

## PSHE, RSE AND CAREERS POLICY

2025/26

### **Context and Rationale**

This policy sets out Rochester Independent College's approach to delivering Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Careers education, in line with the Department for Education RSE and Health Education Statutory Guidance (updated 2025) and ISI inspection requirements.

The programme is compulsory for all students in Years 7–13 and is designed to:

- Promote wellbeing, safety and resilience.
- Support both academic and personal development.
- Provide a spiral curriculum where knowledge is revisited and expanded every year.
- Prepare students for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life.

Our structured six-term approach ensures a consistent and progressive experience across the school:

- Term 1: Navigating School, Self and Society
- Term 2: Careers
- Term 3: Understanding the Law
- Term 4: Wellbeing and Wisdom: Thriving in Body, Mind and Life
- Term 5: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Term 6: Online Safety

This model provides coherence and allows every student to build upon prior learning in a carefully sequenced way.

### **Aims and Objectives**

We aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills and values to make informed, safe and responsible decisions in life, preparing them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adulthood.

Our student body represents a cross-section of cultural and social backgrounds, and through PSHE and college life we foster an atmosphere of tolerance, inclusion and mutual respect. We pride ourselves on these qualities, which are taught to all students both in and out of the classroom, with equal opportunities for all regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, or any other protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

By providing students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to make



informed choices, they develop as individuals, are able to respond with personal and digital resilience, and can confidently navigate an increasingly complex world.

We actively promote Fundamental British Values (FBV) — democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; and mutual respect and tolerance — students will gain a deeper understanding of British values, culture and systems, and how these connect to their own lives and the wider world.

At all levels, students are supported and encouraged to:

- Take responsibility for their actions and choices
- Develop respect for their peers, the college and community
- Feel positive about themselves and their identity
- Develop healthy and respectful relationships
- Build personal and digital resilience to manage risks online and offline
- Make safe and responsible choices and decisions
- Meet and work constructively with others
- Consider social, moral, cultural and ethical dilemmas
- Find reliable sources of information and advice
- Prepare for change and transitions in their lives
- Develop study, communication and life skills
- Access impartial advice about careers and future pathways
- Engage in student voice opportunities, reflect on their learning, and develop greater self-awareness

This approach is spiral and progressive, embedding core values year-on-year while giving students space for reflection, discussion, and self-expression. It aligns with the 2025 RSHE guidance and ensures that all learners are supported to thrive in college and beyond.

### **Teaching and Staff Training**

The PSHE and RSHE curriculum is planned and reviewed by the Vice Principals, Pastoral and Academic and delivered by our PSHE teacher, careers lead, specialist teachers and external speakers in timetabled lessons, assemblies (including Votes for Schools) and off timetable drop down days. Teachers responsible for delivering PSHE, RSE and Careers receive training through a variety of sources such as the PSHE Association. Staff will be expected to employ the principles of Quality First Teaching (QFT) to ensure lessons are taught in a way that is inclusive to all students, especially those identified as SEND who may be more vulnerable to the effects of misinformation and disinformation.

Due to the small class sizes at the college, staff have a thorough knowledge of student needs and will ensure that lessons are taught in a way that allows all students to access the content. This will include, but is not limited to, differentiated material; time in lessons for students to process and reflect what has been delivered; and targeted questioning to informally and



formally assess student knowledge.

### **Creating a Safe and Supporting Learning Environment**

A safe and supportive learning environment is created by establishing clear ground rules in each context for the delivery of subject material. This ensures respectful dialogue and helps students to feel secure when discussing sensitive topics. Staff delivering PSHE and RSE will ensure that any student who appears at risk receives appropriate support by liaising with the pastoral team and following the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If a disclosure is made, this will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures by the DSL or ADSL. The Visiting Speakers Policy is also followed, with all external contributors required to share their materials in advance for vetting.

PSHE and RSE frequently draw on real-life experiences, which may provoke strong emotions and questions. This engagement is seen as a positive sign of curiosity and learning. Where possible, questions are addressed openly with the class; if a question is inappropriate for the group, it will be managed individually. Responses are always tailored to the age and developmental stage of the students.

To support inclusion, all staff and students are treated equally regardless of their sex, gender identity, pregnancy, race, educational needs, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic or national origin, or social background. We are sensitive to the different needs of individual students and the curriculum may evolve as the student cohort changes. LGBT+ and SEND representation is embedded throughout the curriculum, ensuring that all students feel respected and valued. Safeguarding protocols are consistently followed, and teaching staff adopt the distancing approach to delivery. This means teachers do not answer personal questions about themselves or ask such questions of students, preventing individuals from feeling vulnerable or exposed.

Distancing techniques, combined with open and age-appropriate discussion, help reduce stigma, prevent the spread of misinformation, and ensure that students feel safe exploring complex issues. This approach provides an environment in which students can learn accurate information, reflect critically, and develop resilience, supported at all times by trained and knowledgeable staff.

### **Delivery**

Content is taught at an age-appropriate and developmentally suitable level, with adjustments made to meet the needs of students with SEND.

Students bring differing levels of knowledge and experience to PSHE and RSHE. Prior knowledge is assessed through questioning and formative assessment, and teaching methods include discussion, research, role play and group work to promote engagement. Lessons and off-timetable days aim to create a strong sense of community and acceptance.



In Key Stage 3, students have a weekly one-hour PSHE/RSE lesson enriched by trips, assemblies, community engagement and visiting speakers. Resources are drawn from national and local agencies, including the PSHE Association, ensuring coverage of statutory content and contextual needs. Progress is assessed informally through teacher observation and classwork, with feedback given in books. Student progress is also reflected in academic reports. Student voice is actively gathered through class discussion, questionnaires and feedback opportunities.

Key Stage 4 and 5, PSHE builds upon these foundations through assemblies and off-timetable sessions delivered by external speakers and specialist staff, using the focus termly themes of the college. Students are encouraged to reflect and seek further guidance through discussions with the pastoral team, Directors of Studies, Personal Tutors and subject staff. Regular meetings with tutors and Directors of Studies, both individual and small groups, provide additional support, guidance and signposting.

### **Cross-curricular links and delivery in other lessons**

Explicit links between subjects and PSHE/RSE are embedded across the curriculum, with values of respect, teamwork, individuality, sustainability and personal responsibility encouraged in all lessons.

RSE is taught mainly through PSHE and Science: Science covers conception and aspects of contraception, while PSHE explores lifestyle choices, strategies and skills to stay safe and healthy. ICT links highlight how technology can affect wellbeing, safety and reputation, including the risks and laws around image sharing, social networking, online dating and digital behaviour.

PSHE themes are also reinforced through other subjects, examples include:

- Music, History and Drama – presentation and performance skills.
- Science – healthy eating, sun protection and sustainable living.
- English Literature – tolerance, diversity, respect and spirituality.
- Geography – global sustainability, cultural, political and religious comparisons.
- History – British and global events underpinning democracy and social responsibility.
- Sustainability – climate change, environmental responsibility and the impact of individual and collective choices on the planet.
- Computing - online safety

This cross-curricular approach ensures that PSHE, RSE and sustainability are consistently reinforced throughout students' learning.

### **Extra-curricular links and delivery outside the classroom:**

Elements of the PSHE programme are supported during students' experiences through extra curricular activities and trips. The varied programme of clubs and other extracurricular



opportunities respond to the needs and requests of students. Many support and develop knowledge and skills initially delivered in PSHE and offer further opportunities for active citizenship. Examples include sports clubs and competitions, The Duke of Edinburgh award, boarding activities or joining a group supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

Definition of relationships and sex education (from the Sex Education Forum)

“We define relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships, including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life. We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.”

### **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

RSHE equips students with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing. We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex, as well as reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. As part of the college ethos we foster respect, challenge prejudice and develop imaginative and informed attitudes whilst developing students who are able to think critically, creatively and independently.

### **Careers Education and Work Experience**

The college recognises that all young people need a planned programme of activities to aid their decision-making and help them plan for the future. We also recognise the statutory right of all students to receive impartial careers education and confidential guidance.

In the Sixth Form there are drop-down days devoted to careers, with students receiving guidance and support from their personal tutors when considering future career paths and choices. While it remains the case that most sixth formers attend the college with the aim of securing a place at their chosen university, the college is careful to ensure that advice about different career routes is also offered.

The college offers a planned programme of careers education, information and guidance for all students which is appropriate to their age, stage, ability and educational needs. This guidance is provided through a range of different events and activities. We are particularly keen to challenge gender or cultural stereotypes when it comes to presenting particular career paths to students. We use the Unifrog platform and the Gatsby Framework within the college to support students to make the best choices about their future.



All teaching staff make a contribution to careers education and guidance through their roles as subject teachers. The planning of activities is based on students' choices and the evaluation of activities provides guidance for future activities. A significant contribution is made by personal tutors in their tutee meetings. UCAS counselling remains a core part of sixth form careers education and guidance with the Principal, Vice-Principal for Futures, and Futures Team sharing oversight of this extensive process. Careers education and guidance includes supporting sixth-form students as they investigate university options, with in-school discussion of visits to university open days both before and after they take place.

As part of our careers programme we utilise the support of our partner organisations within Dukes Education (Dukes Careers Plus): The Law Portal, The Medic Portal, A List Education, Oxbridge Applications and InvestIn.

In the Lower School, careers forms part of PSHE curriculum and dedicated sessions feature specific careers development. In the Lower School the PSHE programme contains units that explicitly look at personal economic competence and understanding of the purpose and uses of money.

Year 10 students engage in Unifrog virtual work experience days in the summer term.

Students in Year 10 and 12 are also provided with careers support from Dukes Career School by Investin. Support and guidance is given for this, including briefing sessions and resources.

In all year groups, students are provided with guidance and resources through the Unifrog platform.

In the Lower School careers education is overseen, as part of the PSHE programme.. In Sixth Form the provision is overseen by the Academic Director, Careers Lead.

### **Involving Parents and Carers**

We are committed to working with parents/carers, who play a key role in supporting the PSHE, RSE and Careers programme by discussing with their children at home topics that have been explored at school. We will offer support to parents and carers by setting up a meeting at the start of each year outlining our approach to PSHE, RSE and Careers. We will also consult with our parents/carers on the content of our RSHE curriculum.

We engage with parents/carers through parents evenings, reports, newsletters, the sharing of policies and guest speaker visits for parental education.

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of Relationships and Sex Education. However, they do not have the right to withdraw their child from the RSE element of the National Science Curriculum. Nor can they remove their child from the relationship education aspect of RSE as it is important



that the students understand how relationships can develop and evolve. Parents are invited to contact the Principal, in writing, if they have any concerns or queries.

If parents request that their child is withdrawn from Sex Education, they will be invited into college for a discussion. Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their child, but should be made aware of the implications of removing them from lessons. A child will also have a right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday, specifically three academic terms before they turn 16.

Parents and carers will be informed about the policy through email. The policy is also available on the college [website](#). If you require this policy in a different format please contact the College directly.

### **Monitoring, Review and Policy Development**

- Overseen by the Vice Principals, Pastoral and Academic
- Feedback from students, staff and parents informs development.
- The policy is dynamic:
  - It will evolve over the next academic year as we continue embedding the 2025 RSHE guidance.
  - Adaptations will reflect the contextual needs of our student body — including cultural diversity, safeguarding priorities and mental health trends.
  - Annual review will ensure alignment with DfE updates, ISI expectations, and local safeguarding guidance.

This policy supports/complements the following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Visiting speakers

Equality Diversity & Inclusion

Fundamental British Values

Curriculum Policy and Guides

This policy is compliant with:

- Education Act (2002)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- DfE RSE and Health Education Guidance (2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- ISI Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements (2024)



Created/Updated	Author	Approved by	Date
September 2020	ME/KF	AB	September 2020
September 2021	BG/DP	AB	September 2021
September 2022	HR/ MY	AB	September 2022
September 2023	KS/VH/MY	AB	September 2023
September 2024	KS	AB	September 2024
September 2025	KS	KF	September 2025





Appendix 1: Termly overview.

**Term 1: Navigating School, Self and Society** provides the foundation for students' understanding of identity, community and respectful relationships. In Year 7, the focus is on transition to secondary school, building friendships, developing empathy and recognising bullying behaviours. This early stage helps students to explore who they are and how to establish themselves positively in the school community.

In Year 8, the programme develops further by examining bias, stereotypes and discrimination, encouraging students to reflect critically on how attitudes are shaped and to contribute to building diverse, supportive communities. By Year 9, the emphasis shifts towards application, as students learn to navigate peer influence, understand risk-taking behaviours and recognise sources of support for victims. This progression ensures that students move from understanding their personal identity, to respecting diversity in others, and finally to managing more complex social risks.

At Key Stage 4, these themes are built upon with specific workshops and assemblies designed to support students as they prepare for the transition into adulthood. Sessions include *Transition to KS4 – Support Available*, the *Active Bystander Workshop* delivered by Talk Consent, and a *Cultural session* celebrating diversity. The *Game Changers* programme, run by Show Racism the Red Card, provides a further opportunity for students to consider equality, discrimination and their role in challenging injustice. Alongside these, regular assemblies reinforce the importance of community, tolerance and respect, ensuring these values remain visible throughout the school.

In Key Stage 5, the themes deepen as students reflect on identity, relationships and their responsibilities in wider society. Workshops include *Identity* with the School of Sex Ed, *Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism in Society* with Show Racism the Red Card, and *Future Relationships* delivered by It Happens Education. These are complemented by *Healthy Relationships* sessions led by Talk Consent, which prepare students for life beyond college by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to form positive, respectful and supportive relationships.

Term 2 : Careers

**Term 3: Understanding the Law** gives students the knowledge and confidence to navigate their rights and responsibilities in modern society. In Year 7, the focus is on the foundations of



legal awareness: understanding the age of criminal responsibility, learning about protected characteristics, and knowing how to report concerns safely. In Year 8, the curriculum moves into more practical matters, exploring stop and search procedures, the consequences of drug possession, and recognising anti-social behaviour. By Year 9, students apply this knowledge to more complex safeguarding issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), gang involvement, intimidation, and online grooming. This staged approach ensures that students progress from a basic awareness of the law, to an understanding of legal processes, and ultimately to recognising how the law intersects with safeguarding and protection from exploitation.

At Key Stage 4, students build on this foundation with practical and interactive opportunities to deepen their legal understanding. *Elections Day* allows them to experience democratic processes in action and to reflect on the importance of civic participation. The BRAVE workshop, run by Connect Futures, challenges students to consider radicalisation, extremism and violence, building resilience against harmful ideologies while promoting informed, democratic citizenship. They also take part in a mock trial run by the Magistrates, focusing on issues such as joint enterprise. This immersive experience helps students to understand the judicial process, the roles within a courtroom, and the consequences of group decision-making in criminal contexts.

In Key Stage 5, the focus shifts to the more nuanced and societal aspects of law and justice. Connect Futures deliver sessions on fake news, misinformation and disinformation, equipping students with critical thinking skills to evaluate media and online narratives responsibly. Specialist input also comes from Nick Hickmott, who addresses the realities of drug misuse and its legal consequences, and the St Giles Trust, who run sessions on county lines and gangs, offering real-life insights into criminal exploitation and exit strategies. Finally, Allison Harvey's Risky Business programme supports students in understanding how young people can be manipulated into unsafe or illegal activities, and how to recognise and resist such risks.

Through this progression, students move from legal awareness in KS3, to practical engagement with law and civic responsibility in KS4, and finally to critical, reflective analysis of crime, justice and safeguarding in KS5. This ensures they are not only informed about the law but are also equipped to apply their knowledge to real-world risks, preparing them to become active, responsible and resilient citizens.

**Term 4: Wellbeing and Wisdom: Thriving in Body, Mind and Life** helps students to understand how to look after their physical, emotional, mental and financial health, while building the resilience and confidence to make informed choices.

In Year 7, the focus is on self-awareness and identity through the *ARTiculate* series of lessons: *What makes me, me?*, *How can I stay mentally healthy?*, and *What have I learnt about myself?*. These sessions encourage reflection, resilience and positive mental health awareness at an early stage.



In Year 8, the programme develops towards practical health and lifestyle choices, covering dental hygiene, healthy eating, body image, and health education. These topics equip students with essential knowledge to maintain their physical health, while beginning to link lifestyle choices with their wellbeing.

By Year 9, the emphasis shifts towards applied wellbeing. Students explore attitudes to mental health, the promotion of emotional wellbeing, and the differences between unhealthy and healthy coping strategies. They also learn vital life-saving skills through first aid, CPR and defibrillation, alongside sensitive but crucial topics such as cancer awareness, change, loss and grief. Together, these sessions prepare students to manage personal challenges and support others effectively.

At Key Stage 4, wellbeing education broadens with specialist workshops. *Altered, Airbrushed and Unrealistic* with Allison Harvey examines the impact of unrealistic media portrayals on self-esteem and body confidence, helping students to critically evaluate messages they encounter in everyday life. A MyBnk financial workshop strengthens the link between financial security and wellbeing, covering skills such as budgeting, saving and planning for the future. In addition, the college counsellor delivers a mental health workshop, while the college nurse provides input on physical health and healthy habits, creating a balanced and holistic programme.

In Key Stage 5, the focus shifts towards independence and preparation for adult life. The *School of Sex Ed* delivers workshops on reproductive and sexual health, while further sessions explore mental health and sleep, both vital for balance and resilience during times of pressure. MyBnk workshops return at this stage with a focus on moving into adult life, addressing credit, debt, financial planning and independent money management.

Across all stages, this strand of the curriculum builds from self-awareness and identity in KS3, to critical reflection and financial responsibility in KS4, and finally to independence and long-term wellbeing in KS5. This supports students leaving college not only knowledgeable about health and relationships, but also confident in managing their emotional, physical and financial wellbeing as they prepare for life beyond school.

**Term 5: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)** equips students with the knowledge, skills and values to form safe, respectful and fulfilling relationships while taking responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing. The programme builds progressively from early self-understanding to navigating more complex issues as students mature.

In Year 7, the focus is on the foundations of healthy relationships. Lessons explore puberty and emotional changes, the importance of respectful relationships, and an introduction to consent basics. These sessions help students to understand themselves, their bodies and the importance of mutual respect.



In Year 8, the programme develops further into issues of identity and diversity. Students learn about gender identity and sexual orientation, explore relationship expectations, and are introduced to contraception. The emphasis is on respecting others, challenging stereotypes, and understanding the responsibilities that come with forming relationships.

By Year 9, the emphasis is on applying this knowledge to more complex contexts. Lessons cover sexual health, managing the ending of relationships, and navigating consent in more nuanced situations. This prepares students to think critically about their choices, understand boundaries, and seek help when needed.

At Key Stage 4, students deepen their understanding through expert-led sessions delivered by *It Happens Education*. These include workshops on intimate relationships, keeping your body safe and sexual health, choice, fertility and families, and developing digital lives. Together, these sessions equip students with both the knowledge and the practical strategies to manage relationships responsibly, including the impact of technology and digital culture.

In Key Stage 5, the focus broadens to preparing young people for adulthood and independence. The *School of Sex Ed* delivers a series of relationships and bodies workshops, which explore healthy intimacy, consent, body confidence and personal agency in greater depth. These sessions encourage reflection, self-awareness and the confidence to manage relationships with maturity and respect.

Across all stages, the RSE curriculum builds steadily from understanding self in KS3, to respecting others and navigating responsibilities in KS4, and finally to managing relationships safely, responsibly and confidently in KS5.

**Term 6: Online Safety** equips students with the knowledge and resilience to navigate digital spaces responsibly, recognising risks while developing strategies to stay safe. The programme builds from protecting online reputation, to critically understanding digital influence, to managing more complex risks in the online world.

In Year 7, the focus is on building awareness of personal safety online. Lessons on online reputation and online financial harm introduce students to the risks of scams, identity theft and irresponsible sharing, helping them understand how their digital footprint can affect their future.

In Year 8, the programme develops into more critical engagement with online behaviours. Students consider “Are we responsible with social media?”, explore algorithms and their influence, and examine the risks of phishing and hacking. They are also introduced to the concept of deepfakes, prompting reflection on how digital manipulation can distort truth and influence perceptions.

By Year 9, students apply this learning to more complex and sensitive online issues. Lessons address the sharing of nudes, how social media portrays sex and relationships,



microtransactions in gaming, and the dangers of sextortion. These sessions prepare students to recognise coercion, challenge unrealistic portrayals, and manage digital risks with resilience.

At Key Stage 4, the programme deepens through specialist workshops. Students take part in “How Do We Know What is True?”, building critical literacy around misinformation and disinformation. *Talk Consent* deliver a focused session on sexting and consent, highlighting the legal and emotional consequences of image sharing while promoting respect and responsibility in digital communication.

In Key Stage 5, students explore the broader social and psychological impacts of digital culture. Allison Harvey’s *Overexposed: Porn, Relationships and Reality* encourages students to critically analyse the influence of pornography on intimacy, expectations and identity. Psychology teacher Ian Duxbury leads a workshop on the impact of social media, exploring links with self-esteem, mental health and digital dependency. These sessions equip older students with the maturity and critical perspective needed to navigate complex online environments as independent young adults.

Across all stages, the Online Safety curriculum progresses from protecting reputation and managing risks in KS3, to critical evaluation and legal responsibility in KS4, and finally to independent resilience and reflective digital citizenship in KS5.



## Appendix 2 - RIC Assessment Levels - PSHE/RSE

Attainment against age related expectations	Knowledge and understanding of content	Application of skills and content learnt to self.	Application of skills and content learnt to others.
Exceeding	You show excellent knowledge and understanding of the content taught in PSHE and RSE lessons.	You independently and regularly apply the content and skills taught to real life situations that affect you and act accordingly.	You independently and regularly apply the content and skills taught to empathise with others' situations and act accordingly.
Meeting	You show good knowledge and understanding of the content taught in PSHE and RSE lessons.	You can apply the content and skills taught to real life situations that affect you and can act accordingly.	You can apply to the content and skills taught to empathise with others' situations and can act accordingly.
Working towards	You show good knowledge and understanding of some of the content taught in PSHE and RSE lessons but there are gaps in this knowledge.	You can apply the content and skills taught to real life situations that affect you with teacher support.	You can apply to the content and skills taught to empathise with others' situations with teacher support.
Working below	You show weak knowledge and understanding of the content taught in PSHE and RSE lessons.	You are rarely able to apply the content and skills taught to real life situations, even with teacher support.	You can rarely apply the content and skills taught to empathise with others' situations, even with teacher support.