

PSHE POLICY

Company Operations

ADO SERVICES C.I.C.

Incorporating ADO River Valley

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1. Policy Overview

This policy document is called the **PSHE policy**. It works in collaboration with our **curriculum policy**, **RSE policy** and **Safeguarding** and the **Online Safety policy**. Please see these versions for more specific information which are available on the website.

The main objective of this policy is to explain that we have a curriculum which covers a broad range of subject disciplines, delivered through teaching that will enable all students to make progress according to their abilities. It is to also outline what our bespoke curriculum actually consists of and what we do to ensure our students gain the highest quality of education throughout their time with us with the emphasis specifically on Personal Social Healthcare and Education.

This policy content includes, but is not limited to:

- An understanding of our therapeutic ethos.
- Why we feel that PSHE and RSE/ online safety are of the highest importance, which is highlighted throughout our curriculum.

2. Our Approach to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Studies

At ADO River Valley we truly believe that PSHE as a subject is one of the highest importance, not only for our students, but for every person. PSHE is a huge subject to cover, and one that we continually learn throughout adulthood. Through our PSHE curriculum we allow our students to learn important skills which surround 'cultural capital' so that they know what to expect through 'preparing for adulthood' in modern Britain. We teach PSHE as compulsory, irrespective of age and whether a student is on the 'Chosen Pathway'.

This subject is incredibly wide ranging, with some topics needing to be handled sensitively due to them being a trigger for past traumas. PSHE educators work part in parcel with our therapeutic team to ensure learning experiences are managed carefully so not to cause distress, but still to teach and allow students to learn these fundamental life skills.

We conduct weekly lessons in PSHE, and also weekly lessons on Fundamental British Values (which are closely interlinked). At the end of every half term, we provide a focused PSHE practical day as an additional offer to widen students' knowledge on the topic. Educators work together to promote cross-curricular PSHE based learning within other subjects, it is at the forefront of our ethos and holds a strong purpose for why we do what we do.

3.1 What is covered in PSHE lessons?

- Personal- Teaching the students about how to care for their own personal well-being. Understanding how to be flexible and adaptable in society.
- Social - Educating students on how to have effective communication, understand empathy, and manage conflicts and consent appropriately.

- Health - Help the students learn the importance of self-care, how to look after themselves in areas such as hygiene, and sleep.
- Economics - Encourage students learning through numeracy and problem-solving which is linked into our mathematics curriculum.

Within the four factors above are a multitude of sub-categories that are also covered. These include:

- Spiritual - Helping students to see the greater good, a sense of purpose and inner peace.
- Moral - Exposing students to factors such as learning the difference between right and wrong, that there are consequences of behaviour or actions. This section also actively promotes British Values by teaching students about the 'rule of law'.
- Cultural - Giving students culturally specific knowledge, embracing one another as a whole without bias or discrimination through mutual respect (British Values). We also teach about different faiths and cultural diversity.
- Citizenship - Which includes group working, accepting one another, and teaching students the importance of being fair and patient.
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) - We provide a relaxed and mature approach to this subject, ensuring that students learn the importance of a healthy relationship, and how to keep themselves safe. Please see our [Relationship and Sex Education Policy](#) that outlines how RSE is delivered at ADO River Valley.
We ensure that our caregivers are kept informed of our curriculum, and intentions. Furthermore, we will consent with caregivers and ask them to opt out of RSE activities if they feel that they wish for their CYP to not attend those. However, it is mandatory that students attend lessons relating to relationships.

3.2 How is PSHE Embedded into Our Timetable?

PSHE is one of our 'core subjects' within our curriculum. This means that it is mandatory for all students. We teach PSHE lessons once per week (formerly twice per week per group however in line with our students voice we have made some adjustments). PSHE is now not only delivered to groups once per week but also on the last Friday of every half term we do a PSHE practical day. We have done this to ensure that PSHE is as engaging as possible for students, and to ensure we are giving the right amount of time to cover important topics, some of which are better as one big group at the end of each half term. Within the weekly lessons, the topics adjust slightly every half term, however this links into our long term schemes of work and we ensure that every student has the opportunity to 'Do More Remember More'.

Within our timetable, aside from the PSHE subjects we:

- **Are part of the Jack Petchey award scheme.** This scheme enables students to recognise and vote for peers who they feel are deserving of an award and understand the importance of giving back to the community.

- **Have a school council.** Where students can come together to discuss key factors about school life in order to give them a sense of responsibility. Student councils promote the student's voice and help them to feel part of a community and improve the learning environment. Our students have found areas of this difficult, so we are working with them currently to ensure they are comfortable but that we are still covering off important factors that they should be involved in.
- **Have basecamps (assembly).** This is where students come together to share day to day experiences and updates around a fire, giving a sense of relaxation, whilst enjoying one another's company.
- **Embrace cultural celebrations.** As part of our standard curriculum, we actively embrace cultural celebrations in order to widen student experiences but to also promote mutual respect. Celebrations include Diwali, Chinese New Year, St Patricks Day, My Family Week, and Autism Awareness Week, for example.
- **Promote acts of kindness.** As part of society and 'cultural capital' we teach our students the importance of kindness and politeness through skills such as holding a door open, giving lost property back to its owner, which are incredibly important things that any young person should learn. Not only to be polite, but this will also help them to stay 'safe' in society.
- **We respect each other.** We ensure that we promote mutual respect throughout everything that we do, however as an addition we also have specific lessons within our schemes of work that put an emphasis on role-play, teamwork, and self-expression. By carrying out lessons such as these, we encourage confidence, embracing one another, prepare for the students to play an active role in society (and having a positive impact on it). We help the students to form and maintain healthy relationships, getting to know one another and accepting that we will not always agree with one another, but that is fine.
- **We teach online safety.** We feel that in order to keep safe in society students of all ages should be made aware of online safety. For more information, please revert to our [Online Safety Policy](#).
- **We recognise and celebrate effort.** Many of our students have never had the opportunity to be recognised for effort, some of them say that they have never achieved a certificate before. At ADO River Valley we quickly turn this around for students, through celebratory events where families are welcome to visit to view 'positivity display boards', making the most of student ability and encouraging further efforts, steps and progress.
- **Our curriculum includes drug and alcohol awareness.** Many of our students have had direct access to drugs and alcohol, with some who have been exposed to this since pre-birth. We feel it is important for us to help students understand the dangers surrounding these factors. We encourage the students through our PSHE curriculum to obtain AQA Unit Award Qualifications on these topics, to help them take pride and ownership of their safe choices. We cannot stop the easy access to drugs and alcohol, but we strive to nurture the students away from it.

3.3 Why Do We Educate Against Discrimination?

Discrimination can come in many forms. It is a sad and unfortunate way of society however; we are fortunate enough to live in a generation where people are standing up to discrimination of all forms and this is having a positive impact on laws and legislations. We strive for our students to be members of equality during adolescence and adulthood, and it is our responsibility as a school to educate them on how to achieve this.

Within our PSHE sessions, and throughout standard ADO River Valley approaches we:

- Focus on developing social skills.
- Help students to understand how to manage their anger and emotions towards conflict, or how they perceive themselves.
- We talk openly about what we can do as a Therapeutic School Community Interest Company to fight against discrimination.
- We develop anti-discriminatory understanding for things such as bullying, cyber-bullying, religious and ethnic beliefs, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.
- We help our students to become aware of the skills they will need to survive living in London, and modern Britain through teaching Fundamental British Values and Cultural Capital. This includes embracing our cultures, celebrating our differences, having mutual respect, individual liberty, and understanding democracy and rule of law.
- Educating our students about the importance of following rules. This is incredibly important, helping them to build the life skills to stay safe living in London, avoiding crime and gangs. We are the first step to guiding our students away from danger, helping them to choose a safer healthier life.
- We carry out debates, and restorative justice meetings between groups to help them grasp differing viewpoints accepting that we all have different thoughts, feelings, views and actions. We have also been known to do dummy elections, helping to prepare students for adulthood and having the power to vote.
- We involve students in fundraising events, and community events to help them learn the importance of helping one another and wider acts of kindness to the wider, less fortunate society.
- We celebrate key cultural events, to ensure that our students from all walks of life feel part of our therapeutic school community.
- We actively embrace our own lifestyles and celebrate 'My Family Week'. My family week helps students to talk openly about where they live (flat, house, caravan, do they have a garden, balcony etc). We explore our families dynamics, are they from split families, same sex parenting, looked after children. With our specialist team we help the students to accept the difference in lifestyles and see the positives within their own experiences to promote mutual respect.
- Use external organisations to help students feel part of a wider community.
- We raise awareness about how to stay mentally and physically healthy to encourage students to take ownership in their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of each other.

3.4 Students Who May Struggle with PSHE Related Topics

Due to the difficulties or adverse childhood experiences (ACE) that many of our student's face, or have historically faced, they can find specific PSHE related topics incredibly difficult to explore. With this in mind, we have actions and strategies that we access and tap into to help them within these periods.

To help students develop their PSHE skills, we:

- Support students through specific topics that could be a trigger for them through therapy. The student may have some therapeutic sessions to work through the difficult subject, or the therapy team can support the educator to manage the topic sensitively in the classroom.
- If a student accesses therapy, we can signpost to the most relevant therapy to the topic. For example, if a student was struggling with a health or hygiene topic, we could assign/signpost them to Occupational Therapy, or if it was a phobia they could work with our Cognitive Behavioural Therapist.
- We manage each sensitive situation on a 'case by case' basis. For example, a student may benefit from accessing the topic on a 1:1 basis with the educator, or perhaps with a friend or a small group. We meet the needs of what each individual student requires throughout any topic or situation.
- We directly expose our students to different external experiences that they perhaps have not had access to before. By doing this and taking them out of their comfort zone can help them to relate to an associated topic that perhaps they are finding difficult, or not taking seriously. Helping our students to be more streetwise and improve their instincts and common sense, as this is something that every individual needs growing up in modern Britain.
- Where relevant, we help students through exploring legislation and government decisions to help them to understand why rules are in place and that the decisions are not ours to make. This is good for students who feel they can take on the world and do anything they desire with rigidity.
- We support students to express themselves through 'Zones of Regulation'.

4. Our Therapeutic Approach

At ADO River Valley, we have ensured that holistic therapeutic interventions are embedded in every area of our educational practice.

As a 'Specialist Further Education Setting' for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, we feel it is paramount to provide a therapeutic approach to the school day.

Our students have an Educational Health and Care plan (EHCP). Our students are all on their own journey, some have been (and still are) victims of trauma and abuse which are adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

We believe that expecting students to achieve in education, without having therapeutic support is unrealistic and unethical. *'Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all'*.

We have created a fantastic working relationship between our educational and therapeutic teams, making sure that we all work as 'one'. This approach ensures that we are providing the highest level of support for our students, working collaboratively with individuals, families, and wider professionals to meet individual student needs.

We provide group therapeutic sessions as our last 'lesson' of every day. This lesson is called 'mindfulness'. By ensuring that our last lesson consists of mindfulness and therefore focusing on the present moment, ensures that our students have the opportunity to re-ground and prepare themselves for home time, which for some can be a difficult experience. If the term mindfulness is daunting for the students, we will not use this phrase but will encourage them to come and engage in the activity that is being carried out.

Our staff ensure that they inform each other of any essential information surrounding the students needs, triggers, emotions, progress, and difficulties on a day-to-day basis.

Our school SENCO works closely with all staff who are working with students and families, providing frequent meetings keeping everyone up to speed on key information such as EHC/CIN/CP updates and organising further support as and where required.

We ensure that our approach to the curriculum is holistic, and based around students interests to encourage motivation, engagement and therefore 'success'.

5. Promoting Self-care, and Care for Others

Some of our students have been (and still are) in situations that have caused them trauma. Many arrive with us and do not know how to care for themselves. They can punish themselves over situations that are out of their control, thus finding care for themselves and others very difficult.

In most cases, the journey of self-kindness is a long process for our students. It takes a great length of time, and lots of trial and error. Staff are realistic in knowing that we may not be able to fully change a student's approach to self-care, but we strive to make as much impact as possible to improve their wellbeing and mental health.

Our animals give students a sense of purpose and belonging. We are fortunate enough to have several species of animals which help the students to take a sense of responsibility for the care and wellbeing of others. We use animals as a form of role-play, with the viewpoint that if they learn about animal welfare, they can then recognise their own health needs. We often say, how are you going to have the energy to look after the horses if you don't eat before? So, the sense of belonging expands and allows them to use new skills to care for others.

We take bullying very seriously, and the animals are also utilised as a role-play aid in bullying situations. Students will often see things in a more empathetic approach if the scenario is based around an animal being bullied.

With our students, having natural distraction techniques at break times is key. If our students do not have the things to focus on within their break times, their behaviours can present then as challenging. Maintaining focus and engagement choices during their free time can enable them to stay grounded and reduce challenges. During break times, we promote extracurricular activities and ensure they are always available. These extracurricular tasks offer individual and peer-based options, to help develop social skills.

We regularly carry out team building activities, and do not carry out competitive based sports. Our adventure sport curriculum promotes non-competitive outcomes which allows the students to feel a reduction of pressure and frustration and ultimately allows them to enjoy the experience more. Our curriculum holds risks, and we help the students to see through risks the importance of looking out for one another. This is an important part of preparing for adulthood.

Students are aware that all staff members are there to support them. In some instances, we assign a set keyworker for those who need to be directed to one staff member in particular, and this is the person who the student can talk to on a regular basis. This approach allows students to see that they have someone there who wants to listen and help them, in the hope that they can learn such skills to care for others.

6. Careers Guidance

Careers guidance is an incredibly important part of student education, as it helps them to form decisions surrounding their future, whilst providing essential motivation to do their best.

We ensure that every individual student learns fundamental 'employability skills' such as interview role plays and CV preparation through the PSHE core curriculum. By doing this, students can set 'next steps' and raise aspirations which helps with their 'skills for growth'. In addition to this, we work closely with the Bromley Youth Service team (BYSP) who conduct our 'careers guidance and advice' along with student's individual boroughs career offers too. One of the members of the BYSP is on our director board and we have worked closely with them for a prolonged period providing support for our youth. The BYSP team are aware of the GATSBY guidance and are fully 'Connections Qualified'.

Providing our students with every chance of success to lead a prosperous future is very important within the ADO River Valleys ethos, it is part of our value-centered curriculum. Many of our students have been through traumatic experiences within previous school settings, and this is why we try as hard as possible to drive them to achieve their full potential and reduce the negative reminders from their past. We ensure that careers guidance covers a broad range of the opportunities which are available in wider society, it is good practice to encourage work experience and we ensure that our students can make

informed choices from amongst different sorts of careers that can be available to school leavers.

Within the first two weeks that a student first joins ADO River Valley, they meet with one of our pastoral team to start on their 'student profile and Individual Learner Plan (ILP)'. These meetings then follow on a minimum of every term thereafter. Within the meetings, students have support from specific staff members on goal setting, identifying skillsets and areas for development.

7. Therapeutic Tracking:

At ADO River Valley, we pride ourselves in treating emotional education as highly as academic education. We feel that without our mental health, academic aspects are more difficult to retail. With this in mind, our students access a 1:1 therapy intervention at least fortnightly, and they are also learning the model 'Zones of Regulation'. This model is delivered weekly.

8. Review

All ADO River Valley policies and procedures follow ITIL guidelines to ensure version control, change control and release management of any documents. As a matter of policy, documents can be updated at any time to reflect changes to ADO River Valley procedures, legal changes, OFSTED or Pearson directives or any other reason to ensure the policies and procedures are accurate and correct. This involves consultation with stakeholders and approval from the directors and governance committee. All policies and procedures are reviewed at the very least on an annual basis. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, text systems and through our website within the ADO Library is part of our Release Management.

9. Contact

This document was produced by the ADO River Valley Operations team. This version supersedes any previous versions and will be reviewed annually.

All correspondence with regard to this policy, or any other operational policy and procedure should be directed to the ADO River Valley by e-mailing education@adorivervalley.co.uk or calling 0208 855 6778, requesting to speak to the School Business Manager or in writing c/o School Business Manager, ADO River Valley School, 126 Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 3DP.