



Personal Development Policy

October 2025

Intent and Aims

At Birtley House we aim to support pupils to become the best possible version of themselves and to offer them a scope of opportunities. We aim to develop the whole child through a holistic approach focussing on nurturing the children to grow in all areas. We hope to prepare them for all aspects of life outside of Birtley House and equipping them with knowledge past the National Curriculum. Our Personal Development curriculum will highlight how we intertwine the British values into our school and curriculum as well as how we ensure children are developing spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Our children develop core values of: respect, kindness, teamwork, success and pride. Birtley House has always provided its pupils with a range of educational trips and out-of-school opportunities, priding itself on being inclusive for all. We provide these experiences through a carefully planned balance of curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Many pupils with SEND often are unable to attend a range of opportunities therefore our mission is to make all of our personal development curriculum inclusive so no child is not benefiting from these opportunities. Throughout the years we have provided our pupils with a host of opportunities to enable their confidence to grow and develop unique passions for future endeavours. Our curriculum's purpose is to prepare pupils for their adult lives and leave Birtley House much more rounded and developed individuals.

Birtley House Independent School is committed to meeting all statutory requirements for personal and development education. As an independent school, we provide Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) under the Independent School Standards. Our PSHE curriculum includes the statutory requirements for Relationships Education and, where appropriate, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), as set out in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. This policy was approved in October 2025 and will be reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with statutory guidance and best practice.

SMSC

Children's' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is integral to everything we do at Birtley House.

Spiritual – We allow children to explore a range of beliefs firstly through a well-planned RE curriculum as well as through a range of activities. We instil respect in the children while learning about a range of beliefs. We enable to children to develop their personal values and beliefs that make them who they are while praising children's creativity and imagination.

Moral – This area mainly relates to behaviour and children's' understanding of societal values and rules we follow to live our lives. From the beginning, children learn the importance of knowing right from wrong and how to regulate their own behaviour. We promote positive behaviour within our school through a range of ways which can also be seen in our Behaviour Policy.

Social – Children's social development is an area that is particular paramount at Birtley House as the majority of our pupils have a diverse range of social and communication needs. While we support our children in their needs within the classroom we also use our personal development curriculum to broaden their opportunities to develop in this area. We promote children's communication skills as well teamwork and relationship building skills.

Cultural – We aim to provide the children with diverse cultural opportunities which promote tolerance and respect for people from a range of backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs. We encourage our pupils to participate in different cultural activities to learn through a practical approach.

British Values

Birtley House teaches children the British Values explicitly while also using them as key values in all areas of our school life. We see the British Values as extremely influential and important to developing children holistically: Democracy; The Rule of Law; Individual Liberty; Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Those with Different Faiths and Beliefs.

Democracy – At Birtley House we embed democracy into decisions we make as a school so children can observe first-hand the benefits of listening to others while also having the right to share their opinion. We use elections to select School Council members as well as Head Girl and Head Boy. This reflects this specific British Value by valuing the importance of each pupil having their voice heard.

The Rule of Law – This British Value is mirrored in our school rules and expectations which are clearly explained and followed by the pupils of Birtley House. Through our Behaviour Policy our children are supported to know the difference between right from wrong and to follow the school rules. Children have also been visited by a range of visitors who have explained the importance of laws and how they are used to govern and protect us.

Individual Liberty – A common progress made by the children at Birtley House is their growth in confidence; this enables them to become more independent in making choices and decisions that affect themselves. We provide children with a safe environment where they can show initiative and be encouraged to seek different opportunities. All of our pupils are protected by our Safeguarding and Anti-bullying policy with a positive culture embedded throughout the school.

Mutual Respect – Respect is a key value of Birtley House and is extremely important to ensure all of our children feel safe and respected in our school. All our pupils have a range of Special Educational Needs and it is integral that all pupils show each other mutual respect. Staff teach the importance of mutual respect through the curriculum and children are very understanding of differences that make us unique.

Tolerance of Those with Different Faiths and Beliefs – Through the PSHE, RE and Enrichment activities children learn about a range of faiths and beliefs. Our diverse curriculum and activities ensure children are aware there are a range of differences to celebrate. Children begin to understand our culturally diverse society and how to respect the beliefs of others.

The British values are also carefully woven into our curriculum; it is easily identifiable from the long term plans how each British value can be intertwined with the topics taught within the classroom.

Term		Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Otters	Driver project	 Let's Explore	 Winter Wonderland	 Long Ago	 Ready Steady Grow	 Animal Safari	 Splash
	PSHE (FS1)	Being Me in My World	Celebrating Difference	Dreams and Goals	Healthy Me	Relationships	Changing Me
	PE Cycle A	Gymnastics & Dance	Travelling & Passing	Striking & Hitting	Attacking & Defending	Space	Athletics
British Value Links		Individual Liberty	Mutual respect Tolerance	Individual Liberty	The Rule of Law	Democracy Mutual Respect	Individual Liberty

Main theme		Autumn (History)			Spring (Geography)		Summer (History)						
Owls	Driver project		Movers and Shakers (Y2)			Coastline (Y2)			Magnificent Monarchs Y2)				
	Subject-specific projects	Geog (Y2)	Let's Explore the World			Covered in main project		Geography revision and retrieval practice					
		Science (Y2)	Human Survival		Habitats	Use of Materials		Plant Survival		Animal Survival			
		Art (Y2)	Exploring Colours		Still Life	Flower Head			Portraits and Poses				
		DT (Y2)	Remarkable Recipes			Beach Hut			Cut, Stitch and Join				
		RE (Y2)	Judaism		Festivals of Light	Islam			Christianity		Why are some things special?		
		PE Cycle A	Gymnastics & Dance		Travelling & Passing	Striking & Hitting		Attacking & Defending		Space		Athletics	
		Computing (Y1/2)	Y1 Bee-bots		Y1 Digital imagery	Y1 Introduction to data		Y2 Introduction to block coding		Y2 Stop motion		Y2 International space station	
		Music (Y1/2)	Y1: Dynamics (Seaside)		Y1: Sound patterns (Fairy Tales)	Y2: Call and Response		Y1: Musical Symbols		Y2: Contrasting Dynamics		Y2: Structure	
	PSHE (Y2)	Being Me in My World		Celebrating Difference	Dreams and Goals		Healthy Me		Relationships		Changing Me		
British Value Links		Democracy		Mutual respect		Individual Liberty		Mutual Respect		The Rule of Law		Individual Liberty	
				Tolerance						Democracy		Tolerance	

Main theme			Autumn (History)		Spring (Geography)		Summer (History)		
Badgers	Driver project			Invasion (Y4)		Misty Mountain, Winding River (Y4)		Ancient Civilisations (Y4)	
	Subject-specific projects	Geog	Interconnected World			Covered in main project		Geography revision and retrieval practice	
		Science	Food & the Digestive System	Sound		States of Matter	Grouping and Classifying	Electrical Circuits and Conductors	
		Art	Warm and Cool Colours	Warp and Weft		Vista	Animal	Statues, Statuettes and Figurines	Islamic Art
		DT	Fresh Food, Good Food			Functional and Fancy Fabric		Tomb Builders	
		RE	Judaism	Judaism and lifestyle and celebrations	Why do you judge me?		Christianity		
		PE Cycle A	Gymnastics & Dance	Travelling & Passing	Striking & Hitting	Attacking & Defending	Possession & Space	Athletics	
		Computing (Y3/4)	Y3 Networks and internet	Y3 Comparison cards databases	Y3 Journey inside a computer	Y4 Collaborative learning	Y4 Investigating weather	Y4 HTML	
		Music (Y3/4)	Y3: Creating a composition (Theme: Mountains)	Y4: Rock and Roll	Y3: Ballads	Y4: Haiku, music and performance	Y4: Changes in pitch, tempo and dynamics	Y4: Samba and Carnival sounds	
	PSHE	Being me in my world	Celebrating difference	Dreams and Goals	Healthy Me	Relationships	Changing Me		
British Value Links		The Rule of Law Democracy	Mutual respect Tolerance	Individual Liberty Tolerance	Mutual Respect	The Rule of Law Democracy	Individual Liberty		

Main theme			Autumn (History)		Spring (Geography)			Summer (History)			
Bats	Driver project			Maafa (Y6)		Frozen Kingdoms (Y6)			Britain at War (Y6)		
	Subject-specific projects	Geog	Our Changing World			Covered in main project			Geography revision and retrieval practice		
		Science	Circulatory System			Electrical Circuits and Components			Light Theory	Evolution and Inheritance	
		Art	Colour and Style	Trailblazers, Barrier Breakers		Inuit	Environmental Artists		Distortion & Abstraction	Bees, Beetles & Butterflies	
		DT	Food for Life			Engineer			Make Do and Mend		
		RE	Buddhism			Islam	Christianity & Judaism		The Journey of Life		
		PE Cycle A	Gymnastics & Dance	Travelling & Passing		Striking & Hitting		Attacking & Defending		Possession & Space	Athletics
		Computing (Y5/6)	Y5 Music	Y5 Stop motion animation		Y5 Search engines		Y6 Big data 1		Y6 Big data 2	Y6 Introduction to Python
		Music (Y5/6)	Y5: Looping & Remixing	Y5: Blues		Y6: Coast – Fingal’s Cave		Y5: Holi Festival		Y5: South and West Africa	Y6: Composing a Leavers’ song
	PSHE	Being me in my world		Celebrating difference		Dreams and Goals		Healthy Me		Relationships	Changing Me
British Value Links		The Rule of Law Democracy		Mutual respect Tolerance		Individual Liberty		Mutual Respect		The Rule of Law Democracy	Individual Liberty Tolerance

Relationship and Sex Education

At Birtley House we teach Relationship and Sex Education through PSHE sessions that are age-appropriate and evidence-based. Our programme is designed to help pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need for participation and success in later life. The children are taught:

- Families and people who care for me
 - Different types of families
 - Characteristics of a healthy family life
 - Recognising when family relationships are making them unhappy or unsafe
 - How to seek advice
- Caring friendships
 - How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure
 - Characteristics of a friendship include mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness and generosity
 - How to manage conflict and seek help
- Respectful relationships
 - Importance of respecting others
 - Stereotypes and why these can be unfair
 - Importance of permission-seeking
 - Practical steps to improve and support respectful relationships
- Online relationships
 - People can behave differently online
 - Rules and principles for keeping safe online
 - Recognising harmful content and contact online
 - Reporting concerns
- Being safe
 - Appropriate boundaries in relationships with peers and others
 - Concept of privacy and implications of it
 - Each person's body belongs to them
 - How to respond safely and appropriately to adults
 - How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe
 - How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others

Our children are given the space to discuss sensitive topics and feel safe to ask questions surrounding this topic. Our aim is to develop the whole child, through our PSHE sessions we hope to develop their understanding of relationships and changes that happen to them. More details about Relationship and Sex Education can be found in our Relationship and Sex Education Policy.

Enrichment Events and Assemblies

One aspect of our Personal Development curriculum is our enrichment events and assemblies; whole school assemblies are delivered every Monday by the Headteacher. Our enrichment events are special days and activities that we use to celebrate and further our knowledge on a range of topics. Below is a table listing our Enrichment Events and Assemblies for the academic year 2025 – 2026.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Enrichment Events	-Jeans for Genes Charity Fundraiser -Ireland Curriculum Day -Black History Month -Diwali -Movie Afternoon	-Spooky Day -Children in Need -Remembrance Day -Christingle -Christmas Play -Christmas dinner -Christmas Fayre	-Belgium Day -LGBTQ+ History Month	-World Book Day -Mother's Day -Red Nose Day -Easter Day	-Finland Day -Bowles and Activity Week -Crazy Hair and Sock Fundraiser -Year 6 Brands Hatch Visit	-Father's Day -Sports Day -Summer Fayre -Talent Show
Assemblies	-Jeans for Genes -European Day of Languages -Black History Month -World Mental Health Day -World Food Day	-Guy Fawkes -Anti-Bullying Week -Road Safety Week -Advent	-World Braille Day -Winnie-the Pooh Day -LGBT+ History Month -Safer Internet Day	-International Polar Bear Day -Mother's Day -Eid ul-Fitr -World Water Day	-St George's Day -VE Day	-World Environment Day -World Oceans Day -Father's Day

Curriculum Days – Across the year we organise 3 curriculum days which focus on a different country. We spend the whole day learning about the culture, language and celebrating different countries. Throughout these days we aim to develop the children's understanding of a range of countries and immerse them in multi-sensory activities to highlight key traditions and differences between other countries. So far we have celebrated curriculum days for: Ireland, Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden and Ukraine.

Fundraising Events – We share our fundraising events between our school PTA and charities we feel are close to our hearts. We are extremely grateful to have such a dedicated PTA who organise and support us in a range of fun activities for the children. These have included: movie afternoons, cake stalls and Mother's/Fathers' Day stalls as well as many more. On these days our children often love dressing up and expressing their individuality through their outfits.

Commemorative and Religious Celebrations – As part of our enrichment calendar we dedicate afternoons off timetable to celebrate commemorative months e.g. Black History Month or religious celebrations e.g. Diwali. We feel some celebrations require a more thorough exploration compared to our curriculum enhancement activities. We plan activities and tasks that allow children to explore the importance of these celebrations and to ensure they are aware of their significance.

Christmas Events – Our Christmas events include: Christmas Play, Christmas Dinner and Christingle. Auditions are held for parts of the Christmas play and all children are given a role; the play is then performed to our parents before the end of the Autumn term. Our Christmas play is always a great success and boosts the confidence of all our children. We also take all children to have a Christmas dinner at a local restaurant. This event always enables children to develop their social skills and communication skills while enjoying a Christmas dinner as a school. Another much loved event is Christingle which is delivered by St Edmund King and Martyr Church who we have a very close

relationship with. Christingle teaches children about a key event in the Christian calendar while being a memorable whole school event to celebrate Christmas.

Sports Day – Our Sports Day is held at Brands Hatch in the Summer 2 term. All children participate in Sports Day and it is a time when children can demonstrate great sportsmanship, teamwork and competitiveness. This event is much loved by the parents of Birtley House and is praised for its inclusivity.

Educational Trips and Visitors

At Birtley House we aim to enhance childrens' learning experiences with educational trips and visitors. Teachers plan educational trips based on the curriculum topics the children are learning in their classes; children often take part in a minimum of three educational trips a year. Our educational trips aim to deepen children's knowledge as well as progress their skills such as: social and communication skills. As well as participating in trips outside of the premises, we also have a selection of visitors come to visit the pupils at Birtley House. Our visitors come from a range of backgrounds and each aims to add some insightful knowledge to our pupils. We have had visits from: policemen, firefighters, African drummers, scientists and many more. This adds a unique learning experience for our pupils and ensures external learning opportunities are inclusive for all.

Every year our Year 5 and 6 children have the opportunity to attend a 3-day residential trip at Bowles Rocks, Tunbridge Wells. During this excursion, children have the opportunity to attempt a range of outdoor activities including: rock climbing, abseiling, kayaking and much more. This is a great experience for our pupils and is greeted with praise from parents in developing the whole child. Meanwhile the rest of the school take part in a range of activities within the school ground as part of Activity Week.

Curriculum Enhancements

To maximise our personal development curriculum we aim to enhance our typical lessons and activities with key dates, festivals and celebrations. Teacher's interlink their lessons and interventions with wider learning opportunities. For example, a reading comprehension session may have a text focussing on a famous astronaut to celebrate National Space Week. Below is a table to show all of the wider learning areas we integrate into our everyday curriculum.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Wider Learning Opportunities	-Space Week -Dyslexia Week -Invisible Disability Week	-Bonfire Night -Anti-Bullying Week -Road Safety Week -Hanukkah	-Safer Internet Day -Valentines Day -Lunar New Year -Ramadan	-Careers Week -Recycling Day	-St George's Day -VE Day	-D Day -World Cup

Clubs and Wider Opportunities

We are extremely lucky that the teachers at Birtley House are passionate about extra-curricular clubs, each lunchtime a different club is offered to all children. The clubs we offer are:

- Street Dance
- Board Game club
- Singing Club
- Signing Club
- Football club

Alongside these clubs we also try to offer further opportunities, these clubs have been a great starting point for making relationships in the local community. At Birtley House we have a great relationship with Dartford FC, they have offered us many opportunities to compete against local schools as a football team. Regardless of the needs of our children, all are included in these competitive and wider opportunities that allow our students to take part in hobbies and activities alongside local children.

Our personal development curriculum includes meaningful opportunities for pupils to prepare effectively for adulthood and life in modern Britain, and to acquire the knowledge they need to achieve and thrive in later life. We prepare our pupils for their future by:

- Career Week Activities
 - Visits from people in different professions to talk about their job
 - Activities exploring different career paths and what skills they require
 - Understanding the importance of education in achieving career goals
 - Developing aspirations and understanding that careers are open to them.
- Building Essential Skills
 - Communication and teamwork through group activities
 - Problem-solving and resilience through challenges
 - Independence and responsibility through classroom roles
 - Understanding the value of money
- Transition support
 - Visits to prospective secondary schools
 - Transition meetings and activities
 - Information about different types of secondary provision
 - Support for pupils and families
- Understanding the world of work
 - Learning about different jobs and careers
 - Skills and qualifications for different careers
 - Skills and qualification needed for careers
 - Importance of education and training
 - How interests and strengths might link to future careers

Pupil Well-Being

Our pupils' mental health and wellbeing is integral to all we do at Birtley House. Our children receive a large amount of support for their well-being through daily feelings activities and targeted interventions. Many of our children have additional social, emotional and mental health needs, therefore we are equipped and trained in supporting children with their emotional wellbeing. We promote openness and teach our children it is important to share our feelings, every day each class takes part in a feelings check-in. Zones of regulation are used across our school to support children in their feeling check-ins. Each classroom has an area dedicated to zones of regulation. Our children feel comfortable to share any concerns they may have with at least one member of staff at school. Staff are well-equipped to support pupils with their mental health and wellbeing and with the support of the DSLs we follow a very thorough safeguarding policy.

As part of our personal development curriculum, we teach pupils how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. Our programme is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including those who are victims of abuse and children with SEND. Our safeguarding education programme covers:

- Online Safety
 - The dangers of sharing personal information and impact of harmful content
 - Recognising online risks including inappropriate contact, harmful content and online exploitation
 - Understanding people may not be who they say they are
 - Reporting concerns and where to get help
- Recognising risks to wellbeing
 - Pupils are taught to recognise online and offline risks including: criminal and sexual exploitation; domestic abuse; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage; substance misuse; gang activity and radicalisation and extremism.

Our programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate, especially considering the needs of the children with SEND and disabilities and other vulnerabilities. Pupils understand what support is available and can access pastoral care when they need it. We ensure pupils know how to report concerns within school and to external services if they do not feel comfortable talking to school staff. All pupils know:

- Who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and how to contact them
- Other trusted adults they can speak to in school
- External support services available
- That they will be listened to, taken seriously and supported

Pupils can access pastoral care when they need it and know what support is available to them. Pupils can access support by:

- Speaking to their class teacher
- Speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Use the worry box system
- Speak to any trusted adult
- Parents/carers contacting school on their behalf

We work closely with parents, local authorities and other external agencies to strengthen pastoral support. We work closely with:

- Local authority SEND services
- Education and psychology services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Social care (where appropriate)
- Health professionals
- Virtual School Heads (for looked-after children)

Protected Characteristics

At Birtley House we have an extremely inclusive community built up between our directors, our staff, our children and our parents. We carefully consider the protected characteristics in all we do:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

To encourage inclusivity in our pupils we ensure we celebrate a range of events and develop pupil's understanding of equality and diversity. All pupils have a voice in our school and we model to the children how to respect and celebrate everyone.

At Birtley House, all of our pupils have a range of Special Educational Needs, it is integral that our personal development curriculum is accessible and beneficial for every child. Staff know how to identify and remove barriers to achievement for their pupils through effective curriculum design, formative assessment and adapting their practice to meet pupils' needs. Reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the personal development curriculum are well targeted, effective in reducing barriers and focused on pupils' long term success. We recognise that pupils' participating in enrichment opportunities may vary according to their needs and circumstances. Here are some of the steps we take:

- All trips and activities are risk-assessed with individual pupils in mind
- Appropriate staffing ratios maintained
- Adaptions are made to enable participation
- Alternative activities are provided where participation is not possible
- No child is excluded from opportunities due to their SEND

We recognise that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline, including being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying, communication barriers, and cognitive understanding challenges. We address this through:

- Enhanced monitoring and supervision
- Explicit teaching of social skills and friendship skills
- Support with understanding online content and risks

- Close liaison between class teachers, SENCo and DSL
- Extra pastoral support and attention
- Appropriate communication and support

Inclusion & Equal Opportunities

Birtley House promote equality of opportunity in every aspect of our school life. We ensure all areas of our personal development curriculum are inclusive. It is important to us that all extra-curricular and enrichment activities are available to all pupils as every child deserves to benefit from further learning opportunities. It is also part of our duty as we execute this personal development curriculum to our pupils that they understand the importance of inclusion. As part of our British values of 'individual liberty' and 'mutual respect', it is vital our students are aware of how this links to offering equal opportunities to all.

School Council and School Leaders

Another successful area of our personal development curriculum is our school council and school leaders, this demonstrates to our children the importance of 'democracy'. School councillors and school leaders are voted for and spend the academic year completing important work for our school. Our school council is made up of 4 students – one from each class across the school. Our school leaders are picked from the Year 6 students, we have one Head Boy and one Head Girl. This benefits our students and our school as children have the opportunity to experience leadership and teamwork skills. Throughout the year those chosen will plan and execute school events, represent our school in the local community and run fundraising events.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

To ensure our enrichment programme is continually evolving and improving we welcome feedback from all members of our school community. During activities and days we ask for feedback from the children and we also welcome valuable feedback from our parents. Staff also ensure they provide feedback through comments and questionnaires so our personal development curriculum is effective and impactful.

Leaders ensure the personal development programme is broad, coherently planned and suitable for the school's context. We monitor the effectiveness of our personal development curriculum through:

- Regular review of curriculum plans and resources
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Pupil voice activities and questionnaires
- Parent/carers feedback on enrichment events
- Analysis of behaviour and wellbeing data
- Tracking participation in clubs and activities
- Review of pastoral support interventions

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to the statutory guidance or school circumstances. The review process will include:

- Consultation with staff
- Consideration of pupil voice
- Parent/carers feedback

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TO BE REVIEWED: October 2026 or as needed

- Review of statutory guidance updates
- Analysis of impact data
- Governing body approval

October 2025