



The Henslow School

Personal Skills Policy

Introduction

Personal skills refers to all of the skills which compliment academic knowledge and are required for successful adult functioning. The Department for Education has referred to this as character education (2019).

At the Henslow School we have drawn guidance from some tried and tested strategies, as well as Government guidance, bringing these together to create our own overview of the skills and capabilities we are trying to promote in our young people for successful adult functioning. These include:

- Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)
- Personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS)
- Social moral, spiritual and cultural development
- Emotional literacy for resilience
- Independence
- Organisational skills and metacognition
- British Values

Our resulting personal skills programme is delivered through the following elements of our school timetable/curriculum;

- Subject lessons
- Personal skills lessons once a week
- Tutorial sessions
- Personal Social and Health education lessons
- Project sessions
- Project days
- Student council and charity events.

An explanation of each element of our Personal Skills Programme:

Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)

In 2007 the National Strategy published a document to support schools to deliver and promote SEAL, identifying these skills as vital in underpinning effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all. At the Henslow School we have found the structure and descriptions of these elements useful to guide our work and assess student progress.

The elements that make up SEAL are:



Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

The legacy National Curriculum identified PLTS as “a framework for describing the qualities and skills needed for success in learning and life” again we have found these to be a useful summary of the skills we hope to develop in our learners for adult and working life. The skills are:



Emotional Literacy

Emotional Literacy is the term used to describe the ability to understand and express feelings. This is a vital skill to managing social situations and relationships as well as self-regulation. At the Henslow School, emotional literacy focuses on exploring different feelings, how they present and how to manage them, including using role play to help young people explore social situations. With greater emotional literacy comes resilience because it allows young people to talk out their issues rather than act out. Resilience is a vital area for development for our young people and the development of their self-esteem and self-confidence underpins the growth of this resilience.

Social Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development

Spirituality:

Promoting and evaluating pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" March 2004 offers considerable discussion in an attempt to define spirituality, with a recognition that it means different things for different people, often based on their faith/lack of faith. The definition offered and which is accepted by the Henslow School is;

"Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view, either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupil's 'spirit'. Some people may call it the development of a pupil's 'soul'; others as the development of 'personality' or 'character'.

And moreover if a student lacked spirituality;

'Without curiosity, without the inclination to question, and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, young people would lack the motivation to learn, and their intellectual development would be impaired. Deprived of self-understanding and potentially the ability to understand others, they may experience difficulty in co-existing with neighbours and colleagues to the detriment of their social development. Were they not able to be moved by feelings of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world we live in, or the power of artists, musicians and writers to manipulate space, sound and language, they would live in an inner spiritual and cultural desert'.

In school spiritual provision should allow;

- Space for students to reflect on their own beliefs
- Knowledge of and respect for others' beliefs
- Fascination in learning about the world around them
- Opportunity to use their imagination and creativity
- Willingness to be reflective

Morality

"Moral development is about the building, by pupils, of a framework of moral values which regulates their personal behaviour. It is also about the development of pupils' understanding of society's shared and agreed values. It is about understanding that there are issues where there is disagreement and it is also about understanding that society's values change. Moral development is about gaining an understanding of the range of views and the reasons for the range. It is also about developing an opinion about the different views. "

In school moral provision should allow;

- Space for students to explore their understanding of right and wrong
- The development of tolerance

Social Development

“Social development is about young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together. It is about functioning effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. It involves growth in knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects. This includes understanding people as well as understanding society’s institutions, structures and characteristics, economic and political principles and organisations, roles and responsibilities and life as a citizen, parent or worker in a community. It also involves the development of the inter-personal skills necessary for successful relationships”.

In school social provision should allow;

- Students to use a range of skills in different social contexts
- Engagement with the community
- Engagement in British values so they can demonstrate the skills and attitudes to participate fully in modern Britain.

Cultural Development

“Cultural development is about pupils’ understanding their own culture and other cultures in their town, region and in the country as a whole. It is about understanding cultures represented in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is about understanding and feeling comfortable in a variety of cultures and being able to operate in the emerging world culture of shared experiences provided by television, travel and the internet. It is about understanding that cultures are always changing and coping with change. Promoting pupils’ cultural development is intimately linked with schools’ attempts to value cultural diversity and prevent racism”.

SMSC development is a vital element of our school curriculum and appears through subject lessons and PSHE in particular but also right across the curriculum and we will use displays and posters to promote this area appropriately. The school is committed to promoting the SMSC values outlined in the 2014 guidance from the Department of Education.

In school cultural provision should allow;

- Students to develop an understanding of how a wide range of cultural influences have shaped their own heritage
- An appreciation of cultures in school and further afield
- Students to develop an understanding of the things we share in common across cultures
- The development of knowledge around democracy

- A willingness to participate in sporting, artistic and musical opportunities
- Students to develop an interest in exploring different faiths and cultures

Promoting British Values:

Schools are required to promote British Values with the expectation that students will be given opportunities to develop;

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

At the Henslow School we recognise that these are complex ideas and will therefore need to be adapted and woven into our curriculum at an age appropriate/developmentally appropriate level.

Independence

Many of our learners arrive without the self-confidence and self-esteem or skills to learn independently, it is therefore our aim to develop independence to create lifelong learners.

Organisational and metacognitive skills

Our young people have often lived in chaotic environments or experienced a world which constantly changes, as a result they often have poorly developed organisational skills which negatively impact on their learning. We aim to support our students to improve their organisational skills to increase their chances of success in post 16 environments. Our students need to develop an understanding of how they learn best as an individual and develop methods and techniques to maximise their own performance.

Assessing Personal Skills

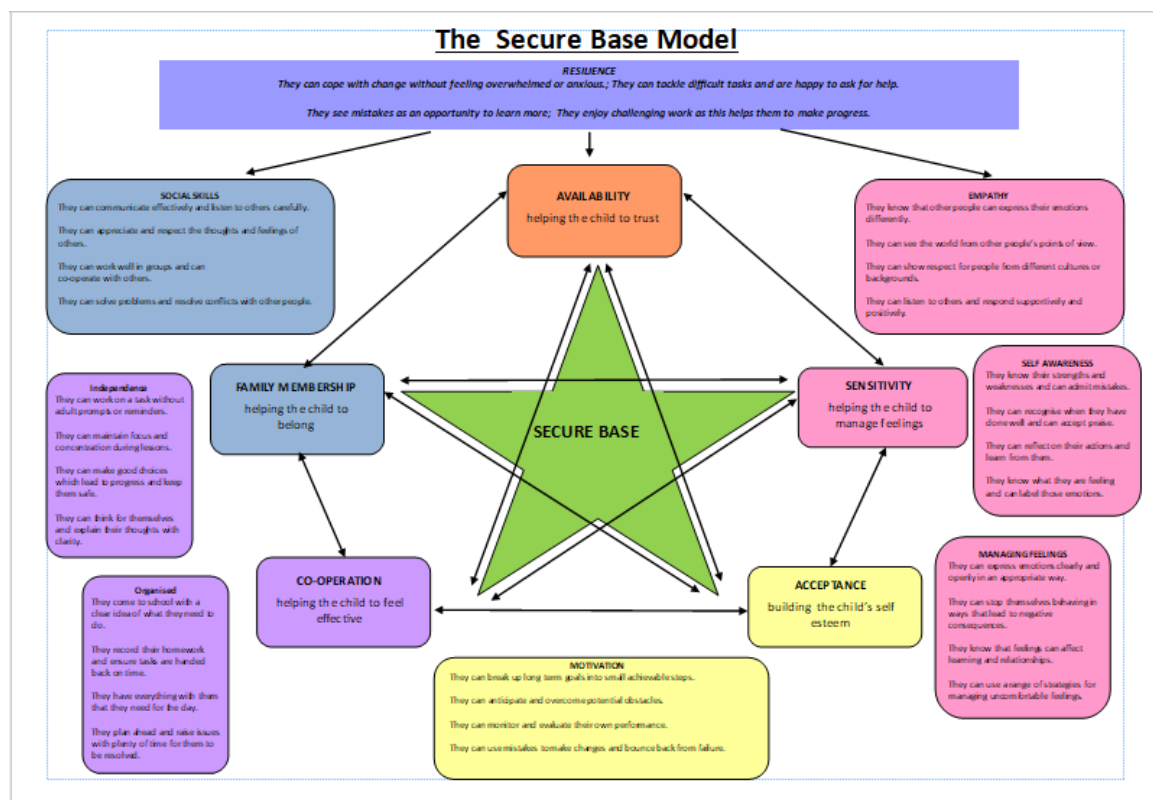
The Henslow School values the development of personal skills alongside academic skills and knowledge because they are inextricably woven together and can not exist in

isolation. We will therefore assess students' personal skills as well as assessing academic progress. This is necessarily a subjective process because it requires an assessment of values, attitudes and skills which are difficult to measure. The school has developed a range of descriptions to guide teachers to assess personal skills and these along with a system for averaging out different teachers' assessments provides a reasonably robust way to consider student progress.

The school regularly carries out audits of its SMSC curriculum content and will identify areas for development over the following academic year. We will continue to review and improve our personal skills programme.

Secure Base

Our therapeutic team use Secure Base as a model which underpins conversations and approaches to supporting a young people. Since care, education and therapy work closely to support each young person we felt it important to map our provision onto the Secure Base Model to ensure a joint understanding.



Last Reviewed	August 2025
Next Review due	August 2028
Reviewed by	Head Teacher and Personal Skills lead