

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Reviewer(s)	Senior House Director
Approved by	
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Contents

AIMS	3
DELIVERY OF THE PROGRAMME	3
INDUCTION.....	4
STUDENT LEADERSHIP: STUDENT COUNCIL	5
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME KEY AREAS	5
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY	7
APPENDIX A – RSE LETTER TO PARENTS	9

AIMS

Personal development is inclusive of PSHE, RSE and academic care.

In Personal Development, we look for ways to encourage and reinforce key positive characteristics in ourselves and each other. We act with care, empathy and respect to make a positive difference to the lives of others, in our community and the world around us. We communicate confidently and creatively in many ways. We create opportunities to listen to different perspectives and collaborate positively with others. We are open-minded and critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the traditions and values of others. We work hard to build resilience to cope with challenges and barriers and recover quickly when we fail. We aim to think critically, be curious and develop skills for inquiry and research, demonstrating a love for learning.

Our syllabus offers students the opportunity to reflect upon and discuss a range of themes including health and wellbeing, relationships and sex education, living in the wider world and academic care. Personal development aims to build knowledge, skills and experiences which support students' transition into life and study in the UK as well as preparing them for living healthily and learning successfully in the future. Personal development takes a dialogic approach to teaching and learning with expectations that everyone contributes actively to lessons. Students will be encouraged not simply to know, but to do. Taking positive action to bring about change; individually, for the school community and our broader communities locally, nationally and globally.

This approach considers the increasing relevance of protected characteristics and the need to recognise these and understand their significance. These characteristics will be woven into the programme including student induction. The programme is also designed to encourage and upskill the student to take responsibility for their actions, as well as having an awareness of and responsibility for those issues, which do and will influence the whole of society and the globe.

PHSE & RSE and Academic Care bring together the pastoral, academic and boarding teams who collaborate to support the students' overall wellbeing, recognising the impact this has on positive academic achievement and ultimately outcomes and destinations.

DELIVERY OF THE PROGRAMME

The Personal Development Programme of Study has bespoke schemes of work which satisfy all PSHE & RSE 'Learning Opportunities' set by the government, across a 2-year programme. The curriculum is differentiated through the organisation of the school, into Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and Key Stage 5 (years 12 and 13). This ensures delivery is age appropriate as well as considerate to the sensitivities of culture and gender. Long term plans support learning themes throughout the year. All programme materials and weekly resource modules are accessed through dedicated courses located in MS Teams. PTs provide group MS Teams courses which allow for ease of tracking of student work, as well as the development of the scheme through the year. Progress within specific topics is formatively monitored, with a summative review of learning at the end of each term.

In addition to the delivery in the personal tutor sessions, personal development and academic care are delivered across the school with wraparound activities and provision, also through the subject lessons and the boarding houses. This is emphasised in the celebration of big themes, for example, Black History Month, Anti-bullying Week, Lunar New Year, Safer Internet Day, Self-Harm / Injury Day and the International Day for Tolerance. This is in addition to raising cultural awareness of popular religious festivals including Christmas, Diwali, and Ramadan.

The delivery of personal development is led by the Assistant Head Wellbeing and the Senior House Director and the team of Personal Tutors (PT's), with senior oversight carried out by the Vice Principal. The House Directors are responsible for the pastoral care, attendance, behaviour, rewards and sanctions for the students in their year groups / programmes of study. They also oversee the delivery of the personal development curriculum and co-ordinate a team of Personal Tutors (PTs), ensuring the effective delivery of PSHE and PT sessions.

Some topics covered in the UK PSHE/RSE curriculum contain mature themes. If parents / legal guardians wish to withdraw their child from specific lessons, it is their right to do so and must provide their withdrawal statement in writing to the Assistant Principal Pastoral. It is also the right of a child to opt back in without parental agreement; the earliest they can independently do this up to three terms before their 16th birthday.

INDUCTION

The induction programme is structured to involve orientation to the school and local area, ensuring that each student is placed on the correct programme of study as well as introducing the student to the unique environment in which they will live and study and the involvement that they can have in shaping this. The student is introduced to their Personal Tutor and engaged in settling in activities in the Personal Tutor groups during the induction programme. The student is also introduced to Cambridge city, to encourage exploration of the many avenues of interest and history immediately surrounding them.

Students are allocated their House upon arrival. The House system is designed to improve social, leadership, competition and participation opportunities. Each House has its own House colours, with student ownership being key to that year's structure and success. House leadership roles can be applied for, with voting to positions held before the end of term 1 week 3. House leadership will be a key part of the Student Council, through whom the student body has a clear voice and a direct line to the Senior Leadership Team.

Induction involves the students being introduced to Fundamental British Values as well as protected characteristics and the importance of these both in society and in the setting of school. Students are also encouraged to share and celebrate their cultural diversity. This is a fundamental theme of school life and runs throughout the school year. Effective preparation for future life and living in British Society are introduced to the student during their induction. Moderated discussion of expectations and differences in custom is encouraged as a learning tool. Encouraging students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is based and to society more widely, is a theme that runs through the programme.

Students are provided with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in the UK. This ranges from information about relevant British laws to an understanding of government and institutions. The programme promotes a respect for Fundamental British Values of democracy and the adherence to British rule of law, individual liberty, as well as mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP: STUDENT COUNCIL

Every year students can stand for election to House Leadership roles including House Captain, Vice House-Captain and members of various committees. Successful leaders will form a foundation of The Student Council. Other students may wish to join the Student Council. This process is supported by the theme of politics, democracy and human rights in the curriculum. The student council enhances the Personal Development programme by allowing all students an opportunity to be involved in the life of the school and to contribute ideas and raise issues. The Student Council meets regularly with school leaders, acting as mentors and liaising with the council on projects and interventions throughout the year.

The process of election of the student council is used to create awareness of democratic structures and forms of government, to encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process and includes respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England. Principles are also actively promoted which allow students to gain a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME KEY AREAS.

Health and Wellbeing – mental health including happiness, early signs of mental health concerns, types of mental ill health; physical health including benefits of exercise physically, mentally and emotionally, blood, organ and stem cell donation, healthy eating, drugs, alcohol and tobacco – health implications and addiction, health awareness and disease prevention including screening and immunisation / vaccination, importance of sleep; emotional health including self-esteem and body image, life online vs real life, and sexual health including reproductive health, STIs and contraception, facts around pregnancy, drugs misuse and increased risky behaviours.

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) – All RSE delivery is designed appropriate to age, gender identity, cultural difference, and diversity – all delivery is sensitive and deliberately incorporates considerations of these areas. This programme is delivered with prior consultation of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw students who are under 16 years of age from the Sex Education aspect of the programme. Parents are sent a letter to introduce the nature of RSE. The letter invites questions and discussion regarding the topics including: different types of families and parenting, respectful relationships, consent, healthy intimacy, respect and tolerance of different relationships, bullying including cyber-bullying, coercive relationships and control, equality act (2010), laws related to FGM, forced marriage, online relationship safety and social media impact on relationships, with flexibility to include important current issues as they occur.

Living in the wider world – life online, harmful content and safety online including reporting and finding support, financial literacy – gambling and debt, money skills, first aid – treatment for common injuries, lifesaving skills including CPR, defibrillators and when they might be needed; the multicultural world – tolerance and equality, diversity and discrimination, politics, democracy and human rights, careers and skills for the future, sustainability.

Academic care – target setting, meta-cognition, reflection, academic next steps, UCAS and university preparation, careers education, individual tracking and achievement monitoring. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own life and career decisions through supported conversations with staff.

Diversity and tolerance - These issues run throughout the personal development programme as well as being central to the school's ethos. Students celebrate and share their cultural differences; which is embraced. This is achieved through different celebration days as well as the school's International Day. This fosters an atmosphere of interest in other cultures, traditions, and religions beyond tolerance of diversity. The school actively promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and belief systems by celebrating international festivals and providing extra-curricular activities that allow students to work together and learn about and respect the diverse range of cultures we have in the school.

Career guidance - Career guidance is delivered through both informal and formal opportunities for students. Career development support is delivered to all students in an age-appropriate manner. These may involve outside speakers including University staff, (inc. Lecturers and admissions staff), as well as specific career talks given by previous students and invited guests. The careers support takes place at an appropriate time of year for the programme of study with Key Stage 4 and lower sixth being placed at the end of the academic year when next steps are being considered and decisions taken.

The Higher Education advisor is instrumental in careers guidance. All students applying to university will apply with support from the Higher Education Adviser. University Fairs are held during the academic year, raising the profile of Higher Education, and providing opportunities to network and find out more. These may have a subject specific focus on occasions, others give information and guidance regarding the visiting university in general. Guest speakers provide inspiration and information during the academic year. These involve individual speakers talking about their own subject and their personal journey to this specialism.

Where possible, opportunity is given for voluntary work and shadowing, within the guidance given by UKVI regarding the number of hours for which international students can undertake voluntary work. Economic education such as personal finance, budgeting, cost of living and taking out loans are encompassed in our life skills programme in boarding.

E-safety – Children are supported to recognise online risks both in PSHE and other academic lessons in areas such as social media, nudes and semi nudes, deepfakes, gambling, pornography, personal information and (cyber)bullying. Sessions are planned in collaboration with the DSL and in liaison with curriculum leaders, to ensure relevant topics are planned, mapped, embedded and evaluated throughout the year.

PSHE lessons are designed to promote discussion of previously 'taboo' topics such as suicide, selfharm, substance misuse and anorexia, guiding students to explore the facts, address misconceptions, address the risks and identify available reporting processes, to help them regulate their online behaviour.

Another layer of protection from online harms for students and staff, are the site wide internet safety filters that are regularly monitored in line with KCSiE (2025) updates. Data is investigated and used to inform educational sessions aimed reactively at addressing current issues, as well as proactively in helping identify growing trends.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

The programme furthermore: (a) precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; (b) Takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils— (i) While they attend the school: (ii) While they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school; or (iii) In the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Students will be encouraged to reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses and PTs will seek to reward achievement, set regular personal targets, and review them with their students. Recognition includes Leadership's praise letters home for outstanding behaviour in the school community as well as outstanding academic work. The House point system formalises praise and PTs report on the number of points issued each half term to each house to celebrate positive characteristics in the students. Certificates are issued at the end of each term in assembly for a range of achievements. PTs report home every term. Student reports are discussed with the student by both the subject teacher and overall, by the PT each term.

Schemes of work are reviewed every term with reflection comments gathered from PTs for future curriculum development. Monitoring Schemes of work for all programmes of study is undertaken regularly by the Senior House Director. As such the schemes may be modified throughout the year. All schemes, tasks and assignments are contained on MS Teams.

Oversight is maintained by the Assistant Principal Wellbeing who reports to the senior leadership team on pastoral matters.

Relationship to other policies:

- Attendance policy
- Student behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Curriculum policy
- E-Safety policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Pastoral principles, welfare and practice policy
- RSE policy

- Visiting speakers policy

PSHE/Personal Development underpins all our work at the School and all staff have key roles to play including House Tutors and Personal Tutors, Teaching, Welfare and Pastoral Staff.

The policy has been informed by the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (including advice on cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC))
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development).
- PSHE Association – material for delivery and structuring outcome

APPENDIX A – RSE LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a part of your child's education at CATS Cambridge, we promote personal development and wellbeing through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) as well as Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programmes. PSHE (including RSE) is the curriculum subject that gives young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential.

I am writing to let you know that starting September 2025, your child's class will be taking part in lessons which will include topics from the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) aspect of the programme. Under UK law, it is mandatory that broad and robust PSHE and RSE curriculums are offered to students.

RSE lessons in 2025-2026 will include:

Healthy & respectful relationships, Living & learning in a multi-cultural society, Diversity & discrimination, Anti-bullying, Consent, Safe sex, Sexual harassment, Laws regarding sharing of seminude or nude material, First aid, Mental health and happiness, Self-care [inc. Sleep and Nutrition], Managing financial risk and Developing independence. All PSHE and RSE content will be delivered highlighting British Values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural aspects.

Students will have opportunities to explore preparing them for healthier relationships of all kinds in the modern world.

PSHE and RSE are taught throughout the school in every year group and are monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff and governing body. Please contact us for more detail about our Personal Development curriculum. All PSHE teaching will take place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our school ethos and values with particular attention given to cultural perspectives. As a school community, we are committed to working in partnership with parents. If you would like to find out more or discuss any concerns, we would invite you to contact pbond@catscambridge.com to arrange a discussion.

Yours faithfully,

Phil Bond
Senior House Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead