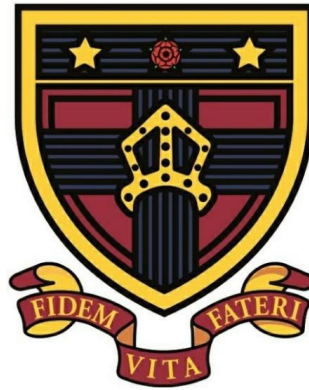


# St. Mary's College



## PSHE Policy

# 2024/2025

## PSHE and EPR at St. Mary's College

### Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Education for Personal Relationships

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## Introduction

This policy covers the school's approach to the personal growth of its students through a programme that enables the pupils to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society.

It has been produced by the Co-ordinator for PSHEe, EPR and Citizenship in the College, based on the solid foundation of recent years and through consultation with the College leadership team, year heads and curriculum coordinators in the school.

Parents and carers will be informed about the policy through a link on our website and be able to download it there. A link will be sent annually via email to ensure parents know where and how to access the policy. It should be reviewed bi-annually. It is approved by the Principal and the Governing body.

## School Aims & Objectives

At St. Mary's College PSHEe, EPR and Citizenship is delivered through the curriculum and other initiatives and is an implicit part of the pastoral support and disciplinary system and the SMCC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) ethos of the school. Our overarching aim for pupils is to provide individual challenge towards holistic and balanced development, service and achievement for life and beyond; and to try to *show our Faith by the way we live, love and learn* by showing care and consideration for each other, those around us and the environment. The personal and social development of the individual underpins the whole education process. We embrace the emphasis that education should pay regard for the whole person as stated in Canon 795. Everything we do flows from an intention to assist the development of the 'whole' physically, socially, spiritually, emotionally, morally and aesthetically, based on the Catholic doctrine of every human being made in the image of God, and therefore whose dignity and worth is inherent.

## The Aims and Objectives of Our Programme

Through the whole school approach, imbedded into the academic curriculum and via separate PSHE lessons and EPR days, the school sets out to equip and encourage personal growth through a programme that enables the pupils to become healthy, independent, responsible, and thinking members of society.

## The Values we promote

As a committed Edmund Rice school, the values which underpin our PSHE programme, as with all we do in the College are:

- faithfulness and integrity
- dignity and compassion
- humility and gentleness
- truth and justice
- forgiveness and reconciliation
- purity and holiness
- tolerance and peace
- service and sacrifice

## The Provision of Individual Challenge and Inclusion

It is important to recognise that assessment in PSHE is not about ‘passing’ or ‘failing’ and that pupil’s starting places and progress will be varied.

In order to ensure that all pupils at the College have equal access to our PHSE programme we will ensure that we recognise and respect pupil’s different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation (which may, due to their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be ‘emerging’), gender identity, faith or culture of their family, friends and wider community. Where differences of belief or practice are identified, it is made clear that as a College we do not support the increasing popular assumption that we have to dislike, or separate ourselves from, those whose practices and beliefs are different to our own, but that we can actively love those with whom we disagree.

All teachers and outside visitors are made aware of individual pupils who may have specific needs or may find the topic difficult. Where we speak as individuals and make known our own standpoints, we will acknowledge that and ensure that the reasons why others come to conclusions different to our own are explained with respect and at length – the respect with which we teach standpoints we disagree with will model to our pupils what (more than) tolerance is.

We respect pupils' unique starting points by providing learning that is engaging, involving and fun. Students are given the chance to consider others experiences, beliefs and insights without criticism. Pupils are given preparation time, lessening any embarrassment they may feel.

Our policy is to include all pupils with special educational needs fully in the PSHE programme as these aspects of a child's education are as important as academic achievement.

Appropriate support is provided to these students and careful consideration is given to the level of differentiation needed.

### **Changes to timetabling from September 2022**

Continuing from changes made in from September 2022, pupils in Lower School benefit from 3 x 25 minute lessons of PSHE a week, with their form tutor. They may have additional drop down EPR days should the school identify a particular need to deep dive a certain area.

For the academic year 2024-2025 Middle School pupils will continue to have EPR sessions which will build on the PSHE lessons delivered in Years 7-9. From 2023 they will be delivered in slots of 3 lessons 2 – 3 times termly, rather than for the duration of a whole day. From September 2024 they will follow on the model being delivered to Lower School pupils.

### **Creating a Safe Learning Environment**

It seems intrinsic to us that the content of what we teach regarding respect and (more than) tolerance starts with the insistence of those high standards being expected within the school setting. Such values are best 'taught by being caught' and so PSHE is delivered in a manner that shows value of the individual and where the respect of the individual is insisted upon between peers. Topics are revisited and the content adjusted age appropriately; resources are assessed to ensure that they are appropriate for the age and maturity of the pupils, and sensitive to their needs.

In addition, because PSHEe education works within pupils' real-life experiences, we ensure that we create a safe and supportive learning environment by setting out these clear expectations in any session and a confidentiality policy that is understood by all to ensure that sensitive issues are dealt with supportively. Where content is still taught in EPR days, outside agencies have been invented into school to support the teaching and learning.

Sessions begin with a positive statement of expectation. In planning content, the PSHEe Co-ordinator will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in order to identify potential issues and to respond to them sensitively.

We ensure that where pupils indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support via the school Safeguarding team and appropriate outside agencies. All staff are up-to-date with procedures of disclosure.

Form tutors who deliver the PSHE lessons have the lesson plans in advance and can meet with the PSHE Co-ordinator should they seek support in dealing with sensitive content. The PSHE Co-ordinator also observes lessons to ensure the quality of delivery and the continued training and support of staff.

Parents and carers are kept abreast with the PSHE curriculum on Firefly and are contacted in advance of the most sensitive EPR sessions to ensure they are aware of, and can inform school of any issues that will ensure that each child feels supported and safe during the session. This reflects our commitment that material is taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils, and in recognition that parents and carers are the prime educators for children, and that it is our intention to support them in that role. The intention of this continual communication with parents is that it will include them, reassure them, and enable them to continue conversations at home. Examples this academic year have been emails regarding bereavement and loss, responding to anxiety and bullying, and where parents have made (very often very pertinent, timely and helpful) suggestions, content has been adjusted accordingly. In addition, parents are given a list of the subjects to be delivered to each year group and invited to assist with the teaching should they it be an area that they have a specialism in – it is always valuable to partner with parents and to benefit from their specific training and experience.

Where content continues to be delivered through EPR days, external agencies will present material, often at the same time as the PSHE Co-ordinator delivers to another half of the year group; a carousel system is ideal since this allows for material to be broken down into manageable chunks and where in smaller groups pupils are more likely to engage, speak personally and access support. There is close liaison between the PSHE Co-ordinator and the external organisations that support EPR days; though time consuming this is vital in ensuring that the learning environment is supportive and safe, and that the content of their presentations is appropriate and suitable. The PSHE Co-ordinator asks staff present to feedback on the quality and appropriateness of all sessions; where external agencies have not met the standards of the college, feedback has been given to them and reasons for a withdrawal of further invitations since we are committed not simply to ticking boxes but to ensure that the quality of what we offer our pupils remains high.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

We encourage pupils to actively engage in learning as it is the most effective way of teaching PSHE. We do not expect all our teachers at SMC to be experts in each field of PSHE rather we encourage them to be facilitators of learning. We provide the pupils with the comprehensive, balanced and relevant body of information to inform their current and future risk assessment, decision-making and management. Armed with this information, children are encouraged to

use scenarios, role-plays, and fill in relevant booklets on issues they have been exploring and to think for themselves. Many practical methods are used in PSHE such as team games, creative solutions, using space and people in different ways.

In accordance with the 2019 RSHE Curriculum, we aim that pupils will:

- Be understanding of themselves as individuals and as valuable, responsible and caring members of society in line with Gospel Values of Truth, Justice, Compassion and Forgiveness.
- Be personally autonomous by encouraging self-awareness, esteem and confidence and leadership skills.
- Be encouraged to be resilient and to face challenges.
- Be actively loving, empathetic, respectful and sensitive towards others.
- Be practiced at thinking and coming to their own considered conclusions for themselves.
- Be appreciative of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes harmony between different cultures and religions.
- Be appreciative of racial and cultural diversity and avoid and resist racism and extremism, rather treat all people as those with an inherent dignity as made by God in his likeness.
- Be understanding of how to disagree well by encouraging tolerance, empathy, respect and sensitivity towards other people whilst rigorously debating ideas.
- Be independent and responsible members of the school community, in preparation for social and economic independence in adult life.
- Be aware of their emotions, and how to evaluate them critically.
- Be aware of the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community engagement and service-based activities on mental health and happiness.
- Understand what constitutes mental and physical wellbeing and to dispel any stigma surrounding mental well-being.
- Understand what the law says on areas such as consent, marriage, knife crime, drug use, violence and exploitation from gangs, pornography, bullying and online behaviours (including 'sexting', youth produced sexual imagery, nudes etc) abortion.
- Understand that the online world is the real world. Assisting them in making wise choices when online that keeps them, and others, safe and supported.
- Understand the use and value of money in the real world; be aware of future financial responsibilities.
- Understand the role of public institutions and services in Britain.
- Understand safety issues such as child exploitation (for example through gang involvement or 'County Lines' drugs operations), personal safety, first aid, managing risk and the importance of checking themselves for signs of Cancer.
- Understand the need to treat themselves and others with respect in relation to relationships and sex as well as in other areas of life.

- Understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle including both physical and mental well-being.
- Understand what makes for healthy relationships with others, be able to develop a whole variety of relationships and adopt appropriate behaviour.
- Understand extremism and radicalisation and hate crime.
- Understand the risks of substance and alcohol abuse.
- Understand and appreciate the place of marriage and the family in society.
- Understand the necessity of personal hygiene, and how to take care of their bodies.
- Understand how to approach challenge, be resilient and respond to anxiety.
- Understand where to access further support if necessary.



## Key Principles and Teaching Methodology

Our EPR programme is taught through a range of teaching methods including group work, creative team games, pupil created presentations and videos, music and drama workshops, pupil-led discussions and expert-led factual demonstrations. Topics are revisited and the content adjusted age appropriately.

PSHEe and EPR allows for personal growth through a programme which enables the pupils to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society. We encourage pupils to play a positive role in contributing to the life of the school and the wider community as partakers rather than consumers. These activities, both inside and outside the classroom, are valuable learning experiences and allow pupils to foster a sense of self-worth as well as teaching them about their responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged, whilst showing impartiality on contentious issues, to speak openly about their responses to appropriate issues where appropriate. Pupils benefit from a variety of viewpoints and value hearing from adults prepared to speak personally about issues they face; the very best sessions have been when additional teachers offer personal reflections (for instance on how they combat anxiety) and the pupils sense that we are learners together.

PSHE education needs to 'start from where the pupils are'. Whenever possible therefore new topics are introduced by enabling pupils to share their prior knowledge with us. We do this by methods such as definition matching, brainstorming, games such as who knows what '...'is?, true / false quizzes and myth busting.

We do not tell our pupils what to think; rather our aim is to give them up to date and accurate information that stimulates their own thought, and enables them to come to their own conclusions. This methodology is likely to be more successful in outcome as well as exemplifying our concern to live out what we teach – the respect for the individual and their right to their own decision making.

We avoid attempting to 'scare' young people into making healthy choices as it can often backfire, inadvertently creating excitement, curiosity or even status among pupils who take

the risk. This does not mean that we do not demonstrate the true consequences of the lifestyle choice but we ensure that a balanced view is given. We ensure that pupils at the college are reassured that in reality the majority of young people make positive, healthy lifestyle choices.

We realise the vital importance that our pupils are helped to make connections between the learning they receive in PSHE and their current and future 'real life' experiences. Therefore, we highlight the skill of critical reflection in all our lessons and EPR days.

Teachers should establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Teacher should set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils engage in a mature manner. Pupils should be encouraged to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box; the teacher will have time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond to any questions that are inappropriate. If a verbal question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. Teachers will not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of abuse the Safeguarding Officer should be informed and the usual child protection procedures followed.

We ensure cross-curricular learning via a survey set by the PSHE Co-ordinator where all subjects highlight any PHSE topic that connects to their curriculum and to which year group. A list of topics to be covered in PSHE time is circulated so that staff can use make connections to their own teaching.

### **Timetabling PSHE Education**

As stated below there is a spiral programme. Pupils in Lower School are taught a lesson of PSHE, usually with their form tutor, and all Lower and Middle School pupil have a day off timetable where they will explore issues for the duration of the (EPR) day.

### **What topics are covered?**

EPR incorporates RSE (Relationships & Sex Education), the aims of which are to develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility.
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others.
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures.

- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

**To develop the following personal and social skills:**

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments.
- loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying.
- managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity.
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference.
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven.
- developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.
- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups, and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately.
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely.
- assessing risks and managing behaviours to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.
- To know and understand the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love.
- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life.
- the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving.
- the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty.
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation.

- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

Effective RSHE does not encourage early sexual experimentation nor make assumptions that pupils are sexually active. Rather it supports pupils to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships at the appropriate time. It should help pupils to value and respect others and to understand and value human sexuality, and understand reasons for delaying sexual activity, whilst at the same time being non-judgemental of and helpful to those pupils who may have already experimented sexually.

Pupils are given a range of perspectives, and within the law, are encouraged to think for themselves and make sound decisions for themselves, whilst respecting the rights of others to make different decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key content includes the age of consent, what consent is, the definition and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, grooming, sexual exploitation, and domestic abuse including controlling and coercive behaviours.

Further information on the programme of study can be viewed in the College Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

### **The right to be excused from sex education**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting such a request, the Principal would discuss the reasoning with the parents, and, as appropriate with the child, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum as well as any potential detrimental effects (such as the pupil hearing a peer's version of what was taught over an accurate one), though such concerns may be mitigated if the parents proposed to deliver sex education to their child at home instead. The right to withdraw exists up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education; the practicalities of our provision would need to be discussed with the parents as our ethos for any sex education is that it is done within the context of Relationship Education.

### **Involvement and Consultation of Pupils**

At SMC we believe the consultation and involvement of pupils in PSHE is crucial if our teaching is to meet their requirements and address the issues they are facing. The involvement of our pupils means we, as teachers, can learn what pupils think of what is currently being taught and

that our content is reactive to a specific context.

**We:**

- Foster an open door policy where pupils can and do initiate ideas as a response to particular concerns or issues that may be facing.
- Have 'Corridor conversations' where the subject of EPR content is initiated by staff and where feedback can be given.
- Tailor EPR day content to the particular challenges facing a particular year group, as voiced by staff and pupils within it.
- Evaluation forms are completed by pupils at the end of EPR days and contain the opportunity for pupils to suggest new topics to be covered. We assess learning outcomes on via these feedback forms from both pupils and teachers, which are analysed, kept and acted upon to ensure delivery of the topics progresses and develops. Pupils can comment on not only the content but the relevance of the day and can feedback, as experts of the challenges they face, how the material delivered could be more effective.
- Sixth Formers are often involved in the delivery of material to younger pupils; ie an annual highlight for Year 11 girls is a session about 'dealing with exam anxiety' that is led by their Lower Sixth counterparts alongside the PSHEe Coordinator.
- Pupils are not 'listeners' but active contributors in all EPR days according to their willingness to participate.

## **Equality and Diversity**

We promote the needs and interests of all pupils, irrespective of gender, culture ability or aptitude; taking into account the Equality Act 2010. Teaching of PSHE will take into account the ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds of our young people and those with English as a second language to ensure that all can fully access the PSHE education provision.

We promote social learning and expect our pupils to show a high regard for the needs of others in various ways:

We have displays clearly displayed regarding respect and non-tolerance of racist, sexist or homophobic language. We also teach lessons and have assemblies on this.

As an Edmund Rice school, we belong to ERI (Edmund Rice International) which makes students aware of those less fortunate and promotes advocacy throughout the school in protecting the human rights of all.

6<sup>th</sup> form pupils at SMC all participate in an 'outreach' programme helping their wider community on a weekly basis.

We will use PSHE education as a vehicle to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by bringing in agencies such as Asylum Link, Liverpool to tackle first hand any misinformation or prejudice regarding other nationalities.

The full PSHE programme is available to all pupils although parents and carers have a right to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of sex education in accordance with the statutory guidance for all schools which is mandatory from term three, 2021.

### **Ensuring a balanced Curriculum**

Whilst promoting the values of the school's mission statement and teaching via the principles of Blessed Edmund Rice, we ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing them with learning that will allow them to be able to make their own fully informed choices. We feel that providing a programme that offers a range of viewpoints is compatible with the promotion of our own set of values.

We ensure that lessons are not polarised debates but are sensitive to a range of views. We ensure that pupils leave the college having accessed the learning they need to stay safe and healthy and are aware of how to protect their human rights.

### **Who is responsible for the programme**

The PHSEe, EPR and Citizenship programme is led by the PSHEe Co-ordinator. It is taught by a mixture of form tutors and other SMC staff who all have the lessons content in advance and are talked through the subjects.

All staff at the College have access to PSHE CPD via membership to the PHSE Association and via the school's CPD programme.

We have developed the use of a growing number of community-based agencies to support PSHE education in our school. We feel the opportunities to use local agencies in school accelerate the development of our programmes and policies. Careful consideration is given to issues of content, co-ordination and consistency: external support is provided in partnership with our own programme.

Visitors complement our planned provision for PSHE and we ensure their input is reviewed and evaluated by the PSHE Co-ordinator.

All community-based agencies that visit us and provide curriculum support, are DBS checked and issued with the following code of conduct:

- Be willing to share their experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid criticising the experiences and insights of others and imposing their views upon pupils in any way.
- Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum at the school.
- Seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods that involve the pupils actively and communicate at appropriate levels for the age group concerned.

- Make clear to pupils who they are, represent, and what they are offering to children.
- Develop ways of speaking to children, which communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to convert young people.

**Previous visitors include:**

NHS School Community Nurse Team (including the specialist on Eating Disorders and Mental Health) we also benefit from the use of an on-site NHS nurse who is available for students during the week with a designated confidential drop in centre. She has also contributed to the whole school approach to PSHE in the form of our EPR days.

- Police Liaison Support
- Local Church Youth Workers
- Asylum Link, Liverpool
- Border Control
- Liverpool Youth for Christ – Sex and Relationships
- The Reward Foundation – education regarding side effects of porn addiction
- Luke Whitehouse - Drugs information through music
- MALS – Knife crime.

**Cross-Curricular Links**

This policy supports the College’s other relevant policies which support PSHE such as:

- Anti-bullying
- Equal Opportunities
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Relationship and Sex Education
- Data protection maybe
- Food

Learning in PSHE classes links to other curriculum lessons via a bi-annual review of subjects and their links to PHSE both content and skills. Particularly relevant subjects are ICT (e-safety) RS (ethics), Science (reproduction, drugs). The coordinator works closely with the Heads of Department to ensure a collaborative and complementary approach.



## **Assessment for Learning**

Completed lesson booklets for KS3 are also kept and looked at to ensure that lesson content is appropriate and that children are actively participating in the lessons and their learning.

The PSHEe Co-ordinator also regularly meets with tutors delivering the PSHE lessons to look at lesson content to assess what is going well or needs adjustment.

All work from EPR days such as completed worksheets children fill in, feedback they give and photographic evidence of learning is also kept to ensure that the College knows what has been taught, what has been learnt and to know that learning is progressing.

Teachers are consulted in advance of topics being taught so that the entire teaching staff can relate PSHEe to their own expectations and conversation with pupils.

At KSE, termly quizzes assess understanding and help the PSHEe co-ordinator to review content.

This document has been prepared in consultation with the Archdiocesan RSE Coordinator.

Policy: September 2024 (G. Whitehouse)

Reviewed: September 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

## Appendix

Covid 19 – we recognise the continuing implications of Covid 19 upon our pupil’s mental ability as well as their academic progress. Changes were made to the scheme of work in 2020 to enable pupils to reflect upon their experience of remote learning and of lockdown generally, as well as to consider how to approach the transition into school life and greater interaction. Time was allocated at the beginning of term to allow for this provision; and where mental health is explored throughout the year, the possible impact of Covid 19 will be acknowledged and considered. As we continue into the new academic year, PSHEe provision will continue to reflect an understanding of the increased mental health needs of our pupils.

2021 Ofsted Report into sexual harassment – in response to this document, all year groups will have a EPR session led by GW and SH, to be continued in Year 7 from this year on. Parents will be notified of the document, its findings to it, making clear that we do not assume that sexual harassment does not happen here, but rather that we are proactive in creating a culture where all members of the community are respected and safe.

To that end sessions will be lead by the PSHEe Co-ordinator and the DSL with the aims and objectives of

- Educating pupils of what the law states surrounding sexual harassment, consent, and online practice.
- Helping the pupils to expect the law to govern the behaviour of themselves, and those around them.
- Share Ofsted’s research findings.
- Assist them to feel in control of their own choices, under law.
- Encourage their participation in the creation of a culture where harassment is not tolerated.
- Reassure them that they can safely disclose incidents to us.
- Direct them to the right help and support.