



Riverside Virtual College- Personal Development Policy

Legislation	Education/ Other
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Publication Date	July 2024
Review Frequency	Annually
Date of Last Review	September 26
Date of next review	September 27

1. Introduction

Personal Development (PD) at Riverside Virtual College (RVC) is an integral part of our curriculum and wider educational provision. It supports students to develop socially, morally, spiritually, culturally, physically and emotionally, while preparing them for further education, employment, adulthood and life within the wider community.

RVC is committed to providing a coherent and inclusive Personal Development programme that reflects the individual needs, abilities, experiences and circumstances of our students. As an online provision, we recognise the importance of ensuring that students develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and resilience required to keep themselves safe and make informed choices both **online and offline**.

Our Personal Development provision reflects the Riverside Virtual College ethos and core values of:

Honesty, Integrity and Respect (HIR).

The programme is delivered through planned Personal Development sessions, tutorials, assemblies, mentoring, curriculum opportunities, careers education, enrichment, student voice, pastoral support and appropriate external provision.

Personal Development is an entitlement for every student. RVC will monitor participation and take appropriate steps to ensure that students, including those with SEND,

disadvantaged students, students known to children's social care and those who experience other barriers to learning or wellbeing, are able to participate fully.

2. Policy Aims

The aims of the Personal Development curriculum are to:

- develop students' confidence, self-esteem and emotional resilience;
- develop students' ability to recognise, understand and manage their emotions;
- promote positive mental and physical health and wellbeing;
- develop students' understanding of healthy lifestyles and healthy relationships;
- enable students to recognise and respond appropriately to risks and safeguarding concerns;
- teach students how to keep themselves safe online and offline;
- develop students' understanding of online safety, social media, digital footprints, cyberbullying and online relationships;
- develop students' knowledge and understanding of child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, bullying and harmful behaviours;
- help students recognise risks associated with exploitation, including criminal and sexual exploitation;
- support students to recognise risks associated with domestic abuse and teenage relationship abuse;
- develop students' understanding of equality, diversity and protected characteristics;
- challenge racism, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping and faith-based prejudice;
- develop students' understanding of fundamental British values;
- develop students' character, including honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, empathy, resilience and tolerance;
- develop students' understanding of the rule of law and how laws and public institutions contribute to a safe society;
- promote democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect;
- develop students' ability to make informed decisions and solve problems;
- develop students' communication and interpersonal skills;
- develop students' aspirations and understanding of future opportunities;
- provide appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- develop employability and life skills;
- support students in preparing for further education, employment, training and adulthood;
- develop students' understanding of financial responsibility and economic wellbeing;
- provide opportunities for volunteering, charity work and contribution to the community;
- encourage students to participate in enrichment and wider experiences;
- promote student voice and enable students to contribute to the development of RVC;
- develop cultural capital and broaden students' knowledge and understanding of the wider world;
- support students to develop positive attitudes towards difference and diversity;

- promote responsible citizenship and active participation in society.
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3. Personal Development Curriculum

RVC's Personal Development curriculum is coherent, progressive and responsive to students' individual needs.

The curriculum includes, where appropriate:

- relationships, sex and health education (RSHE);
- mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- physical health and healthy lifestyles;
- safeguarding and keeping safe;
- online safety and digital citizenship;
- child-on-child abuse;
- bullying, cyberbullying and banter;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- domestic abuse and teenage relationship abuse;
- consent and personal boundaries;
- exploitation, including criminal and sexual exploitation;
- drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
- knife crime and personal safety;
- gangs and serious violence;
- radicalisation and extremism;
- Prevent awareness;
- honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
- equality, diversity and protected characteristics;
- racism and faith-based prejudice;
- fundamental British values;
- democracy and the rule of law;
- individual liberty;
- respect and tolerance;
- citizenship and participation;
- financial education and economic wellbeing;
- careers education and employability;
- preparation for adulthood;
- relationships and communication;
- resilience, confidence and self-esteem;
- decision-making and problem-solving;
- aspirations and goal setting;
- volunteering and charitable activities;
- cultural awareness and cultural capital.

The content will be age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and adapted to meet students' individual needs.

4. Safeguarding and Personal Development

Safeguarding is embedded throughout the Personal Development curriculum.

RVC recognises that Personal Development provides an important opportunity to teach students how to recognise risks, seek help and protect themselves and others.

Students will receive age-appropriate opportunities to learn about:

- abuse and neglect;
- child-on-child abuse;
- bullying and cyberbullying;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- domestic abuse and teenage relationship abuse;
- criminal and sexual exploitation;
- online exploitation and online harms;
- grooming;
- radicalisation and extremism;
- forced marriage;
- female genital mutilation;
- honour-based abuse;
- substance misuse;
- serious violence and knife crime;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- unsafe online relationships and contact with strangers;
- misinformation and harmful online content;
- the safe and responsible use of social media and technology.

The curriculum will also help students understand how and where to seek support.

RVC will ensure that students know:

- who they can speak to within the college;
- how to report a safeguarding concern;
- how to report concerns about another student;
- how to access appropriate external support;
- how to respond if they feel unsafe;
- that they should continue to seek help if their first disclosure does not result in the support they need.

All staff must follow RVC's safeguarding and child protection procedures when a concern is disclosed or identified.

The Personal Development curriculum does not replace RVC's safeguarding procedures. Any safeguarding concern identified through a lesson, tutorial, student voice activity or other PD activity must be dealt with in accordance with the college's safeguarding and child protection policy.

RVC follows the requirements and expectations set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.

5. Online Safety

As an online educational setting, online safety is a fundamental component of RVC's Personal Development provision.

Students will be supported to understand:

- how to use online platforms safely;
- appropriate online behaviour;
- privacy and personal information;
- digital footprints;
- social media;
- cyberbullying;
- online grooming and exploitation;
- inappropriate or harmful content;
- online relationships;
- scams and online fraud;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- reporting and blocking inappropriate contact;
- the risks associated with sharing images and personal information;
- responsible use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies;
- how to seek help if something online makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

RVC will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements in line with current DfE expectations.

Students will be reminded that the same expectations relating to respectful, safe and appropriate behaviour apply in the virtual environment as they do offline.

6. Relationships, Sex and Health Education

RVC provides an appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) programme as part of its Personal Development curriculum.

The programme will be delivered in accordance with the current Department for Education statutory guidance and will be age-appropriate and responsive to the needs of RVC students.

RSHE will support students to develop knowledge and understanding relating to:

- healthy relationships;
- respectful relationships;
- communication;
- consent;

- personal boundaries;
- friendships;
- online relationships;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- recognising unhealthy and abusive relationships;
- physical and mental health;
- puberty and physical development;
- sexual health;
- contraception and pregnancy;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
- emotional wellbeing;
- personal safety.

Teaching will be sensitive, inclusive and appropriate to students' age, maturity and individual circumstances.

RVC will consider students' SEND and individual learning needs when planning and delivering RSHE.

The RVC RSHE policy provides further detail regarding the curriculum, content, parental information and withdrawal arrangements where applicable.

7. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

RVC actively promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We aim to develop students who:

- have a strong sense of self and personal identity;
- understand right and wrong;
- understand and respect the law;
- take responsibility for their actions;
- demonstrate honesty, integrity and respect;
- show empathy and compassion towards others;
- appreciate diversity;
- understand different cultures, beliefs and perspectives;
- participate positively in their communities;
- understand their rights and responsibilities;
- develop confidence in expressing their views appropriately;
- respect the views and rights of others;
- develop an informed understanding of society and the wider world.

SMSC is embedded throughout the curriculum, college ethos and wider opportunities provided by RVC.

8. Fundamental British Values

RVC actively promotes the fundamental British values of:

- **Democracy**
- **The Rule of Law**
- **Individual Liberty**
- **Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Those with Different Faiths and Beliefs**

Students will be provided with opportunities to understand how these values operate within society and how they can contribute positively to their communities.

RVC will actively challenge behaviour, attitudes or opinions that promote discrimination, hatred, prejudice or intolerance.

Students will be encouraged to discuss issues respectfully and understand that different viewpoints can be explored within an environment that promotes safety, equality and respect.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

RVC is committed to providing an inclusive Personal Development curriculum that reflects the diversity of modern society.

Students will develop their understanding of:

- equality;
- diversity;
- inclusion;
- protected characteristics;
- prejudice and discrimination;
- racism;
- faith-based prejudice;
- stereotypes;
- respectful language;
- acceptance and tolerance;
- human rights.

RVC will actively challenge discriminatory language and behaviour.

Personal Development content and delivery will be adapted where necessary to meet the needs of students with SEND or other additional needs.

Reasonable adjustments and appropriate adaptations will be made to enable students to participate meaningfully in Personal Development activities.

10. Student Voice

Student voice is an important part of RVC's Personal Development provision.

Students will be given regular opportunities to:

- express their views;
- contribute to discussions;
- provide feedback on Personal Development activities;
- identify areas they would like to learn more about;
- contribute to college improvement;
- discuss safeguarding and wellbeing;
- participate in surveys, discussions and student voice activities.

RVC will use student feedback to review and improve the Personal Development programme.

Student voice activities may be delivered through live online sessions, tutorials, surveys, discussions, chat functions and other appropriate digital methods.

Where students raise safeguarding concerns through student voice activities, these will be managed through RVC's safeguarding procedures.

11. Careers Education

Careers education forms an important part of RVC's Personal Development programme.

RVC aims to ensure that students:

- understand the range of careers and employment opportunities available to them;
- develop realistic and aspirational career goals;
- understand the skills and qualifications required for different careers;
- challenge career stereotypes and misconceptions;
- understand different education, training and employment pathways;
- understand apprenticeships and technical education;
- develop employability skills;
- understand the importance of English, mathematics and wider transferable skills;
- develop CV, application and interview skills;
- understand workplace expectations;
- have opportunities to engage with employers and external organisations;
- receive appropriate careers information, advice and guidance;
- are supported to make informed decisions about their next steps.

RVC's careers programme will have regard to current DfE careers guidance and the updated Gatsby Benchmarks.

Careers provision will be appropriate to individual students' needs, aspirations and

circumstances.

RVC will particularly consider the needs of students with SEND and those who may face additional barriers to progression.

12. Enrichment, Charity and Volunteering

RVC recognises that personal development extends beyond formal lessons.

Students will be encouraged to participate in appropriate enrichment activities that broaden their experiences, develop interests and talents and build confidence.

Opportunities may include:

- enrichment activities;
- charitable activities;
- volunteering;
- awareness events;
- cultural activities;
- community activities;
- careers events;
- employer engagement;
- educational visits and experiences where appropriate;
- life skills activities;
- competitions and student-led activities.

Participation in enrichment will be monitored to ensure that students have equitable opportunities to benefit from the wider Personal Development programme.

13. Life Skills and Preparation for Adulthood

RVC will provide opportunities for students to develop practical skills that support independence and preparation for adulthood.

This may include:

- budgeting and financial awareness;
- cooking and healthy eating;
- personal organisation;
- time management;
- communication;
- problem-solving;
- decision-making;
- understanding employment;
- workplace expectations;
- independent living;

- personal safety;
- accessing community services;
- understanding rights and responsibilities;
- preparing for further education, training or employment.

The content will be adapted to reflect students' age, needs, abilities and future aspirations.

14. Curriculum Delivery

Personal Development will be delivered through a combination of:

- planned PD lessons;
- tutorials;
- assemblies;
- mentoring;
- pastoral support;
- RSHE;
- careers education;
- enrichment;
- life skills;
- curriculum-based opportunities;
- student voice activities;
- individual support;
- appropriate external provision.

As an online college, RVC will use appropriate digital platforms and teaching methods to ensure that students can engage effectively.

Teaching approaches may include:

- discussion;
- questioning;
- scenarios;
- case studies;
- role play where appropriate;
- quizzes;
- student voice activities;
- online polls;
- collaborative activities;
- videos and presentations;
- reflection activities;
- independent learning.

Ground rules will be established for sensitive discussions where appropriate.

Staff will ensure that students are treated respectfully and that discussions are conducted in a safe and supportive environment.

15. SEND and Individual Needs

RVC is committed to ensuring that Personal Development is accessible to all students.

The curriculum will take account of:

- EHCP outcomes and identified needs;
- SEND needs;
- communication needs;
- cognitive ability;
- emotional and social needs;
- individual circumstances;
- safeguarding concerns;
- students' prior knowledge and experiences.

Resources, teaching approaches and communication methods will be adapted where necessary.

Staff will work with relevant colleagues, parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate to ensure that students receive appropriate support.

16. Pastoral and Wellbeing Support

Personal Development is supported by RVC's wider pastoral provision.

Support may include:

- pastoral meetings;
- mentoring;
- wellbeing check-ins;
- targeted support;
- individual support plans;
- staff referrals;
- parent/carers referrals;
- safeguarding referrals;
- appropriate external professional support;
- signposting to specialist services.

Where a student's needs require specialist intervention, RVC will work with parents/carers and appropriate external agencies.

RVC recognises that staff delivering Personal Development are not necessarily trained therapists or counsellors and will ensure that students are appropriately referred where specialist support is required.

17. External Agencies and Professional Support

RVC values the contribution of appropriate external organisations and professionals.

Where appropriate, RVC may work with organisations and services such as:

- local safeguarding partners;
- police and community safety professionals;
- health professionals;
- educational psychologists;
- mental health and wellbeing services;
- careers professionals;
- specialist charities;
- safeguarding organisations;
- other appropriately vetted external professionals.

All external provision will be assessed for suitability and safeguarding considerations before being used with students.

External speakers and organisations will be expected to comply with RVC's safeguarding requirements and relevant college policies.

18. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Students may wish to discuss personal or sensitive matters with staff.

Staff will create an environment where students feel able to speak openly; however, students must understand that staff **cannot promise absolute confidentiality**.

Where a student discloses information that indicates they or another person may be at risk of harm, the information must be shared with the appropriate safeguarding professional in accordance with RVC's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Staff must never agree to keep safeguarding concerns secret.

Students will be informed, in an age-appropriate manner, about the limits of confidentiality and the circumstances in which information may need to be shared to keep them or others safe.

19. Staff Responsibilities

All RVC staff have a role in supporting students' Personal Development.

Staff will:

- model honesty, integrity and respect;
- promote positive relationships;
- reinforce consistent expectations;
- promote inclusion and equality;
- challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviour;
- reinforce safeguarding messages;
- promote safe online behaviour;
- support students' confidence and resilience;
- encourage students to make informed choices;
- identify concerns about students' wellbeing or safety;
- follow safeguarding procedures when concerns arise;
- contribute to the development of students' character and citizenship;
- support students' preparation for future education, employment and adulthood.

Staff must be familiar with relevant safeguarding policies and procedures and complete required safeguarding training.

20. Monitoring and Evaluation

RVC will regularly monitor and evaluate the Personal Development curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant, coherent, inclusive and responsive to student needs.

Monitoring may include:

- curriculum planning and mapping;
- student participation records;
- student voice;
- student feedback;
- lesson and tutorial observations where appropriate;
- work and evidence produced by students;
- enrichment participation;
- careers participation;
- safeguarding and pastoral themes;
- attendance and engagement information;
- student destinations and next steps;
- parent/carer feedback;
- staff feedback;
- review of incidents and emerging safeguarding themes.

Leaders will use this information to identify strengths, gaps and areas for development.

Participation will be monitored so that RVC can identify students who may be missing opportunities and take appropriate action.

The effectiveness of the curriculum will be evaluated through the knowledge, understanding, confidence, participation and development demonstrated by students rather than solely through written assessment.

21. Impact

The intended impact of the Personal Development programme is that students:

- understand and demonstrate the values of Honesty, Integrity and Respect;
- develop confidence, resilience and self-esteem;
- understand how to maintain positive physical and mental wellbeing;
- understand how to keep themselves safe online and offline;
- know how and where to seek help;
- understand healthy and respectful relationships;
- recognise inappropriate, harmful or abusive behaviour;
- understand equality, diversity and protected characteristics;
- challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes;
- understand fundamental British values;
- understand their rights and responsibilities;
- develop empathy, tolerance and respect for others;
- develop communication and decision-making skills;
- develop aspirations for their future;
- understand different education, employment and training pathways;
- develop employability and life skills;
- participate positively in their community;
- develop cultural capital;
- become increasingly independent and responsible;
- are prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.

22. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and at least annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements, inspection arrangements or the needs of RVC students.

The policy will be reviewed alongside relevant RVC policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety/E-Safety Policy;
- RSHE Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Careers Policy;
- Attendance and Engagement Policy;
- Complaints Policy.

23. Relevant Guidance and Legislation

This policy should be read alongside the most current versions of relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE);**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;**
- **Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People;**
- **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, effective from September 2026;**
- **Independent School Standards, current DfE guidance;**
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2025 and current inspection toolkits;**
- **Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers, updated June 2026;**
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where applicable;**
- **Equality Act 2010;**
- **Prevent Duty Guidance;**
- **DfE filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges;**
- relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures and guidance.

RVC will ensure that this policy is updated when relevant statutory guidance or legal requirements change.