

Promoting Personal Development Policy



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE



Partnership Learning

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1. Introduction

Personal development at Riverside Bridge School is the cornerstone of our mission to educate the whole child. We recognise that for our pupils- many of whom experience complex communication, cognitive, sensory, and emotional needs - academic success cannot exist in isolation. True achievement is measured through confidence, resilience, independence, meaningful relationships, and a deepening understanding of self and the world. Personal development is, therefore, not a programme or an initiative; it is the defining purpose of our curriculum, culture, and community.

This policy sets out our comprehensive and strategic approach to personal development. It goes beyond statutory expectations to articulate how Riverside Bridge School empowers every learner to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally, physically, and spiritually. It unites curriculum, enrichment, family engagement, culture, leadership, and future preparation under one guiding philosophy: that every child deserves not just to be educated, but to be prepared for a life of dignity, belonging, curiosity and contribution.

At Riverside Bridge School, personal development is lifelong learning. It begins with emotional safety and communication, evolves into identity and self-advocacy, and culminates in independence, citizenship, ambition and contribution to society. It is rooted in our belief that every pupil, regardless of need, diagnosis, or starting point - has potential, voice, and purpose.

2. Aims of the policy

Through this policy, Riverside Bridge School aims to:

- enable every pupil to develop self-awareness, emotional security and inner resilience;
- support pupils to develop the school values of respect, resilience, and responsibility into all aspects of personal development;
- promote independence, decision-making and responsibility appropriate to developmental level;
- foster positive relationships, respect for others and active participation in community life;
- provide meaningful exposure to culture, creativity, diversity and personal interests;
- enable pupils to participate in a range of enrichment projects that strengthen their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development;
- equip pupils with life skills, confidence and ambition for their next steps into adulthood;
- recognise and celebrate personal growth, achievement and individual strengths in every pupil;
- Support pupils to work towards external accreditation in personal development, recognising their achievements formally.

Personal development is not time-bound to lessons; it extends across the school day, through transitions, social interactions, enrichment, home partnerships and community engagement

3. Our Philosophy & Educational Principle

We do not view personal development as the responsibility of one subject or one department. It is the responsibility of every adult, every environment, every interaction. Our pupils develop as individuals not only through lessons but through daily routines, transitions, sensory regulation, peer modelling, visits, celebrations, failures and re-attempts, friendships and community engagement. Our commitment is to provide a school life rich with joy, challenge, choice and opportunity.

Personal development is therefore embedded in:

- curriculum design (flow pathways and subject stems)
- relational practice (Zones of Regulation, pupil voice)
- strategic culture (our five drivers: Self, Community, Culture, Wonder, Future)
- enrichment and real-world experience (Cultural Capital, Duke of Riverside, Careers, Work-Related Learning)
- leadership and governance (Personal Development Champions and SLT oversight)

We commit to an evolving, reflective and deeply personalised model that recognises that development is non-linear and unique to each pupil. We prioritise readiness over age, equity over equality, capability over compliance, and voice over silence.

4. Equal Opportunities

Riverside Bridge School is committed to providing equal access to all personal development opportunities regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, or background. Activities and projects are differentiated to ensure every pupil can engage meaningfully.

5. Guiding Framework: The Five School Drivers

Our approach to personal development is anchored in five whole-school drivers that inform every policy, practice and pathway. These drivers articulate not only what we teach, but how we nurture children as human beings within a community. These drivers shape our curriculum, pedagogy, enrichment and leadership decisions, ensuring that our pupils' development is holistic and purposeful.



A Sense of Self

We aim for every pupil to understand who they are, to feel emotionally safe, and to build the tools needed for regulation, resilience and confidence. We support pupils in recognising their emotions, communicating needs, building self-worth, and developing autonomy. Through systems such as personalised Zones of Regulation plans, sensory provision and affirming staff relationships, pupils

gain the confidence to navigate their internal world and advocate for themselves.

A Sense of Community

We teach pupils that they belong to their class, school, family, neighbourhood, and wider society. Through kindness, cooperation, peer interaction, Bridge Buddies, School Council, and community projects, pupils learn responsibility, empathy, and contribution. They are encouraged to participate, not observe; to lead, not follow passively.

A Sense of Culture

We cultivate understanding, celebration and curiosity about diversity, heritage, tradition and identity. Pupils are introduced to stories, art, food, music and beliefs from around the world, while also being encouraged to take pride in their own background. We actively challenge prejudice and promote equity through lived experience, not theoretical instruction. Our curriculum and assemblies ensure pupils encounter difference with respect, not fear.

A Sense of Wonder

We ignite curiosity, creativity and imagination. Through exploration, investigation, outdoor learning, cultural events and enrichment visits, we nurture joy in discovery. Personal development must include awe - moments that inspire questions, dreams and inspiration. Pupils are not only taught knowledge; they are invited to experience wonder.

A Sense of Future

We prepare pupils for adulthood - emotionally, practically and aspirationally. Personal development includes vocational learning, independence, life skills, travel training, financial literacy and exposure to workplaces. We cultivate ambition; however, it is defined by the individual. Through the Duke of Riverside Award, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, work-related learning and transition pathways, pupils are equipped to navigate the world beyond school with dignity and purpose.

These principles underpin every aspect of school life. They ensure that personal development is not treated as an additional programme but as the foundation of how we engage, teach, support and inspire our pupils. They are used to shape assemblies, curriculum design, staff training, enrichment experiences and pupil leadership roles.

5.1 Emotional Development, Regulation & Self-Understanding (A Sense of Self)

Personal development begins with emotional safety. For many of our pupils, self-regulation, emotional literacy and self-identity must be explicitly taught, modelled and scaffolded through consistent, compassionate relationships. Riverside Bridge School prioritises the development of emotional fitness as a lifelong foundation, recognising that a child cannot engage in learning until they feel secure, understood and capable of expressing internal states.

At Riverside Bridge School, we recognise that many of our pupils' experience challenges in identifying, expressing, and managing their emotions. For this reason, emotional fitness is intentionally taught, explicitly modelled and consistently reinforced throughout the school day. We do not wait for crisis to teach regulation; we build emotional understanding proactively, through relationships, consistency and therapeutic approaches.

Every pupil is supported through an individualised approach to self-regulation. The Zones of Regulation framework is embedded across all pathways and adapted to each learner's communicative level. Through the use of visuals, sensory tools, signing, objects of reference and co-regulation strategies, pupils are taught to recognise their internal states and to develop strategies for returning to emotional readiness. Staff do not respond to behaviour with demand, but

with interpretation, understanding that every behaviour is an attempt to communicate a need, discomfort or distress.

Each pupil has access to a personalised Regulation Plan, developed through collaboration between class teams, therapy services and families. These plans outline triggers, regulation strategies, preferred sensory supports and calming techniques. They guide all staff interactions, ensuring consistency and emotional safety across environments. Spaces such as sensory rooms, quiet zones and retreat areas are made available for pupils who need time to reset, without judgement or withdrawal of dignity.

Mental and emotional well-being is nurtured through ritual, reflection and affirmation. Pupils are offered structured opportunities to talk, sign, draw or act out their feelings using whatever method of communication is authentic to them. Staff model emotional vocabulary—identifying their own feelings aloud and demonstrating coping strategies such as breathing, pausing or seeking help. Success in emotional regulation is celebrated with the same respect as academic achievement, recognising pupils who return to calm, use a strategy independently or communicate distress safely.

We aim to ensure that pupils do not simply manage emotions but learn to understand them. Emotional fitness is central to enabling pupils to develop self-awareness, resilience and confidence, equipping them to face challenge with growing independence rather than reliance on adult intervention. This emotional grounding prepares them for deeper social connection, personal responsibility and lifelong well-being.

The Bridge Buddies Committee aim to support staff in improving emotional well-being and peer support. Bridge Buddies promote kindness, inclusion and resilience through anti-bullying campaigns, playground support and supporting assemblies. They work alongside staff to help every pupil feel safe, valued and listened to. Through inclusive resources, anti-bullying framework such as the (Bridge Buddies) and pupil voice, we develop confidence to speak up for themselves and others.

5.2 Social Relationships, Character & Moral Development (A Sense of Community)

Relationships are central to personal development. At Riverside Bridge School, pupils learn how to belong, to cooperate, to care, and to recover relationally when difficulties arise. Character education at Riverside Bridge School is rooted in lived experience rather than abstract instruction. We cultivate values such as respect, kindness, honesty and responsibility not through slogans or posters, but through daily interactions, restorative practice and meaningful opportunities to belong.

Social development is explicitly taught across all pathways, recognising that many pupils require structured guidance to navigate friendships, social cues, turn-taking, empathy and conflict. Through supported group work, play-based interaction, role play, social stories and peer modelling, pupils experience what it means to be part of a shared community. When relationships break down, we do not remove pupils from one another - we guide reconciliation through reflective circles, supported apologies and cooperative repair. We explicitly teach pro-social skills such as turn-taking, listening, tolerance, patience, kindness, disagreement without harm, and responsibility for one's actions. Pupils learn these through lived contexts - classwork, groupwork, team games, shared meals and assemblies. They are taught that community is not a place we occupy, but a space we build together.

Bullying is treated with deep seriousness, including the complex and unintentional forms it may take within a SEND environment. We recognise that pupils may engage in behaviours that cause

harm without understanding intent, and they may struggle to recognise when harm is caused to them. Our Bridge Buddies programme provides peer support, mediation and friendship-building, ensuring no pupil navigates social distress alone.

Behaviour is addressed through restorative, not retributive, practice. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on impact, take steps to repair harm, and develop empathy for others. Some may only achieve this in small, symbolic ways - a gesture, an eye movement, a signed apology. Every step is valued. We do not impose shame; we foster growth.

We treat every interpersonal moment as an opportunity to teach:

- Respect for difference
- Responsibility for action
- Recognition of others' feelings
- Reconciliation and repair

We believe pupils must experience being part of something bigger than themselves. Through charity events, community visits, inter-class collaboration and collective celebration, they learn citizenship in a meaningful way - not as distant theory, but as belonging, purpose and mutual care.

Moral development begins with fairness, equity and integrity. Pupils are taught that fairness means everyone receiving what they need to succeed - not everyone receiving the same. We actively challenge stereotypes, discrimination and exclusion, teaching pupils through action that every voice matter. Through School Council and Healthy Living Ambassadors, pupils take responsibility for their environment, the well-being of others and the culture of the school.

We believe that character is formed not when pupils comply, but when they care. Our role is to cultivate conscience to help pupils move from "What do I want?" to "How do my actions affect others?" In doing so, we prepare them not only to behave, but to contribute.

The Student Council represents pupil voice in shaping school life. Council representatives gather class views, discuss possible community projects, and present proposals to senior leadership. Through this, pupils learn democracy, empathy and shared responsibility within the school community.

5.3 Cultural Exposure, Identity & Global Awareness (Sense of Culture)

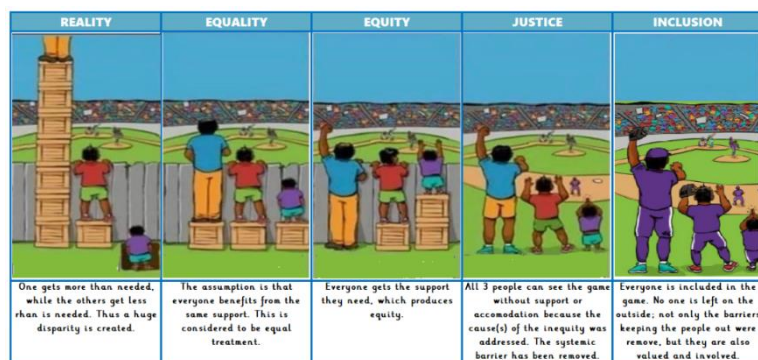
Personal development must give pupils access to a world they may not yet know exists. At Riverside Bridge School, cultural capital is not treated as a privilege, but a right. Many of our pupils face barriers to accessing museums, nature, theatre, sports, travel, community events and new environments. We actively dismantle those barriers through structured, inclusive enrichment.

At Riverside Bridge School, cultural development is not reduced to festivals or themed days. It is rooted in the belief that every pupil must see both *themselves* and *the wider world* reflected in their learning experiences. For many of our pupils, understanding culture begins with identity - knowing their own background, values, likes, beliefs and heritage - before developing the awareness and respect needed to understand others.

We expose pupils to diverse cultural narratives through literature, art, music, food, religion and storytelling. Assemblies, topic work and enrichment experiences enable learners to engage with traditions and worldviews beyond their own immediate community. This is to promote empathy, pride and belonging. Our curriculum celebrates difference not as novelty, but as normality.

Through Religious Education and PSHE, pupils are introduced to beliefs and practices in ways that are visual, sensory and experiential. They may explore religious symbols through touch, experience cultural cooking through taste, or express diversity through art and drama. We aim to foster global curiosity by encouraging pupils to ask *“Who am I?”* and *“Who are we in the world?”*

Crucially, cultural development at Riverside Bridge School also includes equity. We actively challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory attitudes. We teach pupils that fairness does not always mean sameness; equity means everyone receives what they need to thrive.



We aim to provide equality by providing the same pro-social and valued experiences to all pupils and equity by adapting support and resourcing to remove any barriers. Our goal is to eliminate obstacles to participation and cultivating a welcoming and inclusive environment, where we recognise and honour the unique differences of individuals, ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

A pupil who feels culturally seen is a pupil who feels safe to grow. True personal development requires identity, pride and the freedom to exist authentically within a diverse community. Our Culture & Diversity Ambassadors celebrate identity and promote respect through supporting assemblies, creating displays and supporting events that honour heritage, language and difference within Riverside Bridge School and the wider community. These ambassadors help promote our Cultural Capital 50 experiences, ensuring pupils’ voices shape how we explore and celebrate the wider world together.

5.4 Curiosity, Creativity & Enrichment (Sense of Wonder)

Wonder is a fundamental part of human development, especially for children with additional needs who often face barriers to spontaneous exploration. We are committed to preserving and expanding pupils’ natural sense of curiosity, awe and joy, because inspiration is the foundation of aspiration.

A Sense of Wonder at Riverside Bridge School is nurtured through:

- creative arts: music, drama, dance, painting, performance
- outdoor learning: forest school, sensory gardens, environmental exploration
- scientific enquiry: simple experiments, trial and error, cause and effect
- discovery-based visits: museums, theatres, nature reserves, interactive exhibitions

We design experiences that provoke questions, not just provide answers. Pupils are encouraged to try, to explore, to take safe risks, to make mistakes and to rediscover excitement. Enrichment is not treated as a reward or trip-based addition, but as an essential part of the curriculum that feeds imagination, motivation and meaning.

For many pupils, wonder begins with sensory readiness - the feel of rain on skin, the echo of a sound, the smell of cooking, the colour of theatre lights. These moments become the building

blocks of memory, narrative and aspiration. Developing imagination is critical to developing possibility, without imagination, there can be no future goals.

At the heart of personal development is curiosity, the desire to explore, question, connect and make meaning. Riverside Bridge School integrates the Means, Reasons and Opportunities (MRO) Model (Money & Thurman, 1994) as a core framework for igniting this intrinsic curiosity, ensuring that pupils are not only able to communicate but are motivated to discover, to wonder and to seek deeper interaction with their world.

Without the Means, pupils cannot engage with curiosity. Means are not limited to speech; they include symbols, AAC devices, gestures, signing, facial expressions, movement and objects of reference. By equipping pupils with accessible and personalised communication systems, we give them the tools to ask, initiate, experiment and question. Means unlock the how of curiosity, how to explore, how to express, how to take part.

Without Reasons, curiosity has no direction. We believe pupils need authentic reasons to communicate and interact, not rehearsed responses but genuine motivators such as surprise, challenge, discovery, humour, choice, or social connection. Our environments and teaching approaches are intentionally designed to provoke curiosity: unknown textures, unfinished narratives, open questions, cause-and-effect scenarios and real social interactions. Pupils must feel that there is something worth finding out.

Without Opportunities, curiosity cannot live. Pupils must be provided with spaces, relationships and time to pursue their own interests, to initiate rather than simply respond, and to return repeatedly to something that fascinates them. Staff offer planned and spontaneous opportunities — through pauses, open-ended invitations, collaborative play, community encounters and self-directed exploration. We ensure that Opportunities exist not in isolation, but as recurring moments across the school day, encouraging pupils to pursue curiosity as part of who they are.

Through the MRO model, Riverside Bridge School commits to developing pupils not only as communicators, but as questioners, explorers and agents of their own experience. Curiosity is treated as a life skill — essential to self-awareness, social relationship, lifelong learning and preparation for adulthood. Pupils are taught that they do not simply receive the world; they can examine it, reshape it and contribute to it. We do not underestimate the power of joy. Joy motivates learning more than instruction ever can. Through festivals, theme weeks, internal challenges and whole-school celebration, pupils are exposed to moments that expand their vision of what life can offer.

The Eco-Team promotes environmental awareness and a sense of curiosity through pupil-led gardening, recycling and outdoor discovery projects. The work of the Eco Team can nurture creativity, exploration and collective responsibility for our school environment, wider community and the planet as a whole.

5.5 Independence, Aspirations & Preparation for Adulthood (Sense of Future)

Personal development must lead somewhere. For our pupils, this journey is not uniform, but every individual deserves hope, agency and purpose. A Sense of Future means preparing every pupil - regardless of need or pathway - for meaningful life beyond school.

Preparation for Adulthood includes four pillars:

- Employment & Aspirations: careers education, enterprise projects, vocational learning;
- Independent Living: cooking, travel training, money skills, household tasks;
- Health & Well-being: fitness, self-care, making healthy decisions;

- Community & Participation: citizenship, volunteering, social inclusion.

We deliver these through:

- Our Pathfinders Committee supports pupils to explore new skills and future possibilities. Pathfinders will be tasked to support careers events, and act as role models for independence and aspiration. Through their initiatives, pupils begin to see themselves as explorers of their own futures.
- Duke of Riverside & Duke of Edinburgh programmes;
- work-related learning placements, enterprise cafés, internal job roles;
- transition planning with parents, therapists and local agencies;
- life skills curriculum (semi-formal and formal pathways).

A pupil may not speak, but can still advocate. A pupil may not travel independently, but can still make choices. Our goal is not to draw unrealistic futures, but to build real ones rooted in capability, dignity and personal ambition.

6. Personal Development through the Curriculum

Personal development is not treated as a separate strand at Riverside Bridge School; it is the living thread that runs through every aspect of our curriculum. Our intention is to shape not only what pupils learn, but who they become. Every lesson, routine, encounter and environment is deliberately designed to promote emotional growth, social understanding, independence and a sense of self-worth. Personal development is therefore embedded through our three curriculum pathways - pre-formal, semi-formal and formal - ensuring that each learner, regardless of need or starting point, has meaningful opportunities to grow as an individual.

Our curriculum is carefully constructed to reflect the unique developmental journeys of our pupils. In the Pre-Formal Pathway, personal development is rooted in connection, routine and self-awareness. Pupils engage in highly sensory and play-based experiences that focus on communication, co-regulation and early choice-making. Through repetition, intensive interaction and trusted adult relationships, they begin to explore agency, preference and emotional safety.

Within the Semi-Formal Pathway, pupils build on this foundation by developing functional communication, autonomy and social participation. Thematic projects and real-life contexts provide rich opportunities for teamwork, responsibility and problem-solving. Daily routines such as snack preparation, group collaboration or role play gently introduce concepts such as fairness, turn-taking and persistence. Personal development outcomes are explicitly interwoven into curriculum stems, enabling staff to monitor and scaffold essential skills over time.

In the Formal Pathway, personal development becomes increasingly conscious and self-reflective. Pupils engage with structured PSHE, RSE, Citizenship, Careers Education and Work-Related Learning, exploring identity, moral decision-making, digital safety and preparation for adulthood. Leadership opportunities, such as School Council, Duke of Riverside participation or pupil ambassador roles, empower them to apply their personal development in real contexts, guiding younger peers, influencing their environment and contributing to community.

Teaching approaches across all pathways remain practical, creative and inclusive. Staff employ visual supports, sensory integration, role play, social stories and restorative dialogue to make personal development explicit and accessible. Pupils are consistently encouraged to make choices, express preferences, self-advocate and reflect on achievements. These are not incidental experiences, but carefully planned teaching moments designed to build confidence, resilience and self-awareness.

Beyond the classroom, personal development is enriched through structured experiences including

lunchtime and after-school clubs, off-site visits, cultural projects and community participation. Older pupils, particularly within the Oceans and Thames pathways, access award programmes such as Duke of Edinburgh, where teamwork, endurance and leadership are strengthened through physical challenge, volunteering and expedition.

Personal development through the curriculum is sequential and progressive never isolated. It forms a continuous journey from early awareness to empowered citizenship. Through personalised goals, therapeutic collaboration and responsive teaching, we ensure every pupil has the opportunity to grow not only in knowledge, but in character and capability.

Our curriculum stems have Personal Development weaved throughout across all subjects. Some examples are attached below:

CO4.4	F1b	Takes turns within interactive exchange or play routine.
CO4.5	F1b	Demonstrates shared enjoyment within interactive exchange.
CO4.15	F2	Responds to adult's non-verbal communication.
CO4.16	F2	Makes connection between their actions and the behaviour of an adult.
CO8.2	F3	Asks question to seek information.
CO8.3	F3	Asks question to solve problem.
LIT3.1	F1a	Notifies and engages with sounds and images in the environment.
LIT3.2	F1a	Enjoys looking at books and other suitable printed or digital material with familiar people, and being read to.
LIT3.13	F2	Joins in some actions or repeat words, rhymes and phrases when prompted.
LIT3.14	F2	Joins in with predictable phrases or refrains.
LIT3.28	F3	Talks about events in the story and link to their own experiences.
LIT3.29	F3	Retells some of the story.

MA6.1	F1a	Explores space when they are free to move, roll and stretch.
MA6.2	F1a	Explores space around them and engages with position and direction, such as pointing to where they would like to go.
MA14.10	F1b	Sequences familiar daily events using pictures/objects (morning, lunch, home).
MA14.11	F2	Uses language for days of the week and significant times of the day such as mealtimes or bed times correctly.
MA11.15	F3	Uses comparative language independently to describe and compare size in practical contexts.

SMSC1.2	F1a	Participates in shared activities for beliefs.
SMSC1.3	F1a	Indicates own preferences for activities, beliefs and actions.
SMSC1.6	F2	Shows persistence in aims, values, principles and/or beliefs.
SMSC1.7	F2	Shows respect for different beliefs and faiths.
SMSC1.10	F2	Celebrates diversity.
SMSC1.11	F3	Reflects on behaviours, situations or events and learns from this reflection.
SfL9.2	F1a	Puts items in a sink ready for washing.
SfL9.3	F1a	Tolerates soapy water in a sink.
SfL9.4	F1b	Handles items in preparation for washing in the sink.
SfL9.5	F1b	Puts dishes/items in water as if to wash.
SfL9.6	F2	Uses hands to clean dishes.
SfL9.7	F3	Uses a sponge or cloth to wash dishes in a sink.
SfL9.8	F3	Adds dishes to drying rack after washing.
WRL2.1	F1a	Responds to familiar objects or pictures linked to daily living or simple jobs e.g. spoon for cooking, brush for cleaning.

WRL2.2	F1a	Shows awareness of adults performing everyday work routines in the classroom e.g. cleaner, cook, teacher.
WRL2.3	F1b	Expresses their likes and dislikes related to careers/jobs.
WRL2.4	F1b	Indicates a preference when shown two job-related items or pictures.
WRL2.5	F1b	Matches a photo/symbol of a familiar adult to their work role e.g. cook, caretaker.
WRL2.6	F2	Identifies needs and wants for the future and categorises them.
WRL2.7	F2	Participates in role-play activities relating to job roles.
WRL2.8	F3	Understands the links between education/qualifications and work opportunities.
WRL2.9	F3	Researches own potential future jobs.
WRL2.10	F3	Knows where to access advice and support about planning for the future.
WRL2.11	F3	Identifies and discusses the importance of personal core transferable skills.
SED15.1	F1a	Accesses some everyday activities/situations.
SED15.2	F1a	Accesses some new activities/situations.
SED15.3	F1b	Accesses all everyday activities/situations.
SED15.4	F1b	Accesses all new activities/situations.
SED16.1	F2	Seeks support from adult to regulate behaviour.
SED16.2	F3	Shares concerns/problems with a trusted adult.
SED16.3	F3	Seeks advice from adult on social behaviour in specific situations.
SED16.4	F3	Shows understanding of outcomes of different behaviour in social situations.
SED16.5	F3	Reflects on situations/behaviours.

7. Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is not merely about exposure, but about entitlement - the right of every pupil to experience wonder, joy, challenge and achievement beyond the limits of their circumstance. At Riverside Bridge School, cultural capital is planned, not incidental. We curate experiences that provide pupils with meaningful engagement in the world, ensuring they have the opportunity to encounter life beyond the classroom.

7.1 The Cultural Capital Project

Through our Cultural Capital: 50 Experiences programme, pupils are gradually introduced to a rich variety of community, artistic, environmental and social experiences. These are intentionally designed to build confidence and familiarity with the wider world. Each experience – whether learning how to cycle, going to the circus, performing on stage or going to Stubbers - is scaffolded to allow pupils to observe, participate and reflect. For many pupils, these experiences become personal milestones; they foster memories, identity and aspiration.



7.2. The Duke of Riverside Award

The Duke of Riverside Award is our unique school initiative inspired by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It challenges pupils to develop new skills, demonstrate resilience, and engage with their community through four levels. Pupils participate in activities across areas such as personal challenge, skill development, teamwork, and community engagement. This award supports pupils in developing independence, perseverance, and pride in their achievements. The Duke of Riverside Award is our bespoke award for celebrating independence, resilience and citizenship.



Structured over four levels - Blue (Droplet), Green (River), Silver (Tide) and Gold (Waterfall) - each tier challenges pupils to demonstrate progress in personal challenge, skill development, physical activity and service. This award ensures recognition for pupils who may not access external accreditation, honouring effort, character and growth.



7.3 The Duke of Edinburgh Award

Riverside Bridge School is proud to offer the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to pupils in the Key Stage 4 & 5. The DofE is a nationally recognised programme that encourages young people to challenge themselves, develop essential life skills, and contribute positively to their community.

At Riverside Bridge School, pupils have the opportunity to participate in the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels of the Award. Each level builds on the previous one, promoting increasing independence, responsibility, and resilience.

The Award is made up of four key sections that support holistic personal development:

- **volunteering**- encouraging pupils to make a positive contribution to others and their community;
- **physical** - supporting pupils to improve their health, fitness, and well-being through physical activity;
- **skills** - enabling pupils to develop practical abilities, interests, and personal strengths;
- **expedition** - providing opportunities for teamwork, problem-solving, and outdoor learning through a planned journey.

Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award helps pupils to build confidence, develop communication and teamwork skills, and gain a sense of achievement and pride. It forms a key part of our commitment to personal development and preparation for adulthood, aligning closely with our school values of Respect, Resilience, and Responsibility.

For older pupils in the Thames and Oceans pathways, the Duke of Edinburgh Award provides a nationally recognised framework through which they can demonstrate leadership, commitment, teamwork and resilience. Through expedition, volunteering, skills and physical sections, pupils encounter real challenge and real accomplishment. Experiences such as camping overnight, navigating unfamiliar environments or participating in supported community action contribute profoundly to confidence and self-belief.

7.4 Pupil Leadership, Voice & Advocacy

Pupil voice is central to personal development. Through School Council, Eco Team, Bridge Buddies, Culture & Diversity Ambassador, and Pathfinders pupils are not only represented but they are heard. They learn to advocate for themselves and others, shaping school life and culture. Whether selecting theme days, designing playground improvements or leading assemblies, pupils are given agency and responsibility.

These leadership opportunities ensure pupils learn the language of participation. In doing so, they move from passive recipients of care to active members of a community.

8. Parents & Carers & Community Partnership

Personal development is strongest when school, family and community work together in unity. At Riverside Bridge School, we regard parents and carers not as recipients of information, but as co-educators and lifelong partners in the developmental journey of our pupils. We recognise that personal development does not end at the school gate; it must be nurtured at home, in routines, relationships and community experiences.

We actively support families to continue personal development beyond school hours through:

- workshops on emotional regulation, sensory needs, communication systems and independence;
- home versions of Cultural Capital challenges and Duke of Riverside activities;
- transition meetings centred around Preparing for Adulthood outcomes;
- shared celebration events such as festivals, art showcases, and achievement ceremonies;
- collaborative decision-making for enrichment, trips and social development.

The school actively invites families to contribute to cultural learning by sharing traditions, languages, celebrations and personal stories. These enrich assemblies, curriculum themes and identity projects, reinforcing to pupils that who they are is valued and recognised. Community partnerships with libraries, local services, voluntary organisations, vocational centres and health teams ensure pupils see themselves as part of a wider society.

We are committed to ensuring that every family, regardless of circumstance, feels equipped, supported and empowered to extend personal development beyond the school environment.

9. Leadership, Personal Development Champions & Professional Culture

The leadership of personal development at Riverside Bridge School is structured, accountable and proactive. While every staff member contributes to personal development, strategic coordination is overseen by the Senior Leadership Team, with a designated Personal Development Lead responsible for direction, coherence and impact.

To embed personal development deeply across all areas of school life, Personal Development Champions are appointed for each of the Five Drivers — Sense of Self, Community, Culture, Wonder and Future. These Champions act as advocates and innovators, identifying opportunities for enrichment, coordinating pupil experiences and ensuring that personal development is visible in classrooms, corridors and community events.

Their responsibilities include:

- leading initiatives linked to their Driver (e.g. Emotional Fitness, Culture Days, Careers Week);
- supporting colleague development through workshops and coaching;
- gathering and sharing pupil voice, success stories and impact evidence;
- promoting reflective practice among staff to enhance relational consistency.

Professional development for staff includes training in emotional regulation, trauma-informed approaches, safeguarding, sensory integration, restorative practice and equity. This ensures personal development is not a programme, but a professional culture shared across all roles - from classroom support staff to senior leaders.

Leadership accountability includes reporting to Governors on personal development impact, highlighting pupil growth in emotional resilience, independence, enrichment participation and preparation for adulthood.

10. Staff Development, Professional Responsibility and Involvement

Personal development at Riverside Bridge School is only possible through a highly skilled, committed and reflective workforce. Staff are not passive facilitators of programmes; they are active architects of a culture that nurtures confidence, emotional safety, ambition and dignity for every pupil. For this reason, staff development and involvement are integral to our personal development strategy.

All staff - teachers, co-educators, therapists, learning support assistants, pastoral and enrichment teams - receive professional development on the principles that underpin personal growth, including emotional regulation, trauma-informed practice, communication systems, neurodiversity, sensory processing, equity and restorative approaches. Training is not delivered as one-off input, but through ongoing coaching, reflection and collaborative practice, enabling staff to embed personal development into every interaction.

The school's Professional Development Framework (including instructional coaching and internal CPD pathways) ensures that staff are supported to refine classroom climate, model resilience, enable independence and engage meaningfully with pupil voice. Staff are encouraged to take leadership roles in personal development through Champion positions, enrichment leadership, mentoring and project coordination linked to the Five Drivers.

Staff well-being is recognised as a foundation of pupil development. Riverside Bridge School actively promotes a culture of emotional safety for staff - encouraging reflection, peer collaboration and proactive support systems. When adults feel valued, supported and empowered, they are better equipped to model those same qualities for pupils.

Every adult in the school is responsible for personal development. This policy is not delivered by one department, but lived through collective belief, consistent language and shared commitment. The Personal Development Champions project celebrates pupils who demonstrate outstanding commitment to personal growth. Champions act as role models, supporting peers in building resilience, showing respect, and taking responsibility for their actions. Recognition is given through assemblies, displays, and certificates, promoting a culture of aspiration and achievement.

Personal Development Champions (see Appendix A)

Riverside Bridge School has established Personal Development Champions to embed and drive the ethos of personal development beyond policy and into lived practice. These Champions are appointed staff members who each take responsibility for one of the school's Five Drivers — A Sense of Self, Community, Culture, Wonder and Future — acting as advocates, innovators and stewards of experience.

The role of a Personal Development Champion extends beyond coordination; they are catalysts for transformation. Each Champion works alongside class teams, pastoral staff and the Personal Development Lead to identify opportunities for enrichment, celebrate pupil achievements and ensure personal development remains a visible, dynamic priority in every pathway. They promote meaningful initiatives such as cultural events, well-being projects, student leadership programmes, pupil showcases and awards, ensuring that all pupils can experience recognition, participation and belonging.

Champions support staff through modelling, coaching and dissemination of resources linked to their Driver. They contribute to staff training, curate displays, organise driver-specific assemblies and maintain a Personal Development portfolio evidencing impact across the school. By collecting pupil voice, case studies, photographs and project outcomes, they ensure celebration is not isolated to high achievement but inclusive of personal progression.

Champions meet regularly with the Personal Development Lead to review provision, plan upcoming initiatives and evaluate contribution to school improvement priorities. Their work is reported to SLT and Governors, highlighting how personal development is being lived across the school community.

Through this structure, Riverside Bridge School ensures that personal development is actively led, not passively delivered — shaped by those who believe that every child deserves not just to grow, but to flourish.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring personal development requires sensitivity and depth. Traditional metrics such as attendance or compliance do not capture the true progress of pupils with complex needs. Therefore, Riverside Bridge School uses a broad and holistic range of measures to demonstrate the impact of personal development.

Evidence includes:

- pupil voice and individual reflection (verbal, symbolic, signed or sensory)
- regulation plan outcomes and reductions in dysregulation incidents
- engagement in cultural capital experiences, clubs and leadership roles
- case studies demonstrating increased confidence, autonomy or resilience
- external accreditation such as Duke of Edinburgh or Duke of Riverside
- family feedback and home generalisation reports

Personal development progress is discussed regularly in pupil progress meetings, annual reviews and multi-disciplinary planning. Staff reflect on how pupils demonstrate emotional growth, independence, social reciprocity and readiness for transition. Governors receive termly reports summarising trends in enrichment participation, leadership involvement, behaviour transformation and broader well-being indicators.

Evaluation is used not to judge pupils, but to refine provision to ask, “What more can we do to help this pupil grow?”

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors to ensure it continues to reflect the evolving identity of Riverside Bridge School, statutory expectations and the lived needs of our pupils. Amendments are made to incorporate new initiatives, pupil voice developments and community priorities.

Personal development is also evaluated against whole-school strategic objectives, including pathways into adulthood, equity of access, family partnership and staff development.

The responsibility for implementation lies with every adult in the school. The responsibility for reviewing impact lies with leadership. The responsibility for inspiration belongs to all of us.

Appendix A

The Strategic Role of Personal Development Champions

Personal Development Champions play a pivotal role in shaping the ethos and lived experience of Riverside Bridge School. Appointed to represent each of our Five School Drivers — A Sense of Self, Community, Culture, Wonder and Future — these Champions act as dedicated custodians of our mission to inspire, empower and achieve beyond the academic. Their purpose is not administrative, but transformational. They exist to ensure that personal development is not a policy document, but a powerful reality in the daily life of every pupil and staff member.

Each Champion is entrusted with advocating for one dimension of personal development and ensuring that it is actively embedded across curriculum, enrichment and wider school culture. They lead through creativity and initiative, designing projects, experiences and events that help pupils connect with their identity, community, culture, curiosity and future aspirations. Whether coordinating Culture Week, facilitating School Council discussions, launching wellbeing campaigns or developing Duke of Riverside challenges, Champions ensure personal development remains visible, dynamic and inclusive.

These roles also carry influence in shaping staff practice. Champions support colleagues by sharing strategies, building confidence in delivering personal development and modelling inclusive approaches to participation. They contribute to training sessions, mentor emerging leaders and encourage staff to integrate the Five Drivers into their everyday teaching, displays and interactions. In doing so, they create a ripple effect, whereby personal development becomes a collective responsibility, not confined to one department or curriculum area.

Personal Development Champions play a crucial part in gathering pupil voice and recognising achievement. They curate narrative evidence - photographs, pupil quotes, reflections and case studies, which highlight the personal growth that cannot be captured by data alone. These contributions inform leadership review, support governor reporting and drive forward innovation in the personal development strategy. Their ultimate impact is measured not in events delivered, but in the way pupils grow in confidence, character, belonging and ambition.

Champion Planning and Embedded Practice

Personal Development Champions do not simply organise events; they build meaningful experiences that contribute to the long-term growth and identity of our pupils. Each Champion takes responsibility for planning development initiatives that align with their designated Driver, ensuring that every opportunity, whether a theme week, celebration, workshop or pupil-led activity, has a clear purpose and contributes to a wider sense of belonging, confidence or curiosity.

Planning is grounded in three core principles: *inclusion, intention and impact*. Champions begin by considering who each initiative is for, identifying pupils who may benefit most from targeted opportunities such as leadership roles, social participation or sensory exploration. They ensure that adaptations are made so learners of all abilities, including those with profound communication needs, can engage meaningfully. Champions give equal attention to pupils who might otherwise be overlooked, recognising that personal development must reach beyond the visibly confident to empower the quietly emerging.

Champions document and reflect on their work through simple but purposeful planning formats. These include the Driver focus, the aims of the initiative, the types of activities involved, and how pupil voice has influenced decision-making. Reflection is an essential final stage — not to critique effort, but to ask: Did this help our pupils grow? Did they find joy, pride or courage here? Through

this reflective cycle, Champions sustain a living approach to personal development, constantly evolving and responding to the needs, interests and aspirations of our pupils.

While some initiatives may be large-scale, such as cultural festivals or wellbeing campaigns, others may be intimate - a lunchtime group that supports friendships, a reflective space created for calming, a small opportunity to lead in assembly. These quiet contributions often have the deepest personal development impact. Champions recognise that growth does not always happen in spectacle; it often happens in safe, thoughtful, relational spaces.

Sharing Personal Development with Pupils and Community

To truly embed personal development, pupils must understand and experience it actively, not as a quiet framework behind the scenes, but as something alive, meant for them. For this reason, Personal Development Champions ensure their work is visible and accessible to pupils and families. displays, assemblies, newsletters and pupil voice platforms are used to communicate the purpose of each Driver and to inspire pupils to participate in the life of their school.

When introducing Champions to pupils, language is simplified but powerful. Pupils are encouraged to see Champions as helpers, guides and leaders of opportunity – adults who can help them find confidence, friendships, talents, culture, courage or dreams. This clarity allows even non-verbal pupils to recognise and interact with Champions, through symbols, visuals, nods of acknowledgement or shared rituals.

Champions are encouraged to gather and share pupils' reflections; however they are expressed. These may be words, symbols, photographs, Makaton signs or small acts of pride. By celebrating these achievements in corridors, newsletters or assemblies, Champions help build a school narrative in which every pupil can see themselves as developing, improving and belonging.

Furthermore, Champions act as a voice between pupils, staff and families, capturing ideas and feedback to shape future initiatives. Community involvement, such as parents contributing to cultural celebrations or local partners supporting events, is encouraged to strengthen the sense of shared ownership in personal development. Pupils must not only receive personal development; they must live it, own it and know it belongs to them.