ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL
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PSHE Policy

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Contents Page

PAGE

1. Purpose of this policy 3
2. Ethos and aims 3
3. Statutory and regulatory framework 4
4. Scope of the programme 4
5. Curriculum content 5
5.1 Health and wellbeing 5
5.2 Relationships education 5
5.3 Sex education 6
5.4 Living in the wider world 6
5.5 Legal literacy and safeguarding content 7
6. Equality, inclusion and protected characteristics 7
7. Safeguarding 8
8. Online safety 9
9. Fundamental British values, balanced teaching and political impartiality 9
10. Addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence 9
11. Organisation and delivery 10
12. Roles and responsibilities 11
12.1 Governors and senior leaders 11
12.2 Head of PSHE 11
12.3 Teaching staff 11
12.4 Designated safeguarding lead 12
12.5 Students 12
12.6 Parents and families 12
13. Staff training and professional development 12
14. Parental consultation and publication 13
15. Withdrawal from sex education 13
16. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation 14
17. Review 14

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."
John 10:10

1. Purpose of this policy

This policy sets out how St Benedict's School provides Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, including Relationships, Sex and Health Education, in a way that reflects the school's Catholic and Benedictine ethos and meets the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

The policy explains:

- the aims of the PSHE and RSHE programme
- how the curriculum is organised and delivered
- how the school promotes safeguarding, equality, respect and student wellbeing
- the respective roles of governors, leaders, staff, students and families
- arrangements for parental consultation, publication of the policy, and requests for withdrawal from sex education

This policy should be read alongside the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, online safety policy, SEND policy, attendance policy, RSE policy and complaints procedure.

2. Ethos and aims

At St Benedict's, we want our students to become resilient, reflective and morally responsible young people who are well prepared for adult life. We want them to be able to care for themselves and others, to build healthy relationships, to act with integrity, and to contribute positively to society.

The PSHE and RSHE programme supports students to:

- develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- make informed and responsible decisions about health, wellbeing and relationships
- distinguish right from wrong and respect the civil and criminal law of England
- recognise risk, harm, abuse, exploitation and coercion, and seek help promptly
- understand the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society
- respect other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- understand and value democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

At St Benedict's School, we use the term *Conversatio* for our programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. The term Conversatio is drawn from the Benedictine phrase *conversatio morum*, traditionally understood as "conversion of life" or "continuing transformation of

one's way of life". It expresses the idea that formation is not a single event, but a lifelong process of learning how to live well: developing habits and virtues, making wise choices, building healthy relationships, and growing in responsibility towards oneself and others. Conversatio is therefore our programme for personal, social, health and relationships education, reflecting the Benedictine understanding that education involves the continuing formation of the whole person.

The programme is taught within the ethos of a tolerant Catholic and Benedictine school. The school may teach its faith perspective on relationships and moral questions. It will do so in a way that is factual, age-appropriate, balanced and lawful, and which does not encourage disrespect for other people or unlawful discrimination.

3. Statutory and regulatory framework

This policy has regard to:

- the Independent School Standards guidance, April 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, as referenced in KCSIE
- Working together to improve school attendance, as referenced in the ISS guidance
- the Department for Education statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, as referenced in the ISS guidance
- the Equality Act 2010, as referenced in the ISS guidance and KCSIE

This policy is intended to meet:

- the requirement to provide PSHE that reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010
- the requirement to provide secondary pupils with relationships and sex education and to have regard to the relevant statutory guidance
- the requirement to make and keep up to date a separate written statement of policy on relationships education and RSE, to consult parents before making or revising it, and to publish it on the school website and provide it free of charge on request
- the requirement for teaching not to undermine fundamental British values and not to discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010
- the requirement to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and to have regard to KCSIE

4. Scope of the programme

PSHE at St Benedict's includes three core themes:

- Health and wellbeing

- Relationships
- Living in the wider world

These themes are taught through the four PSHE headings of:

- Personal
- Social
- Health
- Economic

The programme is designed to be progressive. Lessons are sequenced so that students revisit and deepen key knowledge and skills over time. Teaching is adapted to students' ages, aptitudes, backgrounds and needs, including the needs of students with SEND.

5. Curriculum content

5.1 Health and wellbeing

Students are taught about:

- physical health, exercise, sleep and nutrition
- puberty and bodily changes, including menstruation
- mental wellbeing, emotional regulation, resilience and help-seeking
- the links between physical and mental health
- healthy and unhealthy coping strategies
- substance misuse, including alcohol, smoking, vaping, nicotine and drugs
- addiction, including gaming and gambling
- personal safety, risk and decision-making
- how to seek support where there are concerns about self-harm, eating disorders or suicidal thoughts

Teaching on particularly sensitive mental health topics is planned carefully, uses appropriate resources, and avoids language or content that may normalise or glamorise harmful behaviour.

5.2 Relationships education

Students are taught about:

- family life and different family circumstances
- friendship, kindness, loyalty, honesty and trust
- respectful relationships
- boundaries and personal space

- online relationships and digital conduct
- coercion, control and manipulation
- consent and communication
- recognising unhealthy or abusive relationships
- domestic abuse, including teenage relationship abuse
- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory bullying

5.3 Sex education

Sex education is taught in an age-appropriate way as part of the wider RSHE programme. Content includes:

- intimate relationships
- sexual consent
- fertility
- contraception
- sexually transmitted infections
- pregnancy and pregnancy choices
- the law relating to sexual activity, image sharing and exploitation
- the influence of pornography and harmful online content

Teaching does not encourage early sexual activity. It aims to equip students to make informed, responsible and lawful decisions, and to recognise pressure, coercion, exploitation or abuse.

5.4 Living in the wider world

Students are taught about:

- democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- public institutions and services in England
- citizenship and participation in society
- media literacy, misinformation and disinformation
- online safety, algorithms, targeted advertising and personal data
- financial education and personal budgeting
- careers, option choices, higher education and employment pathways

For secondary students, careers guidance is presented impartially, supports informed choices across a broad range of options, and helps students fulfil their potential.

5.5 Legal literacy and safeguarding content

Students are taught the law and safeguarding protections relevant to their age and stage. This includes, where appropriate:

- consent
- marriage, forced marriage and civil partnership
- domestic abuse, stalking, rape and sexual offences
- female genital mutilation
- sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation
- harmful sexual behaviour
- online behaviour, image sharing and online sexual harassment
- pornography
- alcohol, smoking, vaping, nicotine and drugs
- gambling
- carrying knives and weapons
- extremism and radicalisation
- grooming and child exploitation
- hate crime
- the age of criminal responsibility

Teaching helps students understand both their legal responsibilities and the protections available to them.

6. Equality, inclusion and protected characteristics

The school teaches students to respect other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. These are:

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

Teaching will:

- make students aware of these characteristics in an age-appropriate way
- challenge harassment, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes
- make clear that all people are to be treated with equal dignity and respect
- not teach that people with particular protected characteristics are inferior or less worthy of respect

The school may explain Catholic teaching on marriage and sexual ethics. It will do so in a way that is consistent with the law and with the requirement to encourage respect for other people.

The programme is inclusive and accessible to all students, including students with SEND and those with additional vulnerabilities. Teaching is adapted where needed so that all students can access learning and make progress.

7. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is central to PSHE and RSHE. The school makes arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and has regard to KCSIE 2026.

Through PSHE and RSHE, students are taught:

- how to recognise abuse, neglect and exploitation
- how to identify unsafe situations, including online
- how to report concerns about themselves or others
- that abuse is never the victim's fault
- that harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable

Staff understand that:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- any concern arising in a PSHE or RSHE lesson must be acted on promptly
- they must not promise confidentiality where safeguarding may be at stake
- concerns must be referred in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy

The school teaches students about:

- grooming and child exploitation
- child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation
- domestic abuse
- harmful sexual behaviour
- serious violence, including the risks linked to carrying knives and weapons
- extremism and radicalisation, in line with the Prevent duty

- online harms, including image sharing, pornography, sexual harassment, coercion and abuse

8. Online safety

Online safety is a running theme across the PSHE and RSHE curriculum and wider safeguarding provision.

Students are taught about:

- safe and respectful online behaviour
- the risks of sharing images and personal information
- online sexual harassment and abuse
- harmful content, including pornography, misogynistic or discriminatory material, extremist content, and misinformation
- how algorithms, targeted advertising and online communities can shape beliefs and behaviour
- how to report harmful content or contact
- the legal and safeguarding consequences of making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated content

Teaching is aligned with the school's wider online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements and safeguarding procedures.

9. Fundamental British values, balanced teaching and political impartiality

The school actively promotes:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Teaching must not undermine these values.

Teachers must present PSHE and RSHE content in a balanced and objective way. Staff must not use lessons to promote partisan political views, and where political issues arise, students must be offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Staff must not allow their personal beliefs to prevent them from teaching the curriculum properly or from encouraging respect for other people.

10. Addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence

The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online.

Students are taught:

- that sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable

- that victims are never to blame
- how to recognise harassment, coercion, exploitation and abuse
- how to seek help and report concerns safely

The curriculum addresses:

- harmful sexual behaviour
- everyday sexism and harmful stereotypes
- homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying
- the influence of harmful online figures or narratives
- the importance of respectful behaviour, empathy and care in relationships

The school's response to reports of sexual harassment or sexual violence is set out in the child protection and safeguarding policy and behaviour policy, in line with KCSIE.

11. Organisation and delivery

The Head of PSHE, the Senior Deputy Head and Heads of Year are responsible for planning and organising delivery, in collaboration with the Senior Mental Health Lead.

PSHE is delivered through:

- a timetabled weekly session
- form time and assemblies
- contributions from other curriculum areas where appropriate
- carefully selected internal and external speakers
- responsive pastoral and curriculum work

Where external providers are used:

- materials and lesson plans must be provided in advance
- content is reviewed for accuracy, age-appropriateness, balance, safeguarding suitability and compatibility with the school's ethos
- a member of staff is always present
- speakers and providers are vetted appropriately
- visitors are informed of safeguarding expectations, including that they must not promise confidentiality

Teaching methods are participative, reflective and age appropriate. Staff may use distancing techniques, such as case studies or scenarios, and may invite anonymous questions where appropriate.

12. Roles and responsibilities

12.1 Governors and senior leaders

The Governing Body and senior leaders are responsible for:

- overseeing compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- making this policy available to parents and publishing it on the website
- reviewing the policy regularly and at least annually
- consulting parents before making or revising the RSHE policy
- supporting staff with training, resources and oversight
- making sure the programme is accessible to students with SEND
- monitoring the quality and impact of provision
- gaining oversight of the PHSE programme through governor engagement days

12.2 Head of PSHE

The Head of PSHE is responsible for:

- leading curriculum planning and sequencing
- supporting staff who deliver PSHE and RSHE
- monitoring consistency and quality of teaching
- reviewing resources and external contributions
- coordinating annual review and consultation
- liaising with pastoral leaders and other departments

12.3 Teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- delivering lessons in a safe, respectful and non-judgmental environment
- teaching factual content accurately and appropriately
- maintaining professional boundaries
- following the child protection and safeguarding policy where concerns arise
- differentiating teaching to meet the needs of students, including students with SEND
- using medically accurate vocabulary where appropriate to support clarity and safeguarding

Where challenging questions arise, staff may:

- answer them in an age-appropriate factual way

- defer a response where more careful consideration is needed
- encourage students to discuss matters with parents or carers where appropriate
- speak to a student privately after the lesson where appropriate
- refer the matter as a safeguarding concern where necessary

12.4 Designated safeguarding lead

The DSL and deputies are responsible for:

- advising staff on safeguarding concerns arising from PSHE and RSHE
- managing referrals and liaising with external agencies where appropriate
- supporting staff in understanding reporting and confidentiality boundaries
- helping to maintain a safeguarding-informed curriculum

12.5 Students

Students are expected to:

- attend PSHE lessons
- engage respectfully
- listen to others' views courteously
- follow class ground rules
- seek help if they are worried about themselves or someone else

12.6 Parents and families

Families are the primary educators of their children in matters of relationships and sexuality. The school works in partnership with families and seeks to keep them informed about the curriculum.

Families can:

- access this policy on the school website
- request a free copy of the policy
- view curriculum information and lesson materials made available by the school
- raise questions with the school
- request withdrawal from the sex education elements of RSHE, as set out below

13. Staff training and professional development

The school will provide appropriate training and support so that staff are well prepared to deliver PSHE and RSHE and to respond to safeguarding concerns.

This will include:

- safeguarding and child protection training for all staff at induction, including online safety, in line with KCSIE
- regular safeguarding and child protection updates for all staff, including online safety, as required and at least annually
- annual whole-staff training on safeguarding themes relevant to PSHE and RSHE, including child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence, online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, and reporting pathways
- training for staff who teach PSHE and RSHE so that they remain up to date with policy, guidance, curriculum content and effective classroom practice
- induction and targeted support for Newly Qualified Teachers and Early Career Teachers so that they understand:
- the school's safeguarding systems and reporting procedures
- the child protection policy, behaviour policy, staff code of conduct and safeguarding response to children absent from education
- the role of the DSL and deputies
- how to handle sensitive questions, disclosures and safeguarding concerns appropriately
- how to teach sensitive content in a balanced, factual and age-appropriate way

The school recognises that early career colleagues may need additional support in managing sensitive discussions and disclosures. They will be able to seek advice from the Head of PSHE, Heads of Year, pastoral leaders and the DSL.

14. Parental consultation and publication

Before making or revising this policy, the school will consult parents of registered students and will take account of their views before finalising the policy.

The school will:

- publish this policy on the school website
- provide a copy free of charge to anyone who asks for one
- make curriculum information reasonably accessible to parents
- give parents advance notice of sex education content and opportunities to ask questions

The school will not enter into contractual arrangements that restrict parents' right to view RSHE materials. Parents must not copy or share materials beyond what copyright law permits.

15. Withdrawal from sex education

Parents have the right to request that their child be wholly or partly excused from the sex education elements of RSHE.

Parents cannot withdraw their child from:

- relationships education
- teaching that forms part of the science curriculum
- safeguarding content necessary to keep students safe

Withdrawal requests should be made in writing to the Head. The school will:

- discuss the request with parents
- explain the implications of withdrawal
- consider the student's circumstances and welfare
- provide purposeful, age-appropriate alternative learning for students who are withdrawn
- In exceptional circumstances the Head can refuse a request for withdrawal, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or if a pupil's vulnerability suggests that withdrawal should not be permitted.

From three terms before a student turns sixteen, the student may choose to receive sex education even if previously withdrawn, in line with statutory guidance as referenced in the ISS guidance.

All discussions and decisions about withdrawal will be documented.

16. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

The school has a framework for evaluating students' understanding and the effectiveness of the programme, in line with the Independent School Standards.

Monitoring and evaluation include:

- annual review of the curriculum and this policy
- feedback from staff, students, parents and governors
- review of lesson content, sequencing and delivery
- review of external provider input
- consideration of safeguarding trends, pastoral themes and local or national developments
- assessment of student learning through appropriate low-stakes methods such as quizzes, reflection, discussion or written work

Monitoring focuses not only on written policy but on effective implementation in practice.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if guidance, legislation or school circumstances change.