



Outcomes
First Group

Personal, Social, Health And Economic Education (PSHE) Policy

Mountfield Heath School

MOUNTFIELD HEATH SCHOOL

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) Policy

| Policy Owner | Drafted | Adopted | Next Review Date |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| Headteacher / DHT and DSL | June 2026 | | September 2027 |

Related Documents:

Curriculum Policy (Capabilities Approach); Curriculum Experiences Collection; Curriculum Wheels; SMSC Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Assessment, Feedback and Evidence of Learning Policy; OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025); PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE Education (2026); PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (Key Stages 1–5); Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy (OFG, 2025/26 — adopted with local arrangements)

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Section 1 — Introduction and Context

Mountfield Heath School (MHS) is a specialist independent primary school for autistic pupils and those with complex social, emotional and mental health needs. We are registered with the Independent Schools Association (ISA) and operate within Options Autism, part of Outcomes First Group (OFG). Our school currently supports approximately 47 pupils, all of whom hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Since 2018, MHS has developed an Integrated Therapeutic Curriculum that places the wellbeing, autonomy, and identity of each pupil at the centre of every learning experience. From September 2026, this curriculum is fully organised around the Capabilities Approach, drawing on the philosophy of Martha Nussbaum. This framework understands education not as the transmission of a fixed body of knowledge, but as the active cultivation of the conditions in which a person can flourish — now and into adult life. The ten capability domains — Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Senses, Imagination and Thought; Emotions; Practical Reason; Affiliation; Other Species and Nature; Play; and Control — form the organising purpose of everything we teach.

This approach is underpinned by our commitment to **trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming practice**. We recognise that behaviour and wellbeing are shaped by individual experiences, including trauma and neurodivergence. Through our **Ask, Accept, Develop (AAD)** approach, we work collaboratively with young people—asking about their preferences, accepting their experiences and needs, and developing together.

Within this framework, PSHE is not a peripheral addition to the curriculum. It is one of its most essential expressions. The capabilities most central to our pupils' futures — keeping themselves safe, understanding their own emotions and those of others, building and maintaining positive relationships, asserting their own needs and boundaries, participating in communities — are precisely what PSHE develops. For our pupils, who may face additional vulnerabilities in navigating social and relational life, this learning is not incidental. It is foundational.

This policy sets out how MHS plans, delivers, monitors, and reviews its PSHE provision. It replaces the previous PSHE Policy (February 2025) and should be read alongside the school's Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy, which is adopted from the OFG model policy with MHS local arrangements. Together these two documents constitute the school's full provision framework for PSHE and RSHE.

Section 2 — Statutory Requirements and Policy Status

PSHE at MHS is governed by the following legislative and regulatory requirements:

ISS paragraph 2(2)(d) requires MHS, as an independent school, to provide PSHE that reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. This applies to all pupils of compulsory school age.

What MHS provides

PSHE is timetabled as a discrete subject across all classes and pathways, ensuring a planned, sequenced programme that covers the three strands of the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025): Relationships; Health and Wellbeing; and Living in the Wider World. Statutory relationships

education content, sex education arrangements, and the parental right to withdraw are addressed in the school's RSHE Policy.

Protected characteristics

In accordance with ISS paragraph 2(2)(d) and the Equality Act 2010, the PSHE curriculum is designed to encourage respect for all people with particular regard to the protected characteristics of: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Pupils are introduced to these characteristics in age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate ways. The curriculum does not discriminate against, demean, or encourage disrespect toward any person on the basis of a protected characteristic.

Section 3 — Aims and Guiding Principles

The PSHE curriculum at MHS is designed to support every pupil to develop the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need to live well — in their relationships, in their communities, and in their own sense of self. We hold high aspirations for all our pupils and recognise that the foundations laid at primary school have lasting significance for the adults they will become.

Our curriculum is guided by seven principles drawn from the July 2025 statutory guidance, each of which reflects established practice at MHS:

Engagement with pupils. Learning is planned in response to pupils' individual needs, communication profiles, and lived experiences. Pupil voice is gathered through accessible means including structured observation, ITEP review, and multidisciplinary discussion.

Transparency and engagement with parents. MHS communicates openly with parents about PSHE content, and makes curriculum materials available on request. Parents are consulted at each policy review (see Section 7).

Positivity. The curriculum takes a strengths-based, trauma-informed and neuro-affirming approach. Language is chosen to avoid deficit framing and to actively challenge stereotypes.

Careful sequencing. Content is planned across three pathways — Curiosity, Discover, and Explore — ensuring foundational concepts precede more complex material and that all pupils encounter statutory content in an accessible form by the end of their time at MHS. Further detail on pathway sequencing is set out in Section 4 and in the Curriculum Experiences Collection.

Relevance and responsiveness. Planning is informed by EHCP outcomes and ITEP targets and responds to emerging contextual issues including online safety concerns, peer relationships, and local safeguarding themes.

Skilled delivery. PSHE is delivered by teachers and teaching assistants who know their pupils well and are supported by the multidisciplinary clinical team. Staff are trained to deliver sensitive content in a safe, trauma-informed way and are aware of safeguarding disclosure responsibilities (see Sections 6 and 9).

Whole school approach. PSHE is one expression of a whole-school culture of relational trust, emotional safety, and consistent therapeutic practice. The values and skills developed in PSHE sessions are reinforced across every area of school life (see Section 5).

Section 4 — Curriculum Structure and Content

4.1 The curriculum framework

PSHE at MHS is planned in reference to the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025), a group-level framework developed for Options Autism and Acorn Education settings, endorsed by OFG clinical teams. The OFG curriculum itself draws directly on the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (Key Stages 1–5), the PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE Education (2026 edition), the SEND Code of Practice (2015), and the July 2025 statutory guidance. MHS also references the PSHE Association materials directly when planning at pathway level. MHS uses all of these as reference and planning frameworks, not as prescriptive schemes of work. Teachers select, adapt, and sequence content in response to the needs of their class and individual pupils.

The OFG curriculum is organised around three strands: Relationships (carrying the majority of statutory relationships education content); Health and Wellbeing (physical and mental health, puberty and body awareness, healthy lifestyles); and Living in the Wider World (community participation, economic wellbeing, and SMSC opportunities). The PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework further organises learning across six thematic strands — Self-Awareness; Self-Care, Support and Safety; Managing Feelings; Changing and Growing; Healthy Lifestyles; and The World I Live In — with progressive, stage-based learning outcomes that align closely with MHS's three curriculum pathways. Where content in the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework (published 2020) predates the July 2025 statutory guidance, the OFG PSHE Curriculum provides the updated statutory alignment, particularly in relation to online safety and financial harms, AI literacy, and the revised content on developing bodies. MHS uses both sources in conjunction, with the OFG curriculum taking precedence on any area where statutory content has changed since 2020. Health and wellbeing content coverage is mapped in Appendix A. Statutory relationships education coverage is mapped in the RSHE Policy appendix.

The PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework is currently undergoing revision to reflect the July 2025 statutory guidance. MHS will incorporate the updated framework on publication and review planning documentation accordingly.

4.2 Curriculum pathways and differentiation

PSHE is planned and delivered across three curriculum pathways — Curiosity, Discover, and Explore — which reflect pupils' stages of development, communication profiles, and individual learning needs. These pathways are not hierarchical and do not correspond to year groups or chronological age. Full descriptions of each pathway, including adulthood orientations and planning guidance, are set out in the school's Curriculum Policy and Curriculum Experiences Collection. In summary:

Curiosity: Engagement through sensory experience, co-regulation, and adult-mediated relational learning, driven by EHCP outcomes and informed by the OFG curriculum's pre-formal guidance and the Encountering and Foundation stages of the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework.

Discover: Purposeful, contextualised activity with adult support, embedded in daily routines. Planning draws on the OFG curriculum's semi-formal guidance, the Core and Development stages of the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework, and ITEP targets.

Explore: Broader, increasingly independent engagement with PSHE content, drawing on the OFG formal primary guidance and the Enrichment and Enhancement stages of the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework, linked to EHCP outcomes and individual aspirations.

Pathway placement is reviewed regularly through ITEP review, pupil progress meetings, and multidisciplinary discussion.

The relationships strand of the OFG PSHE Curriculum, including all statutory relationships education content, is addressed in the school's RSHE Policy. Curriculum coverage of the relationships strand is mapped in the RSHE Policy appendix. For PSHE planning purposes, teachers should read this policy alongside the RSHE Policy to ensure all statutory content is incorporated into their class planning.

4.3 Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing content is an integral component of PSHE at MHS, planned in reference to the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025) and informed by the health education content set out in the July 2025 statutory guidance. Although health education is not a statutory requirement for independent schools, MHS regards the statutory content framework as a sound reference for ensuring comprehensive provision appropriate to its pupils' needs.

Health and wellbeing content at MHS spans six areas drawn from the statutory guidance: General Wellbeing (emotional health, managing feelings, coping with change and loss); Wellbeing Online (balanced and critical use of the internet and digital technology, including risks from online gaming, scams, and age-restricted content); Physical Health and Fitness; Healthy Eating; Health Protection and Prevention (hygiene, sleep, sun safety, dental health, vaccinations); and Personal Safety (hazards, road, rail, and water safety, and basic first aid). Developing Bodies — covering puberty, physical changes, and the menstrual cycle — is taught to all pupils in a timely way informed by physical maturity and individual need, regardless of pathway. Where sex education is additionally provided, this is addressed in the school's RSHE Policy.

Emotional health and wellbeing is substantially embedded across the whole-school curriculum through the Zones of Regulation, Bounce, and Social Thinking approaches and is not confined to discrete PSHE sessions. The relationship between these whole-school approaches and the planned PSHE curriculum is set out in Section 5.

4.4 Curriculum Experiences Collection and Curriculum Wheels

The PSHE curriculum is documented within two complementary tools. The Curriculum Experiences Collection sets out the subject-level experiences and exposures that pupils encounter across each pathway, organised under the heading "Identity, relationships, safety." The PSHE Curriculum Wheel maps PSHE as a subject to all ten Nussbaum capability domains. Together, these tools provide staff, governors, and external stakeholders with visibility of how PSHE is integrated within the capabilities-led model and should be read alongside this policy.

Section 5 — Integration with the Wider Curriculum

PSHE at MHS operates at two distinct but complementary levels: as a discrete, timetabled subject and as a golden thread running through the whole school curriculum and culture.

PSHE is timetabled as a discrete subject across all classes and pathways, ensuring a planned, sequenced programme that maintains its own subject identity. It is important to note that PSHE

and personal development are complementary but not interchangeable: PSHE is the structured curriculum subject through which specific knowledge, skills, and statutory content are explicitly taught and evidenced; personal development describes the broader totality of what MHS does to support pupils to flourish. The two reinforce each other but must each be demonstrable in their own right.

The values and skills developed in PSHE sessions — respect, empathy, self-regulation, boundary-setting, and personal agency — are reinforced across the whole school day through consistent routines, therapeutic practice, outdoor learning, Forest School, and everyday relationships with adults and peers. The following evidence-based approaches contribute to this whole-school personal development offer: the Zones of Regulation (emotional literacy and self-regulation); Social Thinking (social cognition and perspective-taking); Bounce (resilience and wellbeing); and Forest School (confidence, risk awareness, and cooperation). Further detail on how these approaches support capability development is set out in the Personal Development Deep Dive and the Curriculum Experiences Collection.

Section 6 — Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|----------------------|---|
| Headteacher | Overall statutory responsibility; approves the policy; ensures consultation, review and publication. |
| DHT / DSL | Operational leadership of PSHE; curriculum coverage oversight; staff training coordination; safeguarding link. Where the DHT/DSL post is vacant or in transition, the Headteacher assumes these responsibilities directly and nominates an interim lead as appropriate. |
| AHT / SENCo | Differentiation and ITEP/EHCP alignment; access for the most complex learners; oversight of PSHE planning at pathway level. |
| AHT Clinical Lead | Clinical oversight of provision for pupils on the Curiosity pathway; advises on appropriate content, timing and delivery for sensitive areas including puberty education; liaison with the MDT on PSHE-related EHCP targets. |
| Class teachers | Planning, delivery and evidencing of PSHE within their class; adaptation to individual pupil need; reference to the OFG PSHE Curriculum and PSHE Association planning materials. |
| Teaching assistants | In-session support; access facilitation for pupils with complex communication needs; contribution to observation and evidence-gathering. |
| Governing body | Policy approval; oversight through termly Headteacher reports and focused governor visits. The safeguarding link governor (currently Lyndsey Jeffries) holds specific oversight of this area. |
| OFG / Options Autism | Group-level curriculum framework; clinical and QA oversight. Any significant departure from the OFG curriculum framework is discussed with the relevant group-level lead. |

Staff training

All staff who deliver PSHE are expected to have sufficient knowledge and confidence to teach the content appropriate to their class. Staff training in relation to PSHE — including sensitive areas such as puberty education, online safety, and personal safety — is reviewed annually. Training specific to the delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education is addressed in the school's RSHE Policy.

Section 7 — Parents, Consultation and Transparency

MHS is committed to genuine partnership with parents in all aspects of PSHE and to being open and transparent about curriculum content.

Policy consultation. In accordance with ISS Standard 2A(f), MHS consults parents before creating or revising this policy by sharing a draft, inviting feedback, and considering parents' views before the policy is finalised. Consultation records are retained by the school.

Publication and access. This policy is published on the MHS website and provided free of charge to any person who requests a copy, in accordance with ISS Standard 2A(g). Parents are informed of any substantive updates.

Curriculum materials. Parents may request to view curriculum materials at any time. Materials relating to sex education are made available for viewing in advance of delivery. The school will respond to such requests promptly.

Parental right to withdraw from sex education. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from PSHE or from relationships education. Arrangements relating to sex education, including the parental right to withdraw, are set out in the school's RSHE Policy.

Section 8 — Inclusion and SEND

All pupils at MHS have a special educational need or disability and all hold an EHCP. Inclusion is therefore not a supplementary consideration — it is the starting point for all curriculum design.

The July 2025 statutory guidance is explicit that pupils with SEND must be supported to access relationships education and, where provided, sex education. MHS is well placed to meet this expectation: the school's curriculum framework, pathway-differentiated planning, and integrated therapeutic model are designed precisely to ensure that all pupils, whatever their communication profile or level of need, can engage meaningfully with the full range of human experiences that PSHE addresses. Full pathway descriptions are set out in the Curriculum Policy and Curriculum Experiences Collection.

Provision is delivered using a wide range of communication supports and accessible formats, including visual resources, objects of reference, Signed Supported English and symbol-based materials, social stories, video, role play, and concrete resources. For each pupil, the approach reflects their communication profile and is determined in consultation with the speech and language therapist and clinical team.

The school is attentive to the particular considerations that arise when teaching autistic pupils about relationships, personal safety, puberty, and sexuality — including the risk of literal interpretation, the importance of concrete and unambiguous language, the need to address specific vulnerability contexts, and the importance of not avoiding difficult content simply because it is complex to deliver. The OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025) provides detailed, clinically informed guidance on teaching sensitive content to autistic learners across all pathways, and this guidance directly informs MHS's approach.

Where EHCP outcomes include targets related to personal safety, relationships, or communication about feelings and preferences, PSHE content is aligned to those targets within the pupil's ITEP. Progress is evidenced through EfL and reviewed through the ITEP review cycle and annual EHCP review. The school also recognises that autistic pupils and those with complex SEMH needs may face particular vulnerabilities in relation to exploitation, harmful relationships, and online risks. The curriculum is planned with these vulnerabilities explicitly in mind.

Section 9 — Safeguarding

PSHE has a direct and significant relationship with the school's safeguarding responsibilities. Effective PSHE equips pupils with the knowledge and language to recognise unsafe situations and to seek help; the school's safeguarding culture provides the relational safety in which pupils can engage honestly with sensitive content. The two are mutually reinforcing.

The delivery of PSHE increases the likelihood that pupils may make disclosures or raise concerns. All staff are aware of this and understand their responsibility to respond appropriately. Any concern arising during or following a PSHE session is handled in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy: staff do not promise confidentiality, do not investigate concerns themselves, and refer all safeguarding concerns to the DSL without delay.

The teaching of personal safety, consent to touch, correct anatomical vocabulary, privacy, and the identification of trusted adults is understood by MHS as safeguarding practice embedded within the curriculum, not only as statutory content. Content related to personal safety and being safe is reviewed by the DSL to ensure consistency with the school's current safeguarding context and any relevant local safeguarding themes. Where contextual issues arise, the school may adjust provision responsively and will inform parents of any material departure from this policy.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy, which sets out full safeguarding arrangements including the role of the DSL, disclosure procedures, and links to the Pan Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols.

Section 10 — Assessment and Monitoring

Assessment of pupil progress

PSHE at MHS is not assessed through normative attainment measures or summative tests. Progress is assessed ipsatively — in relation to each pupil's own starting point and development over time — through ongoing observation and professional judgement captured in the Evidence for Learning (EfL) platform. Where PSHE content is directly linked to an EHCP outcome or ITEP target, progress is reviewed within the ITEP review cycle and contributes to the annual EHCP review. Further detail on the school's assessment approach is set out in the Assessment, Feedback and Evidence of Learning Policy.

Curriculum coverage monitoring

The DHT/DSL, or in their absence the Headteacher or nominated curriculum lead, maintains oversight of PSHE curriculum coverage, including confirmation that health and wellbeing content coverage is maintained across pathways within each academic year. Oversight of statutory relationships education coverage is addressed in the RSHE Policy. This is monitored through planning scrutiny, learning walks, and staff discussion. Gaps in coverage are addressed through planning adjustments and staff support.

Quality assurance

The quality of PSHE provision is reviewed as part of the school's broader QA cycle, including learning walks, EFL reviews, pupil progress meetings, and feedback from staff, pupils, and families. The governing body receives a report on PSHE through the Headteacher's termly report. The school also maintains a record of parental consultation and requests to view curriculum materials.

Section 11 — Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and DHT/DSL and approved by the governing body. It is also reviewed in response to changes to statutory guidance, ISS requirements, or significant changes to the school's provision. When the policy is revised, parents are re-consulted before the revised policy is finalised, in accordance with ISS Standard 2A(f). Staff are informed of substantive changes through the school's professional development programme and staff briefings. The policy is published on the school website.

| Version | Comments / Amendments | Author | Date |
|---------|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1.0 | New standalone PSHE Policy. Replaces PSHE Policy (Feb 2025). RSE content separated into adopted OFG RSHE Policy with MHS local arrangements (see related documents). Rewritten to reflect the Capabilities Approach curriculum, OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025), and PSHE Association planning frameworks. | Sam Dugan | Drafted June 2026; adopted [date] |

Appendix A — Health and Wellbeing Content Coverage Map

The table below maps recommended health education content against the curriculum strands, pathways, and approaches through which MHS addresses each area. This is a coverage overview, not a lesson-by-lesson plan. Detailed planning is held at class level within ITEP and curriculum planning documentation.

Health and Wellbeing (recommended reference framework, primary phase)

| Content Area | Addressed via | Pathways | Key approaches |
|--|--|---|--|
| General Wellbeing (emotional health, feelings, change and loss) | Health and Wellbeing strand (OFG curriculum); Zones of Regulation; Bounce; ITEP targets | All pathways | Zones of Regulation curriculum; Bounce programme; social stories; therapeutic keywork; PSHE sessions |
| Wellbeing Online (balanced internet use, gaming risks, scams, age-restricted content) | Health and Wellbeing strand; Digital Literacy curriculum; Relationships strand (online safety) | Discover and Explore primarily; adapted for Curiosity | Staying Safe Online policy; class-level PSHE sessions; OFG curriculum online safety outcomes |
| Physical Health and Fitness | Health and Wellbeing strand; PE curriculum; Forest School | All pathways | PE programme; Forest School; active timetabling; OFG healthy lifestyles outcomes |
| Healthy Eating | Health and Wellbeing strand; cooking and nutrition activities; Forest School | All pathways | Practical food activities; sensory food exploration; nutrition-linked PSHE sessions |
| Health Protection and Prevention (hygiene, sleep, dental health, sun safety, vaccinations) | Health and Wellbeing strand; daily routines and personal care | All pathways | Hygiene routines embedded in daily timetable; explicit teaching through PSHE sessions; OFG healthy lifestyles outcomes |
| Personal Safety (hazards, road, rail, water safety, first aid) | Health and Wellbeing and Living in the Wider World strands; community learning | All pathways | Community visits; OFG World I Live In outcomes, MHS Community Passport |
| Developing Bodies (puberty, physical changes, menstrual cycle) | Changing and Growing strand (OFG curriculum); sex education programme (where appropriate) | All pathways — timing determined by physical maturity and individual need | OFG curriculum Changing and Growing guidance; clinically informed individual planning; parental communication in advance |

Note: Health education is not a statutory requirement for independent schools. MHS addresses these areas as part of its broader PSHE and therapeutic curriculum, using the July 2025 statutory guidance as a quality reference framework.