Orion Education

# POLICY

## PSHE - SECONDARY

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| Approval Date | **2025/26 - Summer Term** |
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| Owner | Principal |

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| | | Trust Policy to be adopted in full |
| | ■ | Trust Policy adapted by the Academy |
| | | Academy Policy |

| Approval Body | | |
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| | | Executive |
| | ■ | Trust Board |
| | | Local Advisory Body (LAB) |

## Our Four Critical Questions

**Rationale**

At Orion Education, we recognise that pupils must be prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education plays a central role in supporting pupils' personal development, wellbeing and ability to navigate an increasingly complex world.

Through a structured and carefully sequenced PSHE curriculum, which fully integrates Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to make informed decisions about their health, wellbeing and relationships.

PSHE is a proactive safeguarding mechanism, equipping pupils with the awareness, resilience and strategies to recognise risk, keep themselves safe and seek support when needed. It also provides a vital space for pupils to explore values, attitudes and beliefs and engage in meaningful discussion around important social, moral and personal issues.

We recognise the Department for Education's statement that *"evidence shows that PSHE education can improve the physical and psychosocial wellbeing of pupils. Pupils with better health and wellbeing achieve better academically."* This underpins our commitment to high-quality PSHE provision.

**Aims**

This policy supports a whole academy approach to PSHE within the curriculum, and throughout the life of the Trust and its community. It is consistent with current legislative frameworks and statutory guidance.

The aims of PSHE in Orion Education are to:

- To provide a focused, coherent, and carefully sequenced PSHE curriculum across KS3–5.
- To support pupils in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to manage the critical issues they face now and in the future.
- To prepare pupils to make informed, responsible decisions about their health, wellbeing, relationships, and future pathways.
- To ensure that statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education are fully integrated within the PSHE curriculum.
- To support pupils in developing resilience, self-efficacy, and the ability to recognise risk and seek support.
- To enable pupils to understand and respect diversity, and to engage with a wide range of perspectives in modern society.
- To ensure pupils develop communication, critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to navigate complex social and moral issues.

**Definition of terms**

For the purpose of this document:

a. Members, Trustees and Governors are referred to as Trustees;
b. Orion Education is referred to as The Trust and refers to all academies within the Trust;
c. Academy refers to any one of the academies within the Trust;
d. Staff refers to all staff working at any one of the academies within the Trust;
e. Pupils/children refers to all those being educated or on site at any one of the academies within the Trust.

**Statutory Requirements**
As a Multi Academy Trust, our academies provide a PSHE curriculum that supports pupils' personal development, in line with statutory expectations. Within PSHE, all secondary academies deliver Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science which would include the elements of sex and health education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching PSHE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

The PSHE curriculum is informed by the most recent statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education issued by the Department for Education published in 2025 for implementation from September 2026 and have ensured the provision is reviewed and adapted accordingly.

As well as statutory guidance, the PSHE curriculum draws upon a wide range of advisory guidance from the Department for Education and other professional bodies such as the PSHE Association and the Programme of Study (KS1-5)

In our Trust, we teach PSHE as set out in this policy.

The policy must also be applied within the framework of other relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

**Policy Development**
Our academy policies have all been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance

- Staff consultation – all academy staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
- Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from PSHE
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Trustees and ratified

**Principles and Values**

The Trust believes:

- PSHE, including RSE, is an entitlement for all pupils and a fundamental part of their education and personal development.
- PSHE is a proactive safeguarding mechanism, supporting pupils to recognise risk, build resilience, and make safe, informed choices.
- Education should promote respect, equality and inclusion, actively challenging harmful attitudes, discrimination, and prejudice.
- Pupils should be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to develop healthy, respectful relationships and take responsibility for their wellbeing.
- Learning should be age-appropriate, inclusive, and carefully sequenced, building progressively over time.
- PSHE should be delivered in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment, where pupils feel able to engage with sensitive topics and participate in thoughtful discussions.

**What is PSHE?**

As a Trust we value diversity and foster mutual respect, modelling and inspiring attributes in pupils such as respect, courtesy and honesty. These underpin and inform the relationships we have between pupils and between pupils and adults.

- PSHE is concerned with the personal, social, emotional and economic development of pupils, supporting them to understand themselves, others and the world around them. It includes learning about relationships, health and wellbeing, and living in the wider world.
- It involves a combination of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and exploring values and attitudes, enabling pupils to make informed and responsible decisions.
- PSHE is not about promoting a particular lifestyle or viewpoint, but about equipping pupils with the understanding and confidence to make safe, respectful and informed choices.

Within PSHE, pupils also receive statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, ensuring they are supported to develop healthy, respectful relationships and understand how to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

**Curriculum**

The PSHE curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced across Key Stages 3–5 to ensure pupils revisit key topics, build on prior knowledge and develop understanding over time. Learning is age-appropriate and responsive to pupils' needs, including emerging safeguarding priorities.

Across Key Stages 3–5, pupils explore Orion Education's six PSHE Big Ideas:

- Respectful Communities
- Careers and Ambition
- Healthy Relationships
- Online Safety
- Health and Wellbeing
- Risk and Safety

This structured approach ensures pupils develop a broad and balanced understanding of the key themes that underpin personal development and preparation for adult life.

The PSHE curriculum is enriched and supported by learning across other subject areas, including:

- Science – health, puberty, reproduction, substance misuse
- Physical Education (PE) – physical health, hygiene, teamwork, mental wellbeing
- Computing / ICT – online safety, digital responsibility and cyber awareness
- Mathematics – financial literacy, budgeting and economic understanding
- History – human rights, equality and social justice
- Geography – global citizenship, communities and sustainability
- Religious Education (RE) – values, respect, tolerance and ethical decision-making
- English – identity, relationships and empathy through literature
- Art and Drama – self-expression, identity and social issues

The curriculum is designed to be broad, balanced and inclusive, incorporating different perspectives and reflecting modern society. Teaching is informed by evidence and adapted to meet the needs of pupils, ensuring all learners are supported to engage safely and meaningfully.

For a full breakdown of the PSHE curriculum across KS3–5, please refer to individual academy websites within the Trust.

**Delivery of PSHE**

In secondary academies, KS3 have a dedicated timetabled lesson with a teacher who has received specialist training, with an integrated PSHE and Religious Studies curriculum, which rotates every half term between subjects. KS4 have drop down days focused on the big ideas for PSHE, with opportunities for external speakers for specific topics. KS5 receive 100 minutes of PSHE a week, delivered through form-time and assemblies, with careers and religious studies included within this. Our provision is further enriched by material covered through form time, assemblies or through sessions timetabled outside the normal PSHE periods.

Delivery of the PSHE content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Teachers will liaise with staff, SENDCo and parents when necessary to adapt the content and resources to a level suitable for individual SEND pupils.

PSHE is delivered by a range of staff, including tutors, teachers and where appropriate, external specialists. Academies ensure that staff are appropriately trained and supported to respond to pupils' needs, including managing sensitive questions and safeguarding concerns, and that delivery is consistent with the Trust's expectations and statutory guidance (see Section 14)

**Inclusion**

- Ethnic and Cultural Groups
  We intend our PSHE provision to be sensitive to the needs of pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, recognising and valuing diversity and promoting respect and understanding across all communities.
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
  We will ensure that all pupils have access to PSHE education, with provision tailored to meet individual needs. Teaching will be adapted appropriately, and specialist advice will be sought where necessary to ensure inclusion and meaningful participation for all learners.
- Identity and Diversity
  We aim to address issues related to identity, including sexual orientation and gender identity, in a sensitive, respectful and age-appropriate way. Pupils will be supported to explore these topics safely, ask appropriate questions and understand that PSHE is relevant to them. All pupils should feel represented, respected and included within the curriculum.

**Roles and responsibilities**

- Trustees will approve the PSHE policy and hold the Principals to account for its implementation.
- The Principals are responsible for ensuring that PSHE is taught consistently and for supporting with requests to withdraw pupils from sex education.
- The PSHE Lead is responsible for monitoring the delivery of PSHE, organising and delivering staff training, ensuring the needs of all pupils are met and monitoring progress for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education (see RSE policy for more information).
- Staff are responsible for:
  - Delivering PSHE in a sensitive way
  - Modelling positive attitudes to PSHE
  - Monitoring progress
  - Responding to the needs of individual pupils
  - Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of PSHE

  Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching PSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching PSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.
- Pupils are expected to engage fully in PSHE and, when discussing issues related to PSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

**Parents' right to withdraw**

In line with statutory guidance, parents have the right to withdraw their child from non-statutory

sex education delivered as part of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). There is no right to withdraw from:

- Statutory Relationships Education
- Health Education
- The science curriculum

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the academy. The process for withdrawal, including arrangements for alternative provision, is outlined in the Trust RSE Policy.

**Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues**

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and are required to act in line with the academy's safeguarding procedures if a concern or disclosure is made.

PSHE may raise a range of safeguarding issues, including those related to relationships, health, wellbeing, safety and personal circumstances. Where a pupil makes a disclosure:

a. This matter will be reported by staff immediately to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via the online reporting system (CPOMS).
b. Pupils will be encouraged, where appropriate, to seek support from trusted adults, including parents/carers, and to access relevant support services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that they cannot ever promise confidentiality. Health professionals in academy are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the academy's confidentiality policy.

**Training**

Staff who teach PSHE are trained in the delivery of PSHE as part of their professional qualification training and/or induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The Principal and PSHE lead will also invite visitors from outside the academy to provide support and training to staff teaching PSHE.

**Impact**

The impact of PSHE is reflected in pupils' knowledge, understanding and ability to apply learning in real-life contexts, including making informed, safe and responsible decisions about relationships, health and wellbeing.

Assessment in PSHE focuses on pupils' learning and understanding, measured against lesson objectives and curriculum outcomes, and does not assess personal choices or behaviours. Teachers use a range of formative strategies, including questioning, discussion, reflection activities and knowledge checks, to assess understanding and identify next steps. Where appropriate, summative assessment may take place at the end of units, and opportunities for pupil self-assessment are provided to support reflection on learning.

The delivery of PSHE is monitored by members of the Senior Leadership Team, the PSHE lead and those responsible for quality of education. This includes lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and pupil voice activities to ensure that provision is consistent, effective and in line with Trust expectations. Findings from monitoring activities are used to inform ongoing improvement and ensure that PSHE provision remains responsive to pupils' needs.

**Policy Circulation**

- This Policy will be published on the Trust's website and Orion Secondary academies websites.
- This Policy will be circulated to every Member, Trustee, Governor and Senior Employee by sending an email to the link on the Trust's website on an annual basis and when each new Member, Trustee, Governor and Senior Employee joins the Trust.
- The Trustees, in consultation with the Local Advisory Bodies, are responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the PSHE Education.