

# BIRMINGHAM INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) POLICY

### Policy Statement

Birmingham Independent College is committed to providing high-quality, inclusive Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE) for all students. We recognise that each student has unique needs and abilities, and we aim to ensure that our PSHE curriculum is accessible, age-appropriate, and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs within our student body.

Our goal is to support students in developing their personal and social skills, understanding their health and well-being, and preparing them for life as independent, confident individuals who can engage with and contribute positively to their community.

### Aims of the PSHE Policy

1. To provide students with the tools to understand themselves and others, developing positive relationships and emotional well-being.
2. To foster understanding of personal health and safety, including emotional regulation, self-care, and lifestyle choices.
3. To support students in making informed choices about their lives, including managing risks, promoting physical and mental health, and understanding social issues.
4. To offer a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of students on the autism spectrum, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all.
5. To work closely with parents, caregivers, and external specialists to create an individualised approach for each student.

### Curriculum Overview

The PSHE curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of students at Birmingham Independent College, including:

- **High Achievers:** Students who are able to engage with more abstract concepts and participate in deeper discussions.
- **Functional Level:** Students who may require structured support with understanding and applying the core principles of PSHE.
- **Non-Verbal with Complex Needs:** Students who need tailored, sensory-rich approaches, AAC Augmentative Alternative Communication aids, and one-to-one support.

### Core Principles

- **Inclusion:** Every student, regardless of ability or communication style, has the right to access PSHE education that is appropriate and meaningful.

- **Empowerment:** We aim to empower students by promoting self-awareness, autonomy, and positive social interactions.
- **Well-being:** Emotional, physical, and mental health are integral to our PSHE curriculum, fostering resilience and healthy choices.
- **Respect:** We emphasise the importance of respecting oneself, others, and diverse perspectives within relationships and in society.
- **Personal Safety:** Understanding safe boundaries, personal space, and how to protect oneself are key components of the PSHE curriculum.

## Curriculum Areas

The PSHE curriculum for students covers the following core areas:

### 1. Health and Well-being

- Understanding personal health and hygiene (e.g., self-care routines, dental hygiene, and maintaining a healthy body).
- Emotional regulation and self-awareness (recognising feelings and how to manage emotions).
- Making informed choices about physical activity and healthy eating.
- Understanding the importance of mental health and well-being.

### 2. Relationships

- Developing positive relationships with peers, family members, and trusted adults.
- Understanding and respecting personal boundaries.
- Social skills, such as taking turns, sharing, and responding appropriately in social situations.
- Recognising and dealing with bullying, peer pressure, and discrimination.
- Understanding different types of relationships (family, friends, romantic, professional).

### 3. Living in the Wider World

- Building independence, responsibility, and decision-making skills.
- Understanding diversity, equality, and inclusion in society.
- Preparing for adulthood and understanding aspects of personal finance, safety, and rights and responsibilities.
- Learning about environmental responsibility and community involvement.

### 4. Relationships & Sex Education (RSE)

- A sensitive approach to discussing physical and emotional aspects of puberty and growing up.
- Respect for oneself and others in relationships.
- Identifying trusted adults and how to seek help when needed.

## Teaching Approaches and Strategies

### For High Achievers:

#### Teaching Methods:

- Use of case studies and real-world scenarios to discuss complex topics such as rights and responsibilities in relationships, sexual health, and emotional well-being.
- Encourage critical thinking and reflection through debates, group discussions, and projects.
- Provide opportunities for students to lead discussions or research areas of personal interest related to PSHE.

#### Materials:

- Age-appropriate articles, books, videos, and multimedia resources.
- Interactive presentations, online resources, and group collaboration tools.

### For Students at a Functional Level:

#### Teaching Methods:

- Structured lessons with clear, simple language and visual aids to support learning.
- Use of social stories, role-playing, and structured group activities to model appropriate behaviours and social interactions.
- Focus on core concepts such as self-awareness, managing emotions, and understanding boundaries in a practical, hands-on way.

#### Materials:

- Visual aids, such as pictures, symbols, and videos, to represent social scenarios.
- Social stories to support students in understanding how to behave in different social contexts.
- Sensory objects and tactile materials to engage students in discussions and activities.

### For Non-Verbal Students with Complex Needs:

#### Teaching Methods:

- Use of **augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)** methods such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), communication boards, and speech-generating devices to facilitate communication.
- Sensory-focused activities to help students connect with core concepts related to well-being and relationships, using hands-on and multisensory approaches.
- One-on-one teaching and personalised support to ensure understanding and participation.

## Materials:

- PECS symbols, picture cards, and tactile materials to represent key ideas.
- Sensory tools (e.g., textured materials, calming objects) to support engagement.
- Technology aids, such as communication devices and apps, to assist with communication.

## Inclusion and Personalisation

- **Individual Learning Plans (ILPs):** The PSHE curriculum will be personalised for each student based on their individual needs and communication styles. This may include modifying activities, using specific communication aids, and adjusting the delivery method to ensure full access to the content.
- **Collaboration with Families:** We actively involve families in the PSHE learning process, ensuring that the curriculum reflects the values and preferences of students' homes. Regular communication with parents and caregivers ensures that learning is consistent across environments.
- **Collaboration with External Professionals:** In some cases, we will work with speech therapists, occupational therapists, and other specialists to ensure students have the support they need to access the PSHE curriculum effectively.

## Safeguarding and Sensitivity

We recognise the importance of safeguarding students and ensuring that sensitive topics are handled with care. Our PSHE curriculum promotes personal safety and provides students with the knowledge and skills to:

- Recognise and report unsafe situations.
- Understand and communicate personal boundaries.
- Access appropriate support when necessary.

Teachers will undergo training to understand how to deliver sensitive topics in a manner that is appropriate for each student's cognitive, emotional, and communication needs. Special attention will be given to ensuring that all discussions are safe and respectful.

## Assessment and Review

- **Ongoing Assessment:** We assess students' engagement with PSHE content through observations, individual reflections, and feedback from both teachers and parents. The assessments are tailored to each student's learning style and needs.
- **Student Reflections:** Depending on their communication style, students may provide feedback through verbal discussions, written reflections, pictures, or use of AAC devices.
- **Parental Feedback:** Families are encouraged to provide feedback on how the policy meets their child's needs, ensuring that the policy remains effective and personalised.

## **Conclusion**

Birmingham Independent College's PSHE policy ensures that all students, regardless of their ability or communication needs, receive an education that supports their development as responsible, confident, and socially aware individuals. Through inclusive teaching strategies, personalised learning, and strong collaboration with families and external specialists, we aim to empower all students, to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.

NEXT REVIEW: MARCH 2026