

Personal Development Policy

(Inclusive of RSHE, SMSC and Digital Literacy)

BCHS is a school where:

- Where aspiration, knowledge and kindness are at the heart of all that we do.
- Where every child is respected, valued and supported to achieve their very best.
- Where high expectations, engaging learning and a culture of respect enable every child to succeed.
- Where children feel safe, happy and encouraged to grow into independent and responsible young people.
- Where achievement, character, leadership and personal development are recognised and celebrated.
- Where strong partnerships between staff, students, parents and governors support a thriving school community.

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Authorised by:	Awaiting Ratification

This policy is for the whole school and The Credo School, our designated provision at Birchwood Community High School.

Section 1. Intent

1.1 Introduction

At Birchwood Community High School, we believe that education is about much more than academic success. Through our Personal Development curriculum, we aim to help students become healthy, safe, respectful and responsible members of society who are prepared for life beyond school.

We place a high value on developing the whole child and recognise that a student's personal development is as important as their academic achievement. Our curriculum is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, values and character needed to thrive as confident and successful members of modern Britain.

This policy outlines Birchwood Community High School's whole-school approach to Personal Development, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and Digital Literacy.

Personal Development at Birchwood Community High School is delivered through:

- The Personal Development curriculum
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education
- Digital Literacy education
- Collective Meetings
- Assemblies
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)
- Enrichment opportunities
- Student leadership programmes
- Educational visits and wider experiences
- Partnerships with external agencies and professionals

Our Personal Development curriculum reflects the statutory requirements outlined within the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025).

1.2 Aims

The aims of Personal Development at Birchwood Community High School are:

- To support students to become healthy, safe, respectful and responsible members of society.
- To promote the school's core values of Aspiration, Knowledge and Kindness.
- To develop students' knowledge, confidence, resilience and character.
- To support positive mental, physical, emotional and sexual health.
- To prepare students for adulthood and life beyond school.
- To develop students' understanding of healthy relationships and personal responsibility.
- To promote equality, diversity, inclusion and respect for others.
- To enable students to recognise risk and keep themselves safe both online and offline.
- To prepare students for participation in modern British society.
- To develop students' awareness of careers, employability and future pathways.

- To encourage active citizenship and positive contributions to local and wider communities.
- To ensure all students understand where and how to seek support for themselves or others.

1.3 Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
PD	Personal Development
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
AI	Artificial Intelligence
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead

1.4 Core Values

As part of The One Community Trust, Birchwood Community High School embraces the vision to engage, enable and empower all students.

Our Personal Development curriculum is built around three core values:

Aspiration

Aspiration encourages students to understand their role within society and develop ambition for their futures. Students learn about identity, careers, financial awareness, digital citizenship and contributing positively to their communities.

Knowledge

Knowledge begins with understanding ourselves. Students develop the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, safety and future lives.

Kindness

Kindness is demonstrated through the way we treat others. Students learn to develop positive relationships built upon empathy, respect, consent, inclusion and responsibility.

Our values underpin all aspects of Personal Development, RSHE, SMSC, Digital Literacy, safeguarding, enrichment and pastoral provision.

Section 2: Personal Development Curriculum

2.1 Curriculum Structure

The Personal Development curriculum is organised around three overarching themes:

KNOWLEDGE – Understanding Myself

Students develop the understanding needed to make informed choices about their health, wellbeing and future lives.

Topics include:

- Wellbeing and mental health
- Physical health and healthy lifestyles
- Puberty and human development
- Personal hygiene and menstrual health
- Substance misuse
- Smoking and vaping
- Reproductive health and fertility
- First aid and personal safety

KINDNESS – Understanding Myself With Others

Students learn to build healthy, respectful and positive relationships.

Topics include:

- Friendships
- Family relationships
- Healthy intimate relationships
- Personal boundaries
- Consent
- Sexual harassment
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Equality and diversity
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

ASPIRATION – Understanding Myself Within The World

Students develop an understanding of the wider world and their place within it.

Topics include:

- Identity and belonging
- Community participation

- Digital citizenship
- Online safety
- Financial education
- Careers and future pathways
- Diversity in modern Britain

2.2 Assessment and Feedback

At Birchwood Community High School, we believe that assessment and feedback should support learning and help students retain, recall and apply the important knowledge and skills taught through the Personal Development curriculum. In line with the school's whole-school Feedback Policy, feedback is intended to be **meaningful, manageable and motivating**, enabling students to understand their strengths, address misconceptions and make progress over time.

Assessment is used not only to measure learning, but also to improve learning. Teachers regularly check students' understanding through questioning, discussion, retrieval activities, reflection tasks, scenario-based learning and low-stakes knowledge checks. These approaches allow staff to identify misconceptions, gaps in knowledge and areas where additional support or challenge may be required.

Students receive regular feedback throughout Personal Development lessons. Feedback may be delivered verbally, through whole-class feedback, responsive teaching, guided discussion, modelling, green-pen feedback where appropriate, and opportunities for self-reflection and peer discussion. Feedback focuses on helping students deepen their understanding, refine their thinking and apply their learning to real-life situations and personal decision-making.

In line with the school's **RAP (Respond, Action, Progress)** approach, students are provided with opportunities to respond to feedback, revisit key learning and demonstrate improved understanding. Response activities may include discussion, reflection, scenario analysis, knowledge-retrieval activities or written response tasks. This ensures that feedback forms part of an ongoing learning process rather than a standalone event and supports the development of long-term understanding and retention.

To evaluate students' understanding of the curriculum, all students complete a **KaST (Knowledge and Skills Test)** at the end of the academic year. These assessments are designed to measure how effectively students have understood, retained and can apply the key knowledge and skills developed throughout their Personal Development learning.

The assessment draws upon content from across the three curriculum themes of **Knowledge, Kindness and Aspiration**, enabling students to demonstrate their understanding of topics including health and wellbeing, relationships, personal safety, equality, diversity, citizenship and life in modern Britain.

The KaST is divided into two sections:

- **Section A:** Multiple-choice questions that assess students' recall and retention of key knowledge taught throughout the year.

- **Section B:** Scenario-based questions that present students with realistic situations and case studies. Students are required to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts, apply their learning to real-life contexts, and provide appropriate advice, recommendations and courses of action.

This approach enables students to demonstrate not only what they know, but also how effectively they can apply that knowledge when making informed, safe and responsible decisions.

As Personal Development is focused on preparing students for life beyond school, assessment and feedback information are used primarily to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, identify strengths and areas for further development, address misconceptions and inform future curriculum planning. Unlike other curriculum subjects, outcomes from Personal Development KaST assessments are not formally reported to parents/carers through the school's standard assessment reporting cycle. Instead, assessment and feedback outcomes support the school's ongoing evaluation of students' personal development and readiness for life in modern society.

Section 3: SMSC Development

3.1 SMSC at Birchwood Community High School

SMSC development is embedded throughout school life and is delivered through:

- Personal Development lessons
- Collective Meetings
- Assemblies
- Religious Education
- Careers Education
- Enrichment activities
- Educational visits
- Student leadership opportunities
- Community projects
- Extra-curricular activities

Spiritual Development

Students are encouraged to reflect on values, beliefs, experiences and personal growth through:

- Assemblies
- Reflection activities
- Mentoring
- Restorative practices
- Mindfulness opportunities
- School values programme

Moral Development

Students develop an understanding of:

- Right and wrong
- Equality and fairness
- Anti-bullying
- Responsible decision-making
- Digital responsibility
- Respectful behaviour

Social Development

Students develop:

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Community awareness
- Responsibility
- Collaboration

Cultural Development

Students engage with:

- Diverse cultures and faiths
- Black History Month
- Pride Month
- Religious celebrations
- International visits
- Performing arts opportunities
- Community events

Section 4: Digital Literacy

Students in Years 7-9 participate in a structured Digital Literacy programme.

Topics include:

- Online safety
- Digital citizenship
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Cybersecurity
- Online scams
- Social media
- Misinformation and disinformation
- Data privacy
- Digital footprints
- Responsible technology use

Digital Literacy complements both Personal Development and safeguarding provision and helps students navigate an increasingly digital world safely and responsibly.

Section 5: Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

5.1 RSHE Provision

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is delivered through the Personal Development curriculum and meets all statutory requirements outlined in the 2025 Relationships, Sex and Health Education Guidance.

Students are taught about:

- Families and healthy relationships
- Respect and consent
- Sexual harassment and violence prevention
- Online safety
- Pornography and online harms
- Exploitation and grooming
- Age of consent
- Sexual health services
- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Fertility and pregnancy
- Parenthood
- Equality and protected characteristics
- Physical and mental wellbeing

Teaching is age-appropriate, inclusive, evidence-informed and sensitive to the needs of all learners.

5.2 Working with External Agencies

The school works in partnership with specialist services to enhance curriculum delivery.

School Nursing Team

Year 9

- Sexual health services
- Age of consent
- Contraception
- Pregnancy prevention
- Introduction to STIs

Year 10

- Sexual health
- STI prevention
- Testing and treatment
- Accessing healthcare services

Cheshire Police

Sessions include:

- Knife crime
- Child criminal exploitation
- Drugs and alcohol
- Pornography
- Online safety
- Community safety

All external resources are quality assured and aligned to statutory guidance.

Section 6: Parental Right to Request Withdrawal

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education elements of RSHE.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw students from:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Digital Literacy
- SMSC provision
- National Curriculum Science

Requests should be made to the Headteacher in writing.

The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers before any decision is made.

Students may choose to opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday, regardless of any previous parental request for withdrawal.

Section 7: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The quality of Personal Development, SMSC, RSHE and Digital Literacy provision will be monitored through:

- Curriculum review
- Lesson observations
- Student voice
- Parent feedback
- Governor monitoring
- Work scrutiny
- Safeguarding analysis
- Attendance and behaviour data
- External quality assurance

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with statutory guidance and the evolving needs of students and the wider community.