

PSHE education character curriculum planning toolkit - FAQs

What is character education?

While not defining character for schools, the Department for Education has described it as a set of traits, attributes and behaviours such as: perseverance, resilience and grit; confidence and optimism; motivation, drive and ambition; neighbourliness and community spirit; tolerance and respect; honesty, integrity and dignity; conscientiousness, curiosity and focus. Amongst the many benefits of effective PSHE education to children and young people, is the role it plays in the development of character.

In this toolkit, we interpret 'character' to mean a robust set of skills and attributes that will enable children and young people to confidently face life's challenges and opportunities, now and in a fast-changing future.

What is the PSHE education character curriculum planning toolkit?

Developed through Department for Education (DfE) grant funding, the *PSHE education character curriculum planning toolkit* is a resource pack which aims to support PSHE practitioners in integrating character education within their PSHE programme. Our approach in developing these materials uses guidance from the DfE as a starting point. Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, has said that schools should be the ones to define "character" and should be central in creating their own programmes of study. The planning framework within the toolkit therefore shows how these teaching materials can be used together with the [PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education \(key stages 1-4\)](#) to plan or update your PSHE education schemes of work.

What's in the toolkit?

The toolkit comprises four sections:

Section 1: PSHE education character curriculum framework

The framework is organised into two 'character dimensions': 'Developing me' and 'Managing my relationships'. The dimensions are further divided into 'character aspects', such as self-awareness, values, resilience, interpersonal and social effectiveness, with 'managing risk' integrated throughout the other aspects. The framework identifies learning objectives for each character aspect for each year group.

Section 2: Character aspect development opportunities and learning outcomes

This section comprises two sets of grids: one for key stages 1 and 2 and one for key stages 3 and 4, containing guidance on how to meet the learning objectives identified in the character curriculum framework. They also provide suggested learning outcomes and key questions which, when applied to a PSHE education context (such as sex and relationships, anti-bullying, drug education or economic

wellbeing), will help you plan or update schemes of work for PSHE education that ensure an equal focus on skills and attributes alongside the subject knowledge and understanding.

Section 3: PSHE education character curriculum: Theoretical context and evidence base

This section explores the research evidence and resulting pedagogy of teaching an integrated programme of character education through PSHE education.

Section 4: PSHE education character curriculum: Practical guidance for delivery

This section explains how to use the toolkit and apply the underlying best practice principles in the classroom. It includes exemplar lesson plans and suggested resources to support delivery.

Why integrate character education within PSHE education?

Many schools are looking for ways of adopting a whole school approach to character education that includes a range of opportunities for pupils to develop character attributes and skills. Many of these will be through extra-curricular activities. But, in the same way that an effective whole school approach to safeguarding requires that all pupils are taught to keep themselves and others safe, an effective whole school approach to character education needs a curriculum context where all pupils can be taught about and develop these character skills and attributes in a planned, developmental way. Indeed, in February 2016, Nicky Morgan stated *'I want PSHE to be at the heart of a whole-school ethos that is about developing the character of young people'*.

Using the toolkit to help you adopt a skills and attributes-based approach to PSHE education will, in the same curriculum time, not only achieve the aims of character education but will also deliver the PSHE education subject content more effectively.

Hasn't PSHE education always aimed to develop these skills and attributes?

Yes! The established pedagogy of PSHE education has always been clear on the importance of developing skills and attributes alongside subject knowledge and understanding. But teachers often find this the hardest aspect of PSHE teaching. This toolkit provides planning materials that will make it easier to plan your PSHE education schemes of work in a way that achieves the right balance between skills, attributes, knowledge and understanding.

Where can I get the toolkit?

The toolkit is exclusively available to all PSHE Association members free of charge, via our website: www.pshe-association.org.uk/charactercurriculum

If you are not yet a member of the PSHE Association, you can sign up for a small yearly fee [here](#).

How do I use the toolkit?

The toolkit is designed to be used within the context of a comprehensive PSHE education programme and tailored to the needs of your pupils, local area and community.

The guidance itself offers some suggestions on how it can be implemented, including exemplar lesson plans and suggested resources but if you are a member of the Association please do contact us with queries or to discuss additional training needs.

What age group is the resource intended for?

The toolkit is designed for use with pupils in key stages 1–4 and includes planning grids and exemplar lesson plans for each of these key stages.