



# **Aspire AP Schools PSHE Policy**

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| This policy was adopted: | March 2026                                              |
| Reviewed by:             | Executive Team, Aspire Trustees<br>Ratified by Trustees |
| Review date:             | February 2027                                           |

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## 1. Purpose and context

In line with the Education Act 2002 and Academies Act 2010, Aspire provides a balanced PSHE curriculum which:

- promotes an awareness and understanding of student safety, independence and risk assessment, as well as cultural, mental and physical development whilst building self-esteem, and preparing pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

The 2006 Education and Inspections Act placed a duty on Governing Bodies 'to promote the wellbeing of pupils at the school'. At Aspire we work hard to support the mental health of the students and have assigned members of staff as mental health leaders and have trained mental health first aiders across the school. Aspire has a Senior Mental Health Lead that sits on the school leadership team.

This is in line with Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, which took effect in September 2020.

Relationship and Sex Education is delivered to students in years 7 to 11 as part of the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) curriculum, and the National Curriculum Science topics. This PSHE policy and curriculum has been designed with this in mind.

### 1.1 Aims and objectives

Our school's ethos is to lead with love. Teachers engage with students and build rapport through demonstrating kindness. They support students in developing a love of learning and a deeper understanding of themselves.

Our PSHE programme aims to deliver the ethos of Aspire, ensuring the students feel valued, respected, loved and cared for. Our curriculum drivers are 'safe, love, learn' which run through everything we do. We recognise the importance of PSHE for our learners, in that we see the subject as a foundation to our curriculum.

At the Alternative Provision sites, we have developed our PSHE curriculum under the headings 'Independence and Aspirations', 'Autonomy and Advocacy' and 'Choices and Influence', whilst still increasing the student's knowledge of the 3 core PSHE themes of 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships' and 'Living in the Wider World'.

The curriculum is designed:

- To enable students to grow into responsible young adults, accepting themselves and their responsibilities with confidence and positive self-worth.
- To promote equality and diversity.
- To explore attitudes and develop skills in making decisions about health and safety.
- To gain awareness in financial decisions and careers advice.
- To create an atmosphere in which students can learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- To look at managing relationships and conflict resolution through different life stages.
- To access accurate information about physical development at appropriate ages.

- To ensure that the requirements of the DCSF Guidance on Sex and Relationship Education are met.

We deliver a curriculum that considers the needs of all students, which may involve dealing sensitively and honestly with sexual orientation, answering appropriate questions and offering support. There will be no direct promotion of sexual orientation but a recognition of diversity and equality for all.

## **1.2 Creating a safe and supportive learning environment**

We will create a safe and supportive learning environment by using clear 'ground rules' and a safeguarding policy that is understood by all (adults and children) is important in creating this. During PSHE lessons, pupils may indicate in some way that they are vulnerable or 'at risk'. In these circumstances, our usual safeguarding practices apply.

Students are reminded of the classroom rules; we will set the following ground rules at the start of lessons and these are displayed in the classroom:

- Everyone has the right to be heard and respected.
- We will use language that won't offend or upset other people.
- We will use the correct terms and if we don't know them, we will find out or ask.
- We will comment on what was said and not the person who said it.
- We won't put anyone on the spot.
- We won't judge or make assumptions about anyone.
- We have the right to pass.

Aspire prioritises student welfare and safety. All staff are statutory safeguarding trained and have access to site DSLs regularly.

## **1.3 Entitlement and equality of opportunities**

The PSHE curriculum is in line with the Aspire equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

Lessons consider pupils' ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds, and are adjusted to enable all pupils to access the learning.

Full PSHE education provision is accessible to every pupil, although parents have a right to withdraw their children from those parts of RSE not within the national curriculum Science programmes of study.

## **2. Statutory requirements**

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. However, there are aspects of it we are required to teach.

- We must teach relationships and sex education (RSE) under the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), in line with the terms set out in [statutory guidance](#)
- We must teach health education under the same statutory guidance.

### **3. Content and delivery**

#### **3.1 What we teach**

We are required to cover the content for Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education, as set out in the statutory guidance from Department for Education.

Refer to our Relationships and Sex Education Policy for details about what we teach, and how we decide on what to teach, in this subject. This policy can be found on our website.

For other aspects of PSHE, including health education, see the curriculum map below for more details about what we teach in each year/Key Stage.

#### **Intended outcomes**

- As a result of our PSHE programme of learning, pupils will have opportunities to consider and clarify their values and beliefs and to rehearse and develop enquiry and interpersonal skills. Developing healthy relationships and effective communication skills are central to this. We recognise the need for our students to be taught how to risk take in safe ways. We also intend to teach students how to behave appropriately.
- At Aspire, we want to enhance the student's self-belief, risk management skills and to support the students in finding and accessing help (signposting support strategies and organisations).

#### **Teaching and learning**

- We consider student's prior learning and life experiences by beginning each new topic in PSHE by determining pupils' prior knowledge.
- Topics will be presented in a balanced manner and based on fact.
- At Aspire, we reassure students that the majority of young people actually make positive, healthy lifestyle choices (shock tactics are proven to reduce student engagement with the subject).
- Teaching is kept relevant to student's needs, through making connections between the learning they receive in PSHE education and their current and future 'real life' experiences.
- The skill of critical reflection is therefore at the heart of assessment for learning in PSHE education. The students record their competency in topic areas against objectives in the form of 'I can...' statements to help assess their learning. We also use red, amber, green colour coding (where appropriate) to support the students in recognising their confidence in each topic.
- We create strong links with careers education and create Record of Achievements to develop self-belief and positive attitudes in looking forward and planning for the future.

#### **Sexual identity and sexual orientation**

- We aim to make sure that the needs of all students are met in their programmes of study. The Secretary of State for Education and Employment is clear that teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support without direct promotion of sexual orientation.

#### **Planning**

- All lessons are designed to expand and develop student awareness and understanding and are sensitive to a range of views.

- At Aspire, we ensure that pupils always have access to the learning they need to stay safe and healthy, and protect and enforce their human rights. This includes clear, impartial information in relation to matters such as forced-marriage, female genital mutilation and abortion.

### **KS3 topic focus**

This includes recognising healthy lifestyles, and the wellbeing of self and others, communicating online, employability, making responsible choices and relationship and sex education. The content focuses on:

- Dealing with puberty, growth and change as a normal part of growing up.
- Understanding that relationships can be challenging and the importance of boundaries in relationships.
- Different types of relationships, including those within families and between older and young people, boys and girls, and people of the same sex, including civil partnerships and the importance of stable relationships for family life and bringing up children
- Managing an online presence safely.
- Using social skills to build and maintain a range of positive relationships.
- Using knowledge and understanding to make informed choices about safety, health and first aid.
- Sexual activity, human reproduction, contraception, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and HIV, and how high-risk behaviours affect the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- Students recognising the importance of regulating emotions, mental health and wellbeing and to know when and how to get help.
- Identifying how managing feelings and emotions effectively supports decision making and risk management.
- Understanding how online relationships work, how information can be used by others.

### **KS4 topic focus**

This includes preparing for adult life, managing relationships, employment skills, recognising healthy lifestyles, and the wellbeing of self and others, online relationships, managing transition and relationship and sex education. The content focuses on:

- Understanding that physical, mental, sexual and emotional health affects our ability to lead fulfilling lives.
- Understanding that relationships affect everything we do in our lives and that relationship skills have to be learnt and practiced.
- Using knowledge and understanding to make informed choices about safety, health and wellbeing, evaluating personal choices and making changes if necessary.
- The benefits and risks of health and lifestyle choices, including choices relating to sexual activity and substance use and misuse, and the short and long term consequences for the health and mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- Recognising where to seek help and support.
- Identifying emotions effectively support decision making and risk management.
- Using social skills to build and maintain a range of positive relationships, reflecting upon what makes these successful and applying this to new situations, such as work experience.
- Where and how to obtain health information, how to recognise and follow health and safety procedures, ways of reducing risk and minimising harm in risky situations, how to find sources of emergency help and how to use basic and emergency first aid.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents, carers, children and other family members.
- Parenting skills and qualities and their central importance to family life.

- The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on families and the need to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Exploring feelings of empathy and compassion through emotions related to changing relationships and develop skills to cope with loss and bereavement.

## PSHE LONG TERM OVERVIEW

|     | Autumn 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Autumn 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Spring 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Spring 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Summer 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Summer 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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|     | Independence and aspirations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Autonomy and advocacy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Choices and influences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Independence and aspirations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Autonomy and advocacy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Choices and influences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| KS3 | <p>Developing goal setting, organisation skills and self-awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal identity and values</li> <li>• Learning skills and teamwork</li> <li>• Respect in school</li> </ul> <p>Developing risk management skills, analytical skills and strategies to identify bias:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing online presence</li> <li>• Digital and media literacy</li> </ul> <p>Developing goal-setting, analytical skills and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCSE options (Year 9)</li> <li>• Sources of careers advice</li> <li>• Employability</li> </ul> | <p>Developing empathy, compassion and communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making and maintaining friendships</li> <li>• Identifying and challenging bullying</li> <li>• Communicating online</li> </ul> <p>Developing respect for beliefs, values and opinions and advocacy skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>• Promoting diversity and equality</li> </ul> <p>Developing self-confidence, risk management and strategies to manage influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship challenges</li> <li>• Gangs and violent crime</li> <li>• Drugs and alcohol</li> <li>• Assertive communication</li> </ul> | <p>Developing agency, strategies to manage influence and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulating emotions</li> <li>• Diet and exercise</li> <li>• Hygiene and dental health</li> <li>• Sleep</li> </ul> <p>Developing agency and strategies to manage influence and access support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs and alcohol</li> <li>• Introduction to contraception</li> <li>• Resisting peer influence</li> <li>• Online choices and influences</li> </ul> <p>Developing empathy, compassion and strategies to access support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health (including self-harm and eating disorders)</li> <li>• Change, loss and bereavement</li> <li>• Healthy coping strategies</li> </ul> | <p>Developing self-confidence and self-worth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puberty and managing change</li> <li>• Body satisfaction and self-concept</li> </ul> <p>Developing goal setting, motivation and self-awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspirations for the future</li> <li>• Career choices</li> <li>• Identity and the world of work</li> </ul> <p>Developing analytical skills and strategies to identify bias and manage influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial decisions</li> <li>• Saving and borrowing</li> <li>• Gambling, financial choices and debt</li> </ul> | <p>Developing assertive communication, risk management and support-seeking skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights in the community</li> <li>• Relationship boundaries</li> <li>• Unwanted contact</li> <li>• FGM and forced marriage</li> </ul> <p>Developing communication and negotiation skills, clarifying values and strategies to manage influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy relationships</li> <li>• Boundaries and consent</li> <li>• LGBT+ inclusivity</li> <li>• 'Sexting'</li> <li>• Managing conflict</li> </ul> <p>Developing assertive communication, clarifying values and strategies to manage influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy/unhealthy relationships</li> <li>• Consent</li> <li>• Relationships and sex in the media</li> </ul> | <p>Developing agency and decision making skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</li> <li>• Safety and first aid</li> </ul> <p>Developing agency and strategies to manage influence and access support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining positive mental health</li> <li>• Importance of physical activity</li> </ul> <p>Developing decision making, risk management and support-seeking skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</li> <li>• Contraception</li> <li>• Cancer awareness</li> <li>• First aid</li> </ul> |

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| Yr 10 | Developing self-awareness, goal-setting, adaptability and organisation skills:<br>• Managing transition to key stage 4 including learning skills<br>• Managing mental health concerns | Developing empathy and compassion, strategies to manage influence and assertive communication:<br>• Relationship expectations<br>• Impact of pornography<br>• Identifying and responding to abuse and harassment                   | Developing agency and decision making, strategies to manage influence and access support:<br>• First aid and life-saving<br>• Personal safety<br>• Online relationships                   | Developing goal setting, leadership and presentation skills:<br>• Skills for employment<br>• Applying for employment<br>• Online presence and reputation                                                    | Developing respect for diversity, risk management and support seeking skills:<br>• Nature of committed relationships<br>• Forced marriage<br>• Diversity and discrimination<br>• Extremism    | Developing motivation, organisation, leadership and presentation skills:<br>• Preparation for, and reflection on, work experience |
| Yr 11 | Developing resilience and risk management skills:<br>• Money management<br>• Fraud and cybercrime<br>• Preparing for adult life                                                       | Developing communication and negotiation skills, risk management and support-seeking skills:<br>• Relationship values<br>• Maintaining sexual health<br>• Sexual health services<br>• Managing relationship challenges and endings | Developing confidence, agency and support-seeking skills:<br>• Making safe and healthy lifestyle choices<br>• Health promotion and self-examination<br>• Blood, organ, stem cell donation | Developing empathy and compassion, clarifying values and support-seeking skills:<br>• Families and parenting<br>• Fertility, adoption, abortion<br>• Pregnancy and miscarriage<br>• Managing grief and loss | Developing confidence, self-worth, adaptability and decision making skills:<br>• Recognising and celebrating successes<br>• Transition and new opportunities<br>• Aligning actions with goals | Exams                                                                                                                             |

### Finding My Voice – KS3

Finding My Voice (FMV) is a full time transformational curriculum designed to change lives. This is a unique approach to supporting young people that will enable them to change their own narrative and the narrative others have of them. This transformational growth in young people will enable them to go back to mainstream with an understanding of self, and give them the tools to communicate what they need to flourish.

This is an early intervention programme for KS3 at The Wycombe Grange, designed to work with students on change before they get to crisis points.

Everything we do in FMV is designed around personal development and growth, and the core of our PSHE curriculum across Aspire is built into the day-to-day programme of FMV. Please see our FMV prospectus on the website for a comprehensive overview.

## 3.2 How we teach it

### Teaching responsibility and staff training

PSHE at Aspire is delivered by dedicated teachers. At our AP sites, this is similar to a mainstream model, in that PSHE is taught by all teachers. We do have a Head of PSHE that delivers all PSHE lessons at our CSEC site.

- Visitors, professionals and specialists can bring their expertise or personal stories to enrich pupil's learning. This is part of the learning objectives, and these objectives would be shared with the visitors and then agreed in advance.

- Teachers will remain present to manage the learning, and to ensure that it is safe.
- When using external speakers to deliver aspects of our PSHE programme, we will ensure that the workshop and objectives are suitable and relevant to the students participating.
- A variety of approaches are used to give students relevant information, such as mind mapping, case studies, workshops, vocabulary/definitions, to enable moral issues to be explored in discussion; and to acquire appropriate skills. Details can be seen in the scheme of work. Relationship and Sex Education (secondary) Students are taught in mixed ability groups. When there is specific need, arrangements will be made to teach students in appropriate groups.
- We must be sensitive and cautious around some areas of the RSE programme of study ensuring that any past trauma around this topic is managed safely.
- Aspire works with professionals to deliver Sex and Relationship Education, including health professionals, social workers and youth workers who also provide Relationship and Sex Education in the wider community. These workshops/sessions have much to offer, in meeting the needs of students, supporting the PSHE curriculum and delivering information about core topics in fact-based ways. We also work closely with the Thames Valley Link Team.
- This also benefits the students by signposting the students to support outside of educational environments and in bringing a new perspective and offering specialist knowledge, experience and resources.
- Health professionals who are involved in delivering programmes are expected to work within Aspire's Sex and Relationship Policy. However, when they are in their professional role (i.e., not working in our schools), they should follow their own professional codes of conduct.

### **Assessment**

- We record and measure the student's learning based on the lesson objectives and outcomes.
- The teacher and students both need to know what has been learned, and how learning and understanding has progressed and together complete a log of the student's confidence/attitude towards achieving the objective.
- The students record these against objectives in the form of 'I can...' statements to help assess their learning in each topic area.
- We also use red, amber, green colour coding (where appropriate) to support the students in recognising their confidence in each topic and to then deliver further teaching/support in areas that the student's lack confidence/awareness in.

### **Timetabling**

- We allocate a minimum of 40 minutes per week per student across the Key Stages and all school sites. Sometimes this will be more allocated time where the timetable allows.
- As the topics are taught in a spiral curriculum, it means that they are revisited over time and taught in greater depth as the students progress through the curriculum. This approach avoids PSHE education becoming a string of 'topics' or disconnected issues.
- Our provision is further enriched by vocational and careers enrichment days and through mentoring and support sessions with youth workers and mental health professionals.

### **Confidentiality and handling disclosures**

- Due to the nature of PSHE education, pupils' learning may result in them seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue.

- All teachers are expected to follow our normal safeguarding practices when dealing with sensitive topics including managing disclosures. See our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Teachers cannot offer complete confidentiality. It is for everyone's safety that teachers and pupils are clear about what can and cannot be kept confidential.
- It is also very important for external contributors, including school nurses, to be clear about these rules and that whilst working in the classroom, they are bound by the school's confidentiality policy, not their own. When external contributors attend our sites, they must follow our visitor protocol (see Safeguarding and Child Protection policy).
- Disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse - staff are duty bound to report through our usual safeguarding systems.
- Disclosure of pregnancy or advice on contraception - it is hoped that students who are in difficulty know that they can talk to an adult in the school and that they will be supported. Professional information and guidance will always be sought from a health professional. Students should be asked whether they can tell their parent(s)/carer(s) and whether they want help in doing so. If this takes place, subsequent responsibility then lies with the parent(s)/carer(s).
- It will need to be checked. If students refuse to tell their parent(s)/carer(s), the adult should refer them to a health professional. The adult should report the incident to the Head of School who will consult with the health professional adult about informing parent(s)/carer(s).

#### **Responding to pupils' questions**

- It is important that pupils feel able to ask any questions that they wish and that their questions are valued. However, consideration should be given to how to respond to questions. If necessary, teachers also need to feel able to ask a pupil to wait for an answer to give them time to consult with the school's leadership team if they feel this appropriate, or if the question raises potential safeguarding concerns. For instance: 'That is a really interesting question and I need time to think because I want to give you a proper answer.' Teachers should work with colleagues if necessary to construct an appropriate answer.

#### **Involving parents and carers**

- Parents and carers will be informed about the policy through the school website and in the school induction pack, where Aspire seeks consent from parents and guardians.
- The policy can be made available at 6 or 12 week reviews or during Annual Reviews.
- Effective communication and co-operation between Aspire and parents/carers is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.
- The curriculum can be discussed in greater detail with the PSHE Head of Department, the Head of School or the Trust Curriculum Lead.
- Aspire will do their best to provide copies of the policy in additional formats/languages, if requested and required.
- The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of Sex Education provided outside of national curriculum science. Parents wishing to exercise that right are asked to make an appointment to meet the Head of PSHE or Head of Science to discuss the issues, they are under no obligation to do so. This should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. Once a child is withdrawn, they cannot take part in later sex education without parental approval. Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for science and the compulsory Relationships education will take place in PSHE. Parents can withdraw their children from other parts of Sex Education if they so wish. As per Government guidelines there is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or

secondary as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Access to the full policy will be given to all parents / carers when their child joins Aspire.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Board of Trustees**

The Aspire Trustees will hold the CEO to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Trustees have delegated the approval of this policy to Aspire's Executive Leadership Team.

### **4.2 The CEO and Executive Leaders**

The CEO is responsible for holding the Executive Headteacher accountable for the implementation of this policy. The Executive Leadership team are responsible for ensuring PSHE is taught in a way that adheres to this policy.

### **4.3 Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering PSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to PSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

### **4.4 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in PSHE and, when discussing issues related to PSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## **5. Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of PSHE is monitored by Head of PSHE and SLT through:

- Department meetings, inset activities, lesson observations, performance management, data recording, book reviews, CPD, student progress (data) recording.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of PSHE, and the Head of Science will monitor Sex and Relationship education. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Leadership Team.

## **6. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Aspire Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Aspire E Safety Policy

- Aspire Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Aspire Equality and Diversity Policy

The Policy was produced through consultation with the Science department (regarding sex and reproduction), with school staff and the PSHE department, the Aspire Executive Team and the Trustees.