

## PSHE (LEARNING FOR LIFE) POLICY

The PSHE (Learning for Life) Department aims to take every pupil on a journey to explore their values and belief systems as individuals and as members of the Downe House and global communities. To encourage every pupil to achieve their best by providing opportunities to explore and enhance their personal, social, health and economic well-being and the spiritual and moral values that underpin these, in particular the School code of conduct; to treat everyone, whether younger or older, with the same kindness and respect with which you yourself wish to be treated.

The aims and ethos of the School are reflected in the weekly programme delivered to all pupils from Remove – UVI by a dedicated and passionate team of teachers, as set out in the PSHE Departmental handbook and schemes of work, and is further complemented by guest speakers, on a variety of topics relevant to wellbeing and preparing the pupils for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The PSHE (Learning for Life) Programme provides a significant contribution to the School's responsibility to:

- Promote children and young people's wellbeing
- Achieve the whole curriculum aims
- Promote community cohesion
- Provide careers education
- Provide relationship and sex education
- Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and awareness of the protected characteristics

The ethos of the Department is informed and underpinned by the School's values. The PSHE and RSE programme (known as Learning for Life) aims to develop:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, making progress and achieving
- Confident individuals who can live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society
- Pupils who are living out of the values of individual liberty, rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils are also taught explicitly about British values which are defined as: democracy and the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

These values are taught explicitly through PSHE (Learning for Life), as well as through the School's broad and balanced curriculum in line with statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

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## **Safe and Effective Practice**

PSHE and RSE often draw on pupils' real-life experiences. A safe and supportive learning environment will be created by establishing ground rules in each context for the delivery of subject material. Staff delivering PSHE and RSE will ensure the pupils, who indicate they may be at risk, get appropriate support by liaising with the appropriate member of the pastoral team and adhering to the Downe House Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **Equality of Opportunity**

Classroom practice and pedagogy will take into account pupils' age, ability, readiness and cultural background and pupils with SEND, and will be adjusted to enable all pupils to access the learning. We will use PSHE and RSE education as a way to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by addressing contextual issues identified through our pastoral management system. PSHE and RSE delivery is designed to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Provisions within the Equality Act allow the School to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of protected characteristics.

## **The right to withdraw a child from Sex Education**

Parents will be informed by the Head of Learning for Life (PSHE) when the sex education topics are to be taught in Learning for Life lessons. Downe House respects the rights of parents/carers to withdraw their child from all or some of these lessons, but not those pertaining to relationships or health education, up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16. Such requests to withdraw should be directed to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will then consider the request and meet with the parents, and if appropriate with the pupil, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of this element of the curriculum. Once this discussion has taken place, except under exceptional circumstances, the parents' wishes will be respected, up until three terms before the pupils turns 16. Thereafter any pupil wishing to receive sex education can elect to do so without parental consent and the School will make the necessary arrangements.

It should be noted that the science curriculum includes content on human development, including reproduction, from which there is no right to withdraw.

This policy makes reference to the following School policies, copies of which can be located on SchoolBase in the 'Documents' section:

- Relationship and Sex Education
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## **Assessment**

In accordance with the RSHE statutory guidance, teaching in Learning for Life systematically assesses pupils. Teachers then use that assessment to plan and modify provision for the pupils. In Learning for Life, there are the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work as for other curriculum areas. Assessments are used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention, and this can then be put in place as necessary. A wide range of assessment methods are used to monitor pupil progress including written reflections,

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verbal feedback and self-evaluations. Regular feedback is provided on pupils' progress to the pupils via teacher feedback, and parents are kept up to date with what the students are covering via their academic reports throughout the year.

### PSHE (Learning for Life) overview

The National Curriculum framework states that all schools should make provision for PSHE education, drawing on good practice. This overview follows guidelines by the PSHE Association covering the three core themes within which there is broad overlap and flexibility: 1) Health and Wellbeing, 2) Relationships and 3) Living in the Wider world. It is important to note that the Learning for Life provision also allows for flexibility so that additional topics can be included as necessary to allow the School to be both proactive and reactive to trends or incidents where it is felt teaching of additional content is appropriate. An update to the current government guidance for PSHE in schools has been issued and will come into effect from September 2026. The Learning for Life department is currently reviewing the new guidance and will ensure the Learning for Life programme covers all statutory guidance ahead of the deadline.

Learning for Life year overview (exact timings not fixed and dependent on pupil need):

	Michaelmas Term	Lent Term	Summer Term
<b>Remove</b>	<p>Transition to Downe House: coping with boarding, prep, time management, homesickness</p> <p>Promoting self-esteem: friends and friendships including popularity, peer pressure &amp; equality</p> <p>Healthy Lifestyles: diet and nutrition</p>	<p>Managing puberty: emotions, feelings, romance and relationships, including LGBTQ+, marriage</p> <p>Diversity, prejudice and bullying – including online safety and social media</p>	<p>Promoting responsible behaviour, positive attributes and the risks of smoking and vaping, drug and alcohol misuse</p> <p>Living in the wider world: issues such as, climate change, ethical financial decisions</p>
<b>LIV</b>	<p>Online behaviour and risk inc. AI</p> <p>Leadership and developing positive personal attributes</p> <p>Community involvement and charity</p>	<p>Diversity, Discrimination and stereotypes</p> <p>Mental health and understanding our emotions</p>	<p>Resilience, managing peer influence and toxic friendships, conflict resolution</p> <p>Introduction to sexuality and consent</p>
<b>UIV</b>	<p>Transition to the Upper School/DH: managing independence</p>	<p>Understanding higher education and future</p>	<p>Assessing the risks of drug and alcohol misuse and addiction</p>

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	<p>Mental health and emotional well-being, including body image, power of the press &amp; social media</p> <p>Diversity – including racism, disability, homophobia</p>	<p>aspirations – choosing GCSE options</p> <p>Relationship and sex education: managing periods, healthy relationships, consent, contraception, risks of STIs, sexting and pornography</p>	<p>Managing peer pressure in relation to drug misuse, risky behaviour</p> <p>Exploring mental health and mental illness including unhealthy coping strategies</p>
<b>LV</b>	<p>Lifestyle and Healthy Eating; myth busting the fads, creating the right balance</p> <p>Mental health and well-being: self-harm, coping with stress, change, grief and bereavement</p>	<p>Tackling relationship myths and expectations</p> <p>Managing romantic relationship challenges: recognising consent versus coercion, respect in relationships and issues of sexual harassment and abuse</p> <p>Developing parenting skills, marriage, understanding the consequences of teenage pregnancy</p>	<p>British values, human rights and community cohesion – challenging extremism and radicalisation</p> <p>Eco Matters: understanding our responsibility to the planet, protecting the future</p>
<b>UV</b>	<p>Personal values and assertive communication in intimate relationships, understanding our bodies, recognising and reporting abuse.</p> <p>Feminism and Women's rights</p>	<p>Human Rights issues –</p> <p>The sex trade</p> <p>Medical Ethics</p> <p>Toxic Masculinity</p> <p>Crime and Justice</p> <p>Animal Rights</p> <p>Gambling</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence</p>	<p>Revision/study leave – no LfL lessons</p>
<b>LVI</b>	<p>Emotional Health</p> <p>Higher Education preparation</p> <p>Sexual Health</p>	<p>Finding Balance</p> <p>Drug Awareness</p> <p>Understanding others and society</p>	<p>Sex and relationships</p> <p>Higher Education preparation</p>

<b>UVI</b>	Societal Issues  Life After DH	Finance Matters inc. credit, tax, mortgages etc.  Finding Balance cont.	Revision/study leave – no LfL lessons
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**Revision History:**

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	February 2020	Implemented	Genevieve Ford
	February 2021	Reviewed- Sixth Form content updated	Genevieve Ford
	February 2022	Reviewed- paragraph on the right to withdraw a child from Sex Education rewritten. Added a paragraph and table on assessment and a bullet point on the promotion of EDI through LfL.	Genevieve Ford
	February 2023	Updated the reporting information to include Sixth Form.	Genevieve Ford
	February 2024	Updated PSHE overview with new Sixth Form programme content.	Genevieve Ford
	February 2025	Removal of STEER and USTEER from Curriculum. Added information about the flexibility of the LfL programme to meet education needs around student trends/incidents identified by the wider pastoral team.	Genevieve Ford
	February 2026	Reviewed by the Head of LfL and included detail about planning for September 2026 curriculum updates.	Genevieve Ford

**Review Leader:** Deputy Head (Pastoral)  
**Reviewed:** February 2026  
**Next Review:** February 2027

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