakers Policy
- Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy
- Prevent Risk Assessment / Prevent arrangements
- Accessibility arrangements
- Pupil Supervision Policy

Direct website URLs are intentionally not embedded in this controlled policy. The current approved versions should be accessed through the School's policy library or website.

Appendix A — Curriculum Documentation and Delivery Plans

The detailed Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 delivery plans, curriculum map and schemes of work are controlled curriculum documents maintained by the Head of PSHE / RSE. They provide the detailed sequencing and mapping that demonstrate implementation of this policy and should be available for internal quality assurance and inspection.

For inspection readiness, the curriculum documentation should explicitly map statutory RSE content, safeguarding themes, SEND accessibility, Fundamental British Values/SMSC, Prevent contribution, economic wellbeing/careers, online safety and progression across Key Stages 3–5.

Policy Administration

Policy owner	Head of PSHE / RSE
Approval	Head / Proprietor
Effective date	1 September 2026
Review due	On or before the start of the academic year 2027 - 2028
Parental consultation	June 2026
Publication	School website; free copy on request
Implementation evidence	KS3–5 delivery plans and schemes of work; staff training; pupil voice; curriculum monitoring; parent engagement; safeguarding and pastoral trend analysis