

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH & ECONOMIC (PSHE) POLICY

Applicable to:	RGS Guildford
Author(s):	Head of PSHE
Executive owner:	Senior Deputy Head
Date of last review:	July 2026
Date of next review:	Trinity 2027

1. Definition, Aims and Rationale

1.1 Overview

The Royal Grammar School, Guildford and RGS Prep (together, “the School”) are committed to providing the highest standard of education and pastoral care. This policy reflects the School’s values, ensuring clarity and consistency for pupils, staff and parents.

Throughout this policy, the terms ‘child’, ‘pupil’ or student’ are used to refer to all those attending the School. At the time of publication, the School is a boys' School but is preparing to become co-educational. Nursery, Reception (Shell) and Year 3 at RGS Prep, and Year 12 (Lower Sixth) at RGS Senior will become co-educational from September 2027. Year 7 (1st Form) at RGS Senior will become co-educational from September 2028.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers the School’s approach to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. It was produced by the Head of PSHE through consultation with students, parents, teaching staff, the senior leadership team, and Governors of the School. It should be read in conjunction with the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy and the Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) Policy.

Whilst it is not a statutory requirement to have a PSHE education policy, it is strongly recommended by the PSHE Association and by the Department for Education, which states that “it would be good practice for Schools to set out some of the details about how health education will be taught.” This policy fulfils that recommendation and provides a clear framework for teaching, a statement of the School’s intent, and a toolkit for future curriculum decision-making.

1.3 Definition

At RGS Guildford, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is a planned, developmental programme of learning that builds the knowledge, skills, attributes, and character students need to manage their lives now and in the future. Woven through timetabled lessons, assemblies, tutor time, and the School's wider co-curricular life, it is central to the RGS commitment to educating the whole person.

PSHE is understood as a core part of the School’s commitment to the wellbeing, character development, and life preparation of every student. It is an intrinsic element of the School’s Spiritual,

Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) programme and should be seen as part of the School's SMSC Development Policy.

1.4 School Ethos and Values

The School values of Inclusivity, Scholarship, Integrity, Respect, Courage and Collaboration underpin the PSHE programme and are taught both explicitly and through the culture of PSHE lessons. The partnership between home and School is vital in providing the context for these values, and it is important for students to be able to make their own informed and healthy choices and to prepare for the challenges and responsibilities of adult life.

The School has a statutory obligation under the Children Act 2004 to promote the wellbeing of its students. Evidence consistently shows that a comprehensive, high-quality PSHE programme can have a significant positive impact on students' wellbeing, health and academic achievement.

1.5 Co-educational Transition

RGS Guildford will become fully co-educational from September 2027. The PSHE programme is being progressively developed to reflect the needs of a mixed-sex student body, including topics such as female health, gender-based expectations, misogyny and the social dynamics of mixed-sex peer relationships. The policy and curriculum will be formally reviewed as part of the Trinity 2027 review to ensure full alignment with the needs of a co-educational School.

1.6 Aims and Intended Outcomes

The PSHE programme aims to develop students who are healthy, safe, informed, and responsible citizens. As a result of their PSHE education at RGS, students will:

- know and understand the knowledge they need to manage their physical and mental health, their relationships, their finances and their role in society;
- understand their rights, including to safety, to confidential advice and to equal treatment under the law;
- understand their responsibilities - to themselves, to others and to their communities;
- develop the skills of communication, critical thinking, emotional regulation, resilience and decision-making;
- develop the attributes of respect, empathy, courage and integrity in navigating the challenges of adolescence and adult life;
- be equipped to make informed, responsible decisions about alcohol, drugs, relationships, finances and future careers;
- be prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond School.

2. Roles, Responsibilities and Staff Training

2.1. Board of Governors

The Board of Governors holds strategic oversight for the School's PSHE provision. The Education Committee of the Board of Governors receives annual reports on PSHE provision and formally approves this policy. At least one Governor representative participates in the policy review process.

2.2. Senior Leadership

PSHE is overseen at senior leadership level by the Senior Deputy Head, with curriculum input from the Assistant Head (DSL) and Heads of Section. The Head of PSHE leads the programme day-to-day, liaising with the three Heads of Section, Heads of Department, and with the Head of PSHCE at RGS Prep School to ensure continuity and progression across the School's phases.

2.3. Teaching Staff

PSHE is taught by:

- Form Tutors, who deliver the timetabled weekly PSHE programme across most year groups. Positive and trusting relationships with form groups are central to creating the safe space required for effective PSHE delivery;
- PSHE teachers, who deliver more nuanced Middle School lessons;
- Heads of Year and Heads of Section, who deliver assemblies supporting the PSHE curriculum;
- Subject specialists, where elements of PSHE are most effectively delivered by a curriculum department - for example, the Economics department (financial education), the Biology and Integrated Science departments (health content), and the Religion and Philosophy department (ethical and moral dimensions);
- Specialist staff including the School Nurse, School Counsellor and Wellbeing Practitioner, who contribute to specific areas of the programme;
- Outside agencies and visiting speakers, where appropriate and subject to the protocols set out in Section 6.

Those responsible for delivering PSHE receive lesson plans and briefings from the Head of PSHE, within which they retain professional latitude regarding depth of content and timing.

2.4. Staff Training and Development

Staff training is available through dedicated sessions on Staff Development days, as well as more content and year group specific content throughout the year. Staff may also elect to attend external training relevant to their role, including that provided by the PSHE Association and NSPCC. In preparation for the co-educational transition, training will be prioritised in the following areas:

- Delivering PSHE in mixed-sex environments, including the use of single-sex groupings where appropriate;
- Topics newly emphasised in the 2025 RSHE statutory guidance, including misogyny, online harms and mental health;
- Handling sensitive disclosures and supporting vulnerable students;
- Safe and effective PSHE pedagogy, including distancing techniques and creating a safe learning environment.

3. Curriculum Design and Planning

3.1. Programme Structure

The RGS PSHE programme is broad, balanced, and developmental. It broadly follows the non-examined curriculum recommended by the PSHE Association and covers all statutory requirements

for Relationships and Sex Education - which has its own separate policy. The programme additionally includes financial education, careers education, and skills for the wider world.

Topics will be revisited at different year groups with increasing depth and intellectual engagement, building on prior learning in a spiral curriculum. An overview of the curriculum by year group is maintained by the Head of PSHE and is available to parents on request and to staff via SharePoint.

3.2. Timetabling and Delivery

PSHE is delivered through timetabled lessons, assemblies, additional events and the School's co-curricular programme:

- In the First and Second Form, timetabled PSHE lessons are delivered primarily by the Form Tutor, with input from Heads of Year, Head of Section and the Head of PSHE;
- In the Third Form, two interwoven strands run in parallel - PSHE lessons and input from the Religion and Philosophy department;
- In the Fourth and Fifth Form (Middle School), PSHE lessons are delivered by Form Tutors and specialist PSHE teachers, alongside Religion and Philosophy input;
- In the Sixth Form, PSHE is delivered through compulsory RE (for those not studying four A levels), an assembly programme, and regular tutor group discussions on pertinent topics in our 'extra-curricular' provision.

Flexibility is built into the programme to allow content to be adapted to the developmental needs of students. Where appropriate, time is also set aside in morning tutor time for students to review and reflect on progress, set targets, and develop habits of self-accountability.

3.3. Curriculum Content

The PSHE programme covers the following broad themes across relevant year groups:

- Physical health and mental wellbeing, including emotional literacy, managing stress, healthy sleep, physical activity and recognising signs of mental ill health;
- Relationships and sex education - delivered in full as a separate strand; see the RSE Policy for detail;
- Online safety and digital literacy, including responsible use of social media, managing digital footprint, cyberbullying and internet safety;
- Drug, alcohol and tobacco education, including the law, health risks and support available;
- Financial education, including budgeting, debt, saving and understanding the world of financial services;
- Careers education and the world of work, including skills for employment, entrepreneurship, subject choices and pathways beyond School;
- Citizenship and British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs;
- Diversity and inclusion, including understanding and celebrating difference, the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics, and challenging discrimination;
- Community and social responsibility, including the value of volunteering and contributing positively to families, Schools and wider society.

3.4. Health Education

Health education forms an important component of the School's PSHE programme. Although Health Education is not a statutory requirement for independent schools, the School believes that all students should develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to make informed decisions about their physical health, mental wellbeing and personal safety. Health education is delivered through dedicated PSHE lessons and reinforced through the wider curriculum, pastoral programme, assemblies, and specialist input where appropriate.

Health education at the School aims not merely to provide information, but to enable students to apply their knowledge, exercise sound judgement, and develop the confidence and habits necessary for lifelong health and wellbeing. Content is reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects current evidence, recognised good practice, emerging health issues and the needs of the School community.

3.5. Links to Other Curriculum Areas

PSHE links to and complements learning in a range of other subjects, including Science and Biology (health and physical development), Religion and Philosophy (ethics, values and belief), Economics (financial literacy), Computing (online safety and digital citizenship) and Citizenship. The Head of PSHE works with subject leads to ensure content is complemented but not unnecessarily duplicated across the curriculum.

3.6. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment in PSHE is not about passing or failing. It is about understanding what students know, can do and have reflected on, and using that understanding to improve teaching and curriculum planning. Assessment activities include:

- Baseline assessments at the start of topics to identify students' prior knowledge and experience, allowing teachers to adapt planning;
- Formative activities during lessons, including discussion, reflection tasks and written responses;
- Endpoint assessments to evaluate what has been learned and to inform future planning on related topics;
- End-of-topic summary forms (particularly in the Middle School);
- Microsoft Forms, OneNote, and peer discussion as tools for capturing evidence of learning.

Evidence of learning is collected without detriment to the learning outcomes themselves. Feedback on student progress is provided through personal development conversations and tutor engagement.

4. Teaching and Learning

4.1. Pedagogy and Approach

PSHE is a subject in its own right with its own specific pedagogy. Lessons at RGS are planned to develop knowledge, skills, character, and attributes through active learning methods, rather than passive reception of information. Teaching approaches include discussion, debate, case studies, role play, scenario analysis, guided research and presentations, and reflective writing.

Lessons are largely taught by form tutors or PSHE teachers; however, to support staff and students effectively, particularly in more sensitive topics, members of the pastoral team are available to team-teach or advise otherwise.

Research shows that attempts to shock or scare students into making healthy choices are rarely effective and can be counterproductive. Lessons, including those covering risky behaviours, are kept positive in tone, reassuring students that the majority of young people make healthy choices, and focusing on developing the skills to do so rather than dwelling on consequences alone.

Information provided in PSHE lessons is kept accurate and up to date by the Head of PSHE through regular review of resources against current guidance, research and best practice recommendations from the PSHE Association.

4.2. Safe Learning Environment

Because PSHE covers topics close to students' real-life experiences, it is essential to establish a safe and supportive learning environment where students are not put at risk of emotional harm. Ground rules are established by the teacher with each class at the start of the year and are revisited as needed. These set out mutual expectations of respect, confidentiality within the group, and the right to pass.

Distancing techniques are used throughout the programme to enable students to engage with sensitive material without feeling personally exposed. These techniques help students explore issues at one remove from their own experience, allowing reflection without risk.

Teaching takes into account the age, ability, readiness and cultural backgrounds of students to ensure all can fully access the PSHE programme. The needs and interests of all students are promoted irrespective of sex, culture, ability, sexual orientation or personal circumstance.

Lessons will be designed and delivered to ensure that males are not stigmatised as perpetrators of abuse or harmful behaviours, nor females as victims. It will be made clear that: the majority of young men hold respectful attitudes; boys and young men can be victims of abuse, exploitation, and coercive relationships; girls and young women have agency and are not taught as though vulnerability is their defining characteristic.

4.3. Questions and Anonymous Questions

Students are actively encouraged to ask questions in PSHE. Where students feel unable to ask questions openly, anonymous question methods are used - including written question boxes and digital tools - to ensure all students can seek information safely.

Teachers answer questions sympathetically, honestly and factually. Where a question goes beyond the scope of the planned curriculum, or where the teacher is unsure of the answer, the question will be 'parked' and guidance sought from the Head of PSHE or another appropriate colleague before a response is given. Personal questions should not be asked of, or answered by, teachers.

Teachers are supported in answering tricky questions through regular training and communication.

4.4. Disclosures and Confidentiality

Students are made aware throughout the year that some information shared in PSHE cannot be held confidentially; this is emphasised especially in lessons with a higher risk of disclosure. If a student makes a disclosure that raises a safeguarding concern, the teacher will follow the School's Safeguarding Policy and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Teachers are not able to offer complete confidentiality to students.

If a safeguarding concern is raised through an anonymous question, the teacher will respond in a way that addresses the concern for the whole group whilst following up appropriately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Students are regularly signposted to the support services available to them, both within School and through external agencies.

5. Engaging Parents and Other Stakeholders

5.1. Parental Partnership

PSHE is strongest when there is open communication and collaboration between School and home. RGS is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to support them in understanding the PSHE curriculum and in reinforcing its values and messages at home.

There is no right for parents to withdraw their children from any aspect of PSHE education, with the exception of sex education taught as part of RSE, for which the withdrawal process is set out in full in the RSE Policy (published on the School website).

5.2. Transparency and Communication

Parents are kept informed about the PSHE programme through newsletters and information evenings throughout the year. The Head of PSHE compiles an overview of the School's PSHE provision which is available for parents, staff, and Governors to view on request.

Parents may request to view the teaching materials and resources used in PSHE. Requests should be directed to the Head of PSHE, who will arrange access in a timely manner. Any significant changes to the published PSHE programme will be communicated to parents in advance.

If a parent has questions about any aspect of the PSHE provision, they are welcome to contact the Head of PSHE directly, or to raise concerns at Parents' Evenings.

5.3. Governors

Governors contribute to and are kept informed about the PSHE policy and curriculum through the Education Committee. At least one Governor representative is involved in the policy review process. Governors may undertake observations of PSHE lessons to ensure consistency of teaching and student safety.

5.4. Student Voice

Student voice is actively used to ensure the PSHE programme meets the needs of the students it serves. Students regularly contribute through feedback questionnaires, student councils, and student working groups. Student voice is influential in adapting planned learning activities and will be particularly important as the School's curriculum evolves during the co-educational transition.

5.5. Co-educational Transition - Parent Communication

The School recognises that the move to co-education from 2027 will raise questions from parents about PSHE provision. The School commits to proactive, transparent communication with parents about how the programme is being developed and adapted in response to the transition, including clear information about delivery arrangements for sensitive topics.

6. Safeguarding and Visiting Speakers

PSHE plays a vital preventive role in meeting the School's safeguarding obligations, helping students learn about safety, risk, healthy relationships, and their rights from an early age. This policy links to and is informed by the School's Safeguarding Policy and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), as well as the Anti-Bullying Policy, Student IT Acceptable Use Policy, and RSE Policy.

Staff delivering PSHE are aware that effective teaching, which builds understanding of safe and healthy choices, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In such cases, the teacher will follow the School's safeguarding procedures and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6.1. Visiting Speakers and External Agencies

Visiting speakers and external agencies can enrich the PSHE programme by bringing specialist knowledge and lived experience to students; however, the School remains responsible at all times for the content and approach of all PSHE delivery. A member of RGS staff is always present and retains responsibility for the learning environment.

Where visiting speakers are invited to contribute to the PSHE programme:

- Testimonials are sought from other Schools prior to their involvement;
- A member of staff meets with the speaker in advance to brief them on the School's safeguarding procedures, the School's values and the expected tone and content of the session;
- The School will confirm that it is content with the content and approach before delivery proceeds;
- Visiting speakers are accompanied by a member of RGS staff throughout;
- If a visiting speaker receives a disclosure from a student, they will refer this immediately to the accompanying member of staff, who will follow the School's safeguarding procedures.

Resources and materials provided by external agencies are reviewed for suitability by the Head of PSHE before use. The contribution of visiting speakers and external agencies is monitored and evaluated as part of the annual review of provision.

7. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The School's PSHE provision is monitored and evaluated by the Head of PSHE and reported to the Education Committee of the Board of Governors.

The Head of PSHE will annually review current provision against the recommendations of the PSHE Association to ensure best practice is being implemented and that the curriculum remains relevant to students' needs.

Teachers reflect on their professional practice in delivering PSHE through personal development conversations with their Head of Year or the PSHE Coordinator. They are encouraged to share best practice through peer observation and to seek training to keep their professional knowledge current. Observations of PSHE lessons may be undertaken by Governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Head of PSHE.

The RSE Programme, lessons and resources are monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually by the Head of PSHE in conjunction with the relevant Heads of Section.

8. Related Policies and Statutory Documents

8.1. Related School Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Senior:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour (Rewards and Sanctions) Policy
- RSE Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Student IT Acceptable Use Policy

Whole School:

- Safeguarding Policy

8.2. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Equality Act (2010) and Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education - DfE Statutory Guidance (July 2025, mandatory from September 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - statutory safeguarding guidance (2026)
- SEND Code of Practice - Statutory Guidance
- SMSC Requirements for Independent Schools
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in Schools

- PSHE Association Programme of Study and guidance

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in Trinity 2027 by the Head of PSHE in consultation with the Heads of Section, the Assistant Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing), the Senior Deputy Head and the Education Committee of the Board of Governors. The Trinity 2027 review will incorporate the curriculum developments required for the School's co-educational transition in September 2027.

The policy will thereafter be reviewed at least every 18–24 months to ensure it continues to meet the needs of students, staff and parents and remains aligned with current DfE guidance and PSHE Association best practice.