

Subject: Personal Development Studies

Curriculum Principles

By the end of their education, a student of PDS at Dixons Newall Green will:

Have the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.

Know how to stay healthy, safe and prepared for life and work in modern Britain.

Have the resilience and mental self-awareness to manage situations in a balanced and pragmatic way, with access to a toolkit of strategies, both within themselves and in their environment, to support them to navigate any challenges that may arise in their academic, personal and social lives.

Understand what healthy relationships look like and have knowledge and strategies to make informed decisions about how they interact with the people around them.

Know how and when to ask for help, and where to access support if they need it.

Our unifying sentence is The PDS department enables students to confidently navigate their academic, personal and social lives because they understand how to stay safe, healthy and resilient, and have the knowledge, skills and strategies to make informed decisions, seek support, and thrive in modern Britain.

- The PDS curriculum at Dixons Newall Green fits into the wider Personal and Community Development of our students by supporting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.

In order to achieve a true understanding of PDS, topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:

Topics are intelligently sequenced within a spiral curriculum that revisits key themes—such as relationships, health, citizenship, and careers—at age-appropriate stages to ensure relevance and depth of understanding. For example, students explore puberty and emotional regulation in Year 7, financial literacy and discrimination in Year 8, and complex societal issues like misogyny, addiction, and workplace readiness in Years 9–11.

PDS lessons are delivered in safe, respectful classroom environments that allow students to engage in meaningful discussions with their peers and trusted adults. This structure supports the development of resilience, autonomy, and mental self-awareness, while also addressing social disadvantage through scaffolding, literacy strategies, and inclusive content.

Through enrichment opportunities like Unifrog, First Give, Dream Team speeches, and student leadership, students connect their learning to real-world contexts and are empowered to climb their mountain to university, or a real alternative, and a great life.

- **The PDS curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students' knowledge and skills:**

As with all learning at Dixons Newall Green, PDS is designed around the most vulnerable learners. Within PDS lessons social disadvantage is addressed through key literacy skills, consideration of memory and retrieval through low stakes formative assessments and scaffolding. All students are supported in PDS through increasing and fading scaffolding in response to students' gaps based on assessment, 'teaching to the top' meaning that all students receive the same level with effective classroom management, as well as individual interventions and small group work where needed. PDS also contributes to the Cultural Capital of our students, through exposure of different beliefs, lifestyles and communities giving them the skills to become successful in the wider world.

- **We fully believe PDS can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons Newall Green:**

PDS at Dixons Newall Green plays a vital role in preparing students to lead fulfilling adult lives by fostering a lifelong love of learning, celebrating difference and inclusion, and equipping them to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Through a spiral curriculum that revisits key themes with increasing complexity, students build the autonomy to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, relationships and future pathways. For example, Year 7 students begin by exploring friendships, emotional regulation and citizenship, while Year 9 students tackle topics such as employability, financial safety and discrimination. By Year 11, students are engaging with advanced content including university options, workplace rights, and the impact of AI on jobs. The curriculum also supports students in understanding when and how to ask for help, with topics like mental health stigma, stress management and accessing support embedded across all key stages. Delivered in safe, respectful classroom environments, PDS is a core part of our safeguarding strategy and is enriched through initiatives like Unifrog, First Give, Dream Team speeches, and student leadership opportunities. These experiences empower students to see themselves as active contributors to society, capable of shaping their futures and climbing their mountain to university, or a real alternative, and a great life.



- **At KS3 and KS4, our belief is that homework should be interleaved revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low stakes quizzing and practice.**
- **Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice and guidance that students are exposed to:**

Opportunities are intentionally built into the PDS curriculum at Dixons Newall Green to connect students with the world of work and enhance the careers advice and guidance they receive. Across all key stages, students engage with topics such as employability, applying for jobs, understanding workplace rights, and financial literacy. For example, Year 9 students explore employer expectations and payment systems, while Year 10 students learn about mortgages, gambling, and managing money—essential life skills for future independence.

Careers Morning Meetings feature themes like 'Careers and the Climate', 'What makes a great communicator?', and 'Is AI a threat to our jobs?', helping students link classroom learning to real-world developments. The use of Unifrog across year groups supports personalised exploration of interests, skills profiles, and career pathways, including apprenticeships, T Levels, and university routes. Subject Spotlights introduce students to careers in fields such as engineering, humanities, and creative sectors, while drop-down days, external speakers, and trips provide authentic insights into vocational opportunities. These experiences ensure that students are not only informed but inspired to pursue ambitious futures, equipped with the knowledge and confidence to climb their mountain to university, or a real alternative, and a great life.

Curriculum Overview

All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge which will open doors and maximise their life chances. Below is a high-level overview of the critical knowledge children will learn in this particular subject, at each key stage from year 7 to Year 11, in order to equip students with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life

This table outlines the progression of knowledge, skills, and understanding across year groups in the Personal Development curriculum at Dixons Newall Green. It demonstrates how the spiral curriculum supports student development through revisiting key themes with increasing complexity.

| Year Group | Core Knowledge | Skills Developed | Understanding Deepened Through Spiral Curriculum |
|------------|--|---|--|
| Year 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puberty and emotional regulation - Citizenship and British values - Conflict management - Introduction to healthy relationships - Digital literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-awareness - Managing emotions - Respectful communication - Basic decision-making | Revisits themes like relationships, emotional health, and citizenship in later years with increasing complexity (e.g., discrimination, intimate relationships, political systems). |
| Year 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of parliament and monarchy - Discrimination (Equality Act 2010) - Finance and taxes - Body image and media influence - Active citizenship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical thinking - Understanding societal structures - Financial literacy - Empathy and inclusion | Builds on Year 7's citizenship and emotional health by introducing legal frameworks, media literacy, and deeper social awareness. |
| Year 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employability and applying for jobs - Workers' rights - Volunteering and crime awareness - Financial safety - Sexual health and harassment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career readiness - Personal responsibility - Risk awareness - Advocacy and resilience | Revisits financial literacy and relationships with real-world applications (e.g., job applications, employer expectations, contraception). |
| Year 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law and voting systems - Managing money and mortgages - Gambling and addiction - Healthy and intimate relationships - Workplace expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informed decision-making - Autonomy - Evaluating risk - Preparing for adult responsibilities | Deepens understanding of legal, financial, and relational topics introduced in earlier years, with a focus on independence and future planning. |
| Year 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University, apprenticeships, and T Levels - CV writing and interview prep - AI and the future of work - Mental health and exam stress - Online safety and spending | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career planning - Self-regulation - Seeking support - Navigating adult life | Consolidates all prior learning into practical, future-focused knowledge and skills, preparing students for post-16 pathways and adult life. |

