



ORWELL PARK SCHOOL
Nacton, Ipswich IP10 0ER

**Life Skills Policy
(PSHCE)**

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Foreword

At Orwell Park School, students are helped to develop lively, enquiring minds and to be positive about what they can achieve. They are encouraged to become adept at dealing with others because they value the worth of everyone in the community and know the importance of caring and co-operating as well as competing. They have clear personal goals and are aware of the needs of others as well as their own. They are willing to put others first and have a good understanding of Christian values. But, above all, they leave us with a deep respect and love of diversity as well as a natural curiosity towards other cultures.

Introduction

Aims and objectives

Personal, Social, Health Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCE) is known as Life Skills at Orwell Park. It is a wide and all-encompassing subject that helps to equip pupils with the knowledge, life skills and general understanding that they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens.

All pupils are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences across and beyond the curriculum, contributing fully to the life of our school and the communities that they interact in. In doing so they learn to recognise their own worth, work well with others and become increasingly responsible for their own learning and personal development. They reflect on their experiences and understand how they are developing personally and socially, tackling many of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues that are an integral part of growing up. They also find out about the main political and social institutions that affect their lives and about their responsibilities, rights and duties as individuals and members of communities. They learn to understand and respect our common humanity, diversity and differences so that they can go on to form the effective, fulfilling relationships that are an essential part of life and learning.

To ensure pupils' personal, social and emotional development we aim to create a friendly, supportive atmosphere, where all are valued and encouraged, positive relationships are seen as important and there is a safe and secure school environment which is conducive to teamwork and independent learning.

Links to Other Policies

Other whole school policies contribute to the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. In particular:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have an entitlement to access the Programme of Study at an appropriate level. The “thumbs up thumbs down” feedback method encourages students to signal to their teacher how much (or how little) they benefit from the programme on offer. The “no hands up policy”, which is actively encouraged across the whole department, gives further opportunity for full class participation. The Equal Opportunities topic itself is tackled as part of the Years 6, 7 & 8 Programme. For further details, see Schemes of Work.

Helping Children Achieve More (Every Child Matters)

Following the 2004 white paper on children's services, the schemes of work for Life Skills were adapted to include teaching and learning materials that help students to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being.

Multicultural Statement

Though Orwell Park School has a Christian statement, members of other faiths attend the school and are encouraged to share their experience of the culture(s) that they grow up in.

Life Skills naturally relates to studying links with other cultures and these are developed whenever possible.

Each lesson centres on the concepts of acceptance, tolerance and the respect of each individual in a multi-cultural society.

Teaching PSHE and citizenship to children with special needs

We teach PSHE and citizenship to all children, regardless of their ability. As Life Skills is not a lead subject, it is set against a variety of subjects, depending on timetabling needs for each academic year. Lessons mean to provide each student with an appropriate challenge through careful selection of engaging resources. When teaching Life Skills and citizenship, we take into account the targets set for the children in their Individual Education Plans.

Safeguarding

Staff have guidelines for dealing with sensitive and controversial issues and confidentiality (these are explained in the Staff's Handbook) and have received training on this issue. The Deputy Head, Pastoral is the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The School Council

School Councillors are elected by their peers and assume their role for a whole academic year.

The School Council meets regularly to discuss items raised by the pupils. Many classes have suggestion boxes and pupils bring sensible suggestions to the meeting: a preparation meeting always precedes a meeting with the Headmaster, who meets the School Council twice per term. An agenda is agreed at the preparation meeting and discussed during each meeting with the Headmaster. Minutes are then produced and displayed on the School Council Notice Board in the Main Corridor. The minutes are discussed at SMT and appropriate action is taken to address the issues identified by the pupils.

The School Council liaises closely with the Boarders' Forum and the Pupils' Catering Committee to ensure that all pupils have a voice.

The Council organise charity events throughout the School Year and strive to make a difference in and around the school.

Departmental Handbook

School Curriculum and Schemes of Work

Though opportunities exist throughout the curriculum for promoting pupils' personal, social, economical and emotional development, pupils in Years 3-8 receive one Life Skills lesson a week. Year 6 pupils also receive one lesson of Philosophy for Children. Year 7 Potential Scholars receive two lessons of Life Skills and General Studies, which are complemented by one prep per fortnight. The Year 8 Scholarship set receives one General Studies single lesson and one prep per week.

Cross-curricular opportunities arise on a near daily basis and a variety of topics, such as teamwork, bullying and diversity are tackled as they arise.

Schemes of Work are available for all year groups on the extranet:

<http://extranet.orwellpark.co.uk/departments>

Though the Pre-Prep operates its own Life Skills policy, a close liaison is kept with the Head of Life Skills to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of teaching between both departments.

Currently the promotion of Life Skills throughout the school curriculum is successfully complemented by a number of activities/events:

- Assembly time
- Tutor Time
- Class circle time
- Special events as required (e.g. period talk in Year 6)
- Indirect teaching as situations arise
- Cross curriculum teaching i.e. Literacy/Life Skills
- Special school events e.g. fund-raising events, interaction with the local community, visits by school
- External speakers
- In Science, related topics dealing with the human body address many of the issues stated in the N.C. guidelines
- The School Council Meeting –representatives from each year group formally meet once a week as a group and twice a term with the Headmaster.
- Leavers' course for Year 8.

General Studies

General Studies is a programme which runs alongside the Life Skills provision and is aimed at academic potential scholars. It seeks to equip pupils with the skills required to prepare for their academic scholarship attempts.

The programme is tailored to meet the needs of every cohort and its focus therefore changes slightly according to senior school destinations.

The following topics are however covered with each cohort, over the two-year period.

- Current Affairs
- Interview Skills
- Lateral Thinking and initiative exercises
- Exam Preparation and Study Skills
- Essay Skills
- Debating Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Self-review and personal target plan.
- Philosophy for Children tasks

On top of the topics above, sample General Studies papers from senior schools such as King's Canterbury and Eton are covered with all pupils, regardless of their senior school destination. This is because these papers give pupils the opportunity to practise the above skills and to put them in the context of external examinations.

Lesson plans are reviewed weekly. Sample lesson plans are available from the Extranet.

Philosophy for Children

P4C is about getting children to think and communicate well; to think better for themselves. Children are taught how to create their own philosophical questions. They then choose one question that is the focus of a philosophical enquiry, or dialogue. For example the question might be 'is it ever ok to steal? The teacher, as facilitator, supports the children in their thinking, reasoning and questioning, as well as the way the children speak and listen to each other in the dialogue. After the enquiry the children and facilitator reflect on the quality of the thinking, reasoning and participation, and suggest how they could improve, either as individuals or as a group (community).

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Monitoring and Evaluation of Programme of Study and Teaching

This is an on-going process. Initially class teachers monitor and evaluate their teaching and schemes of work for Life Skills, altering and updating as necessary. The Life Skills coordinator monitors book marking and report writing termly. Annually the Life Skills coordinator monitors classroom teaching and lesson plans to ensure suitability and progression. There are formal lesson observations and departmental support meetings once a year.

The Headteacher receives feedback from this exercise as part of the appraisal system.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is a key component of Life Skills teaching. Objectives are announced at the beginning of each lesson and regular group work, circle time sessions and reflection time provide ideal opportunities for group, peer and self-assessment. Each lesson has specific objectives with realistic differentiated outcomes.

Teachers regularly monitor progress against objectives and team meetings ensure that teachers also self-evaluate their teaching methods, as well as the relevance of each programme of study. Pupils are asked for feedback on a regular basis and a formal questionnaire is issued at the end of each academic year encouraging students in Years 6-8 to identify which lessons they benefited from the most.

In end of term reports, teachers highlight areas in which pupils need to make progress to encourage them to take the lead in deciding how they may improve.

Monitoring, Recording and Reporting of Pupils' Progress

As with any learning process, assessment of pupils' personal, social and emotional development is important. It also provides information, which indicates pupils' progress and achievement and informs the development of the programme.

Pupils do not pass or fail within any given area but they have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences and to set personal goals and agree strategies to reach them. The process of assessment has a positive impact on pupils' self awareness and self-esteem.

Teachers assess the children's work in Life Skills and citizenship both by making informal judgments as they observe them during lessons and by assessing effort against the school's own ARR policy. They have clear expectations of what the pupils should know, understand and be able to do by the end of each key stage. These expectations are set out in the course statements used for reporting by teachers twice yearly. We do not set formal examinations in Life Skills and citizenship.

Good oral or written work is rewarded by Good Marks or Send-Ups.

Careers Guidance

Orwell Park School seeks to give pupils the means to make well-informed choices about their future. Much of the work in Life Skills lessons and tutor time is designed to help them to consider the world of work, their own personality, strengths and skills, the things they enjoy and the way in which they make decisions.

By the end of Year 8, pupils should:

- Begin to know what strengths and skills they have and how they can be used.
- Be aware of the programme of GCSE options open to them and the importance of selection of said options

- Know how to use the Direct.gov website and other relevant websites, including Orwell Park's Life Skills website to access information about choosing a career path.
- Be able to use the Direct.gov website to access information about getting ready to apply for a university place and/or a job.
- Have had opportunities to record their achievements, set targets for their future and complete a personal statement, as part of the Year 8 Leavers' Programme.
- Have had the chance to meet at least one professional to discuss career choice and continual professional development.

Leavers' Course

In the Summer Term of Year 8, pupils attend a series of lectures and workshops aimed at equipping them for the move to a Senior School.

The Leavers' Course usually consists of much of the following:

- A Drug talk, given by an established Speaker (currently Peter Hall).
- A First Aid session, organised by the School Nurse and the Head of Boarding.
- A talk on Life at Senior School, given by a guest speaker from a local senior school.
- A talk on mental health and well-being led by Dick Moore;
- A day of Community Service; practical work within the local community.
- A Sports Leaders' Day; organising a day of sport for the local primary schools during which pupils will need to demonstrate communication and leadership skills.
- Career talks given by parents and past pupils.
- A Technology Challenge in which pupils have to work as a team to complete a practical task.
- Learning a variety of life skills, such as how to change a tyre and cook a healthy meal.
- The Leavers' Project. An opportunity for independent study in which pupils produce a project based on an interest of their own.

The Head of Life Skills coordinates all the events, which take place in the last three weeks of the Summer term, after Common Entrance exams.

Approaches to teaching and learning

To facilitate pupils' learning in Life Skills, teachers should ensure that:

- The aims and objectives of each lesson are made clear.
- Appropriate learning experiences are planned and meet the needs of every child.
- Learning experiences draw on pupils' own experiences or existing knowledge and provide a range of opportunities for pupils to learn, practise and demonstrate skills, attitudes and knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect, consolidate and apply their learning in their own life.

- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to assess their own progress.
- Attention is given to developing a safe and secure classroom climate.

The Head of Department, in close partnership with her colleagues should ensure that:

- Staff training needs are met –such needs may be identified through Self-Evaluation, Peer Observation, Appraisal by SMT or Subject monitoring by HOD

Visitors to School

The school leads the Life Skills programme but outside visitors have a role.

- There are regular visits by members of Christian organisations and charities to lead assemblies.
- Previous members of staff and former pupils and parents are encouraged to come back to conduct lectures on a variety of subjects.
- The School Nurse is consulted as appropriate and helps in or leads some sessions on Puberty and Sexual Health (Years 6-8).
- Visitors wear a name badge and are accompanied/supported by a member of staff.
- The need for confidentiality is discussed and agreed upon before a visitor takes the lead in any organised event.

Celebration of Achievement

Good classwork is rewarded in accordance with the school's ARR policy.

Celebrating achievement contributes to building pupils' self-esteem, developing a sense of community and belonging, helps create a positive atmosphere in the school and develops pupils' sense of pride.

Achievement is celebrated:

- In class as appropriate
- In House Assemblies
- In Whole School Assemblies
- During tutorial sessions
- At Prize Giving ceremonies
- During church services

Resources

General reference materials are kept by the HOD. These materials are kept in Room B101. Teachers are given free access to material appropriate to their year group and are encouraged to provide/suggest new materials. Additional resources are available in the library. There is an adequate annual budget.

A list of resources is regularly updated by the HOD.