

The Secondary Character Curriculum at AJK

Why should all students learn about character?

The Character curriculum is one of the most important undertakings of our school, as it works alongside our academic curriculum to encourage students to think deeply about their society and become active and critical participants in the world around them. As well as this, topics are sequenced to ensure students learn how to interact safely and empathetically both online and in person, gradually and sensitively introducing students to the more difficult topics of today's political landscape.

All units place a firm focus on real life skills, be that online safety, substance abuse, consent or a wide range of others, and these are sequenced to increase challenge and ensure memory over the course of five years. Emphasis is put on the RSE statutory content, which is placed to ensure that topics are both challenging and age-appropriate for all students.

What is the core knowledge in your subject?

RSE Content:

- What healthy friendships, working relationships, intimate relationships and other committed relationships look like.
- How healthy relationships can benefit mental wellbeing and self-respect.
- How to identify when relationships are unhealthy or abusive and how to access support
- Contraception, developing intimate relationships, resisting, and not applying, pressure to have sex.
- What is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.
- Safer sex and sexual health (including LGBTQ+ relationships)
- Facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity.
- The law relating to sex, including the age of consent, what consent is and is not
- The definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.
- Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse.
- FGM – including the physical and emotional damage it can cause, and how to access support.

Well-being Content:

- The impact of puberty on pupils' health and wellbeing.
- The steps pupils can take to support their own health and wellbeing.
- The benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition, and strategies
- Information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs and alcohol, and information about effective interventions.
- The impact of time spent online, the positive aspects of online support and how to negotiate social media, online forums, and gaming.
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What do students do with their knowledge to demonstrate proficiency?

Due to the nature of the subject, Character is not a curriculum that can be traditionally assessed. Students demonstrate proficiency in the topics through respectful class discussion and debates, and written work exploring their perspectives on different issues. Character is largely about developing empathy and resilience, as well as life skills such as discussion, clear communication, and respectful disagreement. Therefore, students can demonstrate proficiency in these skills in Character sessions, around the school itself and in their wider community. Understanding of technical topics, such as the political spectrum, are measured by tutors in-session, using quizzes, writing tasks and a large range of activities. Tutors are able to feed back to me frequently if they feel there are any significant gaps for certain groups, or if there is a need for Character to adapt for a year group to become more proficient.

Character Curriculum Content Overview						
	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Year 7	What is character?	Community	E-Safety	Democracy	Media Literacy	Puberty and Hygiene
Year 8	Self-Discipline	Happiness	First Give Programme	First Give Programme	Sexual Health and Relationships	Aspirations
Year 9	Identity and Diversity	Changing Relationships	Financial Literacy	Financial Literacy	Global Conflict	Shaping our Futures
Year 10	Adapting to the Wider World	Political Extremism	Post-16 Options	History of Education	Leadership and Education	
Year 11	RSE	Post-16 Options	RSE			
Year 12	VESPA Study Skills	Barclays Student Finance	RSE	Post-18 Options	Personal Statements	Employability
Year 13	Big Ideas: Leading Discussions	Professionalism	Next Steps	Financial Literacy		