Cothill Policy Documents

ISSR 2 PSHE Policy

Date: Sept. 2026
Next review: Sept. 2027

PSHE at Cothill

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is an important part of the education and pastoral provision at Cothill. It supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to thrive as individuals, contribute positively to the school community and wider society, and prepare for the opportunities and responsibilities of later life.

All year groups and classes receive at least one dedicated lesson of PSHE each week. Lessons are delivered by form teachers and other appropriately trained staff in accordance with the current scheme of work. PSHE is also embedded across the wider curriculum, boarding provision, assemblies, form time, family groups and everyday interactions with staff.

As a predominantly boarding school, Cothill provides many opportunities for pupils to develop independence, self-awareness, resilience, self-esteem and respect for others. All staff have a role in supporting pupils' wellbeing, personal development and relationships.

Policy links and statutory framework

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety / E-Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Equality and Diversity / Equal Opportunities Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- British Values Policy
- SMSC / Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development policy

The school has regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. The school's separate RSE Policy sets out the detailed statutory requirements, curriculum content, parental consultation and withdrawal arrangements for Relationships Education and RSE.

As an independent school, Cothill provides PSHE in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations and associated Department for Education guidance. The health and wellbeing elements of PSHE form part of the school's wider PSHE provision.

The school also has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and other relevant safeguarding guidance. Where a concern or disclosure arises during PSHE, staff follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Aims of PSHE

We believe that pupils at Cothill should learn to:

- build healthy, respectful and positive relationships;
- feel positive about themselves and develop self-esteem, confidence and resilience;
- develop the knowledge and skills needed to support their physical and mental wellbeing;
- take responsibility for their actions, their relationships with others and their environment;
- develop independence, organisation, self-care and responsibility, with particular regard to the needs of boarders;
- understand how to recognise and manage risk and keep themselves and others safe;
- participate positively in their school, local and wider communities;
- develop informed attitudes towards diversity, equality, difference and inclusion;
- prepare for change, including transitions through school and into adolescence;
- develop an understanding of rights, responsibilities, rules, laws and democratic participation;
- develop financial awareness, decision-making and preparation for adult life;

develop the confidence to seek help, ask questions and access appropriate support.

Curriculum organisation

The PSHE programme is organised around three broad areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

The curriculum is based on the school's current scheme of work, informed by Jigsaw PSHE and, where appropriate, resources from the PSHE Association and other reputable sources. The programme is spiral in nature, revisiting key themes at an age-appropriate level and increasing in depth and complexity as pupils progress through the school.

Relationships Education and RSE are delivered principally through PSHE, with relevant biological content also taught through Science. The detailed content and progression for Relationships Education and RSE are set out in the school's separate RSE Policy.

Core areas and curriculum content

Health and Wellbeing

Pupils develop knowledge and skills relating to physical health, mental wellbeing, emotional literacy, resilience and personal safety. Content includes:

- mental and emotional wellbeing, including recognising and managing feelings;
- self-esteem, confidence, body image and positive self-talk;
- healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, physical activity, sleep, hygiene and rest;
- managing stress and developing healthy coping strategies;
- drugs, alcohol and other health-related risks;
- first aid, personal safety and risk management;
- safeguarding and knowing how and when to seek help;
- puberty, growing and changing, where age appropriate and in accordance with the RSE Policy.

Relationships
Pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to build respectful, healthy and safe relationships. Content includes:

- friendships, cooperation, kindness and respect;
- families and different family structures;
- communication, listening, empathy and resolving disagreements;
- personal boundaries, privacy, permission and consent, taught in an age-appropriate way;
- recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships and behaviours;
- bullying, cyberbullying and respectful behaviour online and offline;
- stereotypes, sexism, misogyny, discrimination and prejudice;
- sexual harassment and inappropriate language or behaviour;
- online relationships, harmful online content, image sharing and digital consent, as appropriate to age;
- safeguarding, trusted adults and how to report concerns;
- Relationships Education and RSE in accordance with the school's separate RSE Policy.

Living in the Wider World
Pupils develop an understanding of their responsibilities as members of different communities and prepare for adult life. Content includes:

- school and community life;
- rights, responsibilities, rules and laws;
- democracy, participation and Fundamental British Values;
- diversity, equality and inclusion;
- economic wellbeing and financial awareness;
- careers, aspirations, goal setting and preparation for future opportunities;
- the environment and responsibility for the wider world;
- media literacy and understanding information and influence;
- topical issues and current affairs, where appropriate.

Jigsaw themes and existing Cothill curriculum
The current Cothill programme uses the following Jigsaw themes as a framework for delivery. These are supplemented by school-specific content and statutory requirements.

- Being Me in My World – belonging, identity, community and responsibility.
- Celebrating Difference – similarities and differences, diversity, stereotypes, disability, racism, sexism, friendships, conflict and anti-bullying.
- Dreams and Goals – aspirations, resilience, teamwork, perseverance and overcoming challenges.
- Healthy Me – emotional and mental health, physical health, nutrition, activity, rest, hygiene, drugs and alcohol, first aid and safety.
- Relationships – friendships, families, feelings, respect, loss, safeguarding and keeping safe.
- Changing Me – change, growing up, puberty, self-respect, transition and safeguarding, alongside relevant Science and RSE content.
- British Values – democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Equality, diversity and protected characteristics

Respect for others is central to PSHE at Cothill. The curriculum promotes equality, dignity and respect and supports pupils to understand and challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour.

The school has regard to all nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

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

Teaching is age-appropriate and sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of pupils. Where relevant issues arise within the school community, PSHE may be used to help pupils understand the issue and develop respectful attitudes towards others.

Online safety and safeguarding

Online safety is integrated throughout PSHE and is also addressed through the school's wider online safety provision. Pupils are taught about responsible and safe use of technology, online relationships, cyberbullying, privacy, image sharing, harmful or inappropriate content, gaming and how to seek help.

PSHE also contributes to safeguarding education, including recognising unsafe situations, understanding boundaries, identifying trusted adults, managing risk and knowing how to report concerns. Teaching may include age-appropriate content relating to harmful sexual content online, pornography, sexualised bullying and digital consent, in line with the RSE Policy.

The Prevent duty and the promotion of resilience against extremism and radicalisation are addressed through the wider curriculum and pastoral provision where appropriate.

All staff delivering PSHE must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. A pupil's disclosure or a concern arising from a PSHE lesson must be reported and managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Inclusion and SEND

The PSHE curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Teachers take account of individual needs, developmental stage, communication needs, learning profiles and relevant pastoral or safeguarding information when planning and delivering PSHE.

Resources, language, activities and teaching approaches are adapted where necessary. Pupils with SEND or other identified needs may require additional explanation, repetition, differentiated resources or specialist support.

The school recognises that some pupils may be more vulnerable to particular safeguarding risks and works with relevant staff and parents/carers where additional support is required.

Wider provision

PSHE is reinforced through the wider life of the school, including:

- family groups, which meet twice each week to provide support and discuss relevant topics;
- form time, including circle time, goal setting and discussion;
- assemblies led by the Headmaster, form tutors and other appropriate staff;
- chapel and opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection;
- visiting speakers and external providers on relevant topics;
- subject-specific teaching, trips and enrichment activities;
- boarding life and the daily routines and responsibilities of community living;
- pastoral support from teaching, boarding, matrons, catering and other staff.

The school seeks to ensure that external speakers and resources are appropriate, accurate, age-appropriate and consistent with the school's policies and values.

Teaching approaches and sensitive issues

PSHE is taught in a supportive, respectful and inclusive environment. Teachers establish clear expectations for discussion and encourage pupils to listen to and respect different perspectives.

Teachers may respond to questions that arise naturally during lessons. Where a question is outside the planned curriculum or is not appropriate to answer in the whole-class setting, the teacher may defer the question, provide an age-appropriate response at another time, or refer it to an appropriate member of staff.

Political or controversial issues are approached in a balanced and age-appropriate way, in accordance with the Independent School Standards and the school's wider policies.

Where sensitive content is taught, staff consider the age, maturity, needs and circumstances of pupils and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Parent and carer engagement

The school recognises the important role of parents and carers in supporting pupils' personal development. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss PSHE and RSE topics with their children and may contact the school with questions about curriculum content.

The school's RSE Policy sets out the arrangements for parental consultation, access to curriculum information and requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education. Parents cannot withdraw pupils from statutory Relationships Education or from Science teaching.

Assessment

PSHE assessment is primarily formative and is used to inform teaching and support pupils' personal development. Teachers may use questioning, discussion, reflection activities, pupil self-assessment, baseline and end-of-unit tasks, written work and other appropriate evidence.

Where appropriate, summative assessment may take place at the end of a topic or term using the school's current PSHE resources and assessment approaches.

Assessment in PSHE recognises that personal development is not always linear or easily captured through formal testing. Teachers use professional judgement alongside available evidence.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Head of PSHE is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the PSHE programme. Monitoring may include:

- review of curriculum planning and schemes of work;
- learning walks, lesson observations and drop-ins;
- review of pupil work and assessment evidence;
- pupil voice and pupil evaluation;
- staff feedback;
- review of resources and external provision;
- consideration of safeguarding, pastoral and emerging pupil needs;
- annual review of the curriculum to ensure it remains age-appropriate and reflects statutory requirements and relevant guidance.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to statutory requirements, guidance or the needs of the school.

Reporting to parents

PSHE contributes to the school's reporting arrangements. Form Teachers may comment on pupils' personal development and participation in school life, including relationships, responsibility, interpersonal skills, confidence, resilience and contribution to the community.

Role of General Studies and Religious Studies

General Studies provides opportunities for pupils to explore the human world, ethics, economics, politics, current affairs, community and wider social issues. It complements PSHE by developing pupils' ability to debate, question, research, justify opinions and consider different perspectives.

Religious Studies contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about world religions and spiritual beliefs and are encouraged to develop understanding and respect for different perspectives.

Roles and responsibilities

Head / Senior Leadership

- ensure the policy is implemented effectively;
- provide appropriate support and resources;
- ensure safeguarding concerns arising from PSHE are dealt with appropriately;
- ensure the policy is reviewed in accordance with the school's policy cycle.

Head of PSHE

- coordinate the PSHE curriculum and scheme of work;
- support staff with planning and delivery;
- monitor and evaluate provision;
- ensure relevant statutory requirements and guidance are reflected in the programme;

- coordinate with relevant staff so that PSHE and RSE provision are coherent.

Teachers and staff
- deliver PSHE sensitively, inclusively and in accordance with the curriculum;
- model respectful behaviour and language;
- respond appropriately to pupils' needs and questions;
- adapt teaching where necessary;
- follow safeguarding procedures when concerns arise.

Pupils
- engage positively with PSHE learning;
- listen to and respect others;
- contribute appropriately to discussion and activities;
- seek help when needed and follow the school's expectations for respectful behaviour.

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