



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## WHY IS V&V IMPORTANT?

Delivering **Values & Virtues** helps pupils:

- ✓ Understand themselves and others
  - ✓ Build positive relationships
  - ✓ Stay healthy and safe
  - ✓ Know their rights and responsibilities
  - ✓ Prepare for life and work beyond school
- We have a responsibility to deliver a planned PSHRE curriculum.
  - *Values & Virtues* is about more than content – it's about culture.
  - Great opportunity to get to know your form!



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## CURRICULUM STATUTORY COVERAGE

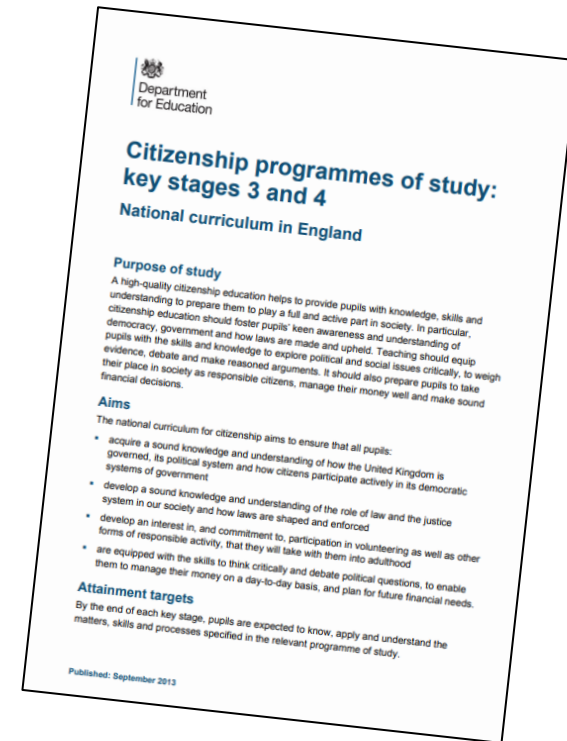


Department  
for Education

We have a statutory responsibility to deliver:

- a planned programme of PSHE and RSE (DfE statutory guidance)
- Citizenship education (National Curriculum)
- Careers education and guidance from Year 7 onwards (Careers Strategy and Gatsby Benchmarks).

Inspection frameworks (Ofsted and Section 48) also expect to see evidence of personal development across the school, supported by this curriculum.



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## STATUTORY CURRICULUM COVERAGE

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
RSE	Every Ten:Ten SOW for each year group focuses on the following: <i>Religious understanding, my body, emotional well-being, life cycles, personal relationships, keeping safe and wider world.</i>				
PSHE & Citizenship	<p><b>Loving &amp; Compassionate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Values</li> <li>Learning at St Mary's</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Friendships</li> <li>Healthy lifestyles</li> <li>Keeping safe</li> <li>CPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Curious &amp; Active</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Values</li> <li>Charities</li> <li>News &amp; media</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>Refugees</li> <li>Taxes</li> <li>Wants &amp; needs</li> <li>CPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eloquent &amp; Truthful</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Values</li> <li>Rights &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>UK democracy</li> <li>England &amp; Wales Legal System</li> <li>Human Rights</li> <li>CPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intentional &amp; Prophetic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Values</li> <li>Human Rights</li> <li>Citizens in Action</li> <li>EconoMe (Money Matters)</li> <li>Diverse society</li> <li>CPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learned &amp; Wise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Values</li> <li>EconoMe (Money Matters)</li> <li>CPR</li> </ul>
Careers	Careers and your future Future Skills Questionnaire	Personal Skills Career Management Job Opportunities	Careers Aspirations GCSE Options Qualifications & Pathways	The Workplace Business Structures Employment Rights	Post-16 Options CVs Applications Work Experience



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## STATUTORY CURRICULUM COVERAGE

Values & Virtues Curriculum Map 2025-26

Content Key: [Careers](#) | [First Aid \(CPR\)](#) | [Relationships and Sex Education \(Ten:Ten\)](#) | [PSHE & Citizenship](#)



Date	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
VIRTUE THEME	<i>Loving and Compassionate</i>	<i>Curious and Active</i>	<i>Eloquent and Truthful</i>	<i>Intentional and Prophetic</i>	<i>Learned and Wise</i>
03/09/2025	Timetables & Welcome to St Mary's	Timetables & Welcome Back	Timetables & Welcome Back	Timetables & Welcome Back	Timetables & Welcome Back
10/09/2025	7.1 - Baseline Assessment & What is PSHE?	8.1 - Baseline Assessment & What are the British Values?	1. The Search for Love	10.1 - Baseline Assessment & What are Human Rights and why do they matter?	Post 16 Options
17/09/2025	7.2 - What are the British Values?	8.2 - What are Charities and NGOs?	2. Love People, Use Things	10.2 - How did the world agree on Universal Human Rights?	Planning for The Future
24/09/2025	7.3 - How do we learn at St Mary's?	8.3 - How can we achieve change in our communities?	3. In Control of My Choices	10.3 - Who protects our rights when they are threatened?	Personal Statement & CV
01/10/2025	7.3 - How do we learn at St Mary's?	8.4 - What is news and what responsibilities does the media have?	4. Fertility and Contraception	10.4 - What happens when one person's rights conflict with another's?	Applications
08/10/2025	7.4 - How do we communicate at St Mary's?	8.5 - Should we believe everything we see and read?	5. Commitment and Marriage	10.5 - How do citizens take action?	Interviews
15/10/2025	7.5 - How do we build the St Mary's community?	8.5 - Should we believe everything we see and read?	6. Understanding Consent	10.6 - What is the role of interest groups?	WORK EXPERIENCE
22/10/2025	7.6 - How do we use social media safely?	8.6 - What are the types of bullying?	7. Human Rights - And Wrongs	10.7 - What is the role of pressure groups and social movements?	FSQ & Thank you letters to WE
<b>HALF TERM</b>					
05/11/2025	7.7 - What are the types of bullying?	8.7 - What are the dangers of stereotypes?	9.1 - Baseline Assessment & What are the British Values?	1. Authentic freedom	Mock Prep
12/11/2025	7.8 - What are the dangers of stereotypes?	8.8 - Why do we need to be tolerant and respectful?	9.2 - What are my rights and responsibilities?	2. Self-Image	FIRST AID CPR Refresher (AGI - Spts Hall & LWI - Main Hall)
19/11/2025	7.9 - How can we keep our bodies healthy?	8.9 - What is a digital footprint and how can I manage it?	9.3 - What is the Equality Act 2010?	3. Beliefs, Values, Attitudes	11.1 - Baseline Assessment & What are the British Values?
26/11/2025	7.10 - What are the dangers of smoking and vaping?	8.10 - What are the risks of high screen time?	9.4 - What is discrimination and prejudice?	4. Parenthood	11.2 - When is it smart to borrow money and when should you avoid it?



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## ACTING ON FEEDBACK

HISTORIC CHALLENGES	SOLUTION FOR 2025 ONWARDS
<p>PSHRE ate into significant curriculum time.</p>	<p>A weekly 'Values &amp; Virtues' session has been created in the timetable on Wednesday mornings (8.55-9.40am) to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- minimise impact on curriculum time.</li><li>- change pupil perceptions and improve attitudes.</li></ul>
<p>Afternoon sessions often unfocused.</p>	
<p>PSHRE undervalued and had a poor perception among pupils, leading to poor attitudes to learning.</p>	
<p>RSE was unfocused and evidence of learning was inconsistent.</p>	<p>St Mary's RSE Learning Logs introduced from September 2025.</p>
<p>Lesson resources for Citizenship were not always collected from the Staff Room, therefore there must have been inconsistencies with delivery.</p>	<p>Lesson resources for the year for all elements of the 'Values &amp; Virtues' offer have been printed in 3 workbooks and ready for Form Tutors to collect.</p>
<p>Last minute changes to the PSHRE timetable created inconsistent teaching and some 'opted out'.</p>	<p>A complete 'Values &amp; Virtues' curriculum map has been published for 2025-26 &amp; resources created.</p>



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## CHANGES TO THE WEDNESDAY SCHOOL DAY

A weekly 'Values & Virtues' session has been created in the timetable on Wednesday mornings (8.55-9.40am) to help:

- minimise impact on curriculum time.
- change pupil perceptions and improve attitudes.


Timings	Activity
08.55 - 09.40	Values & Virtues (PSHRE)
09.40 - 10.35	Period 1
10.35 - 10.55	Break
10.55 - 11.50	Period 2
11.50 - 12.45	Period 3
12.45 - 13.25	Lunch
13.25 - 14.25	Period 4 (PM reg mark in P4)
14.25 - 15.25	Period 5

- Values & Virtues (PSHRE) is now **every Wednesday AM** in extended form, a session of **45 minutes**.
- **Periods 1-3** are now **55 minutes** (as with extended registration on first Friday of the month for Voluntary Mass).
- **Later break and lunch.**
- **No PM form – accurate P4 registers required.**



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY




**Values & Virtues**

**LIFE TO THE FULL**

**YEAR 9**


### RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION




**LEARNING LOG**

Pupil Name			
Form		Form Tutor	


This workbook has been produced by St Mary's RC High School to aid the delivery of the RSE curriculum using 'Life to the Full' produced by Ten:Ten Resources.






**Values & Virtues**

PSHRE AT ST MARY'S



**Year 8 PSHE & Citizenship**  
**Curious and Active**



Pupil Name			
Form		Form Tutor	



**Values & Virtues**

PSHRE AT ST MARY'S

**CREATIVE CAREERS**

Pupil Name			
Form		Form Tutor	



**CREATIVE CAREERS**

**Y7 UNIT**

**CHANGE**



CDI OUTCOMES

BENCHMARK FOUR

CAREERS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

### Housekeeping

- All workbooks should be kept in pupil Values & Virtues folders.
- Pupils will take their folders through their school life, **please keep them in form rooms.**
- Folders need to be maintained to evidence pupil learning.

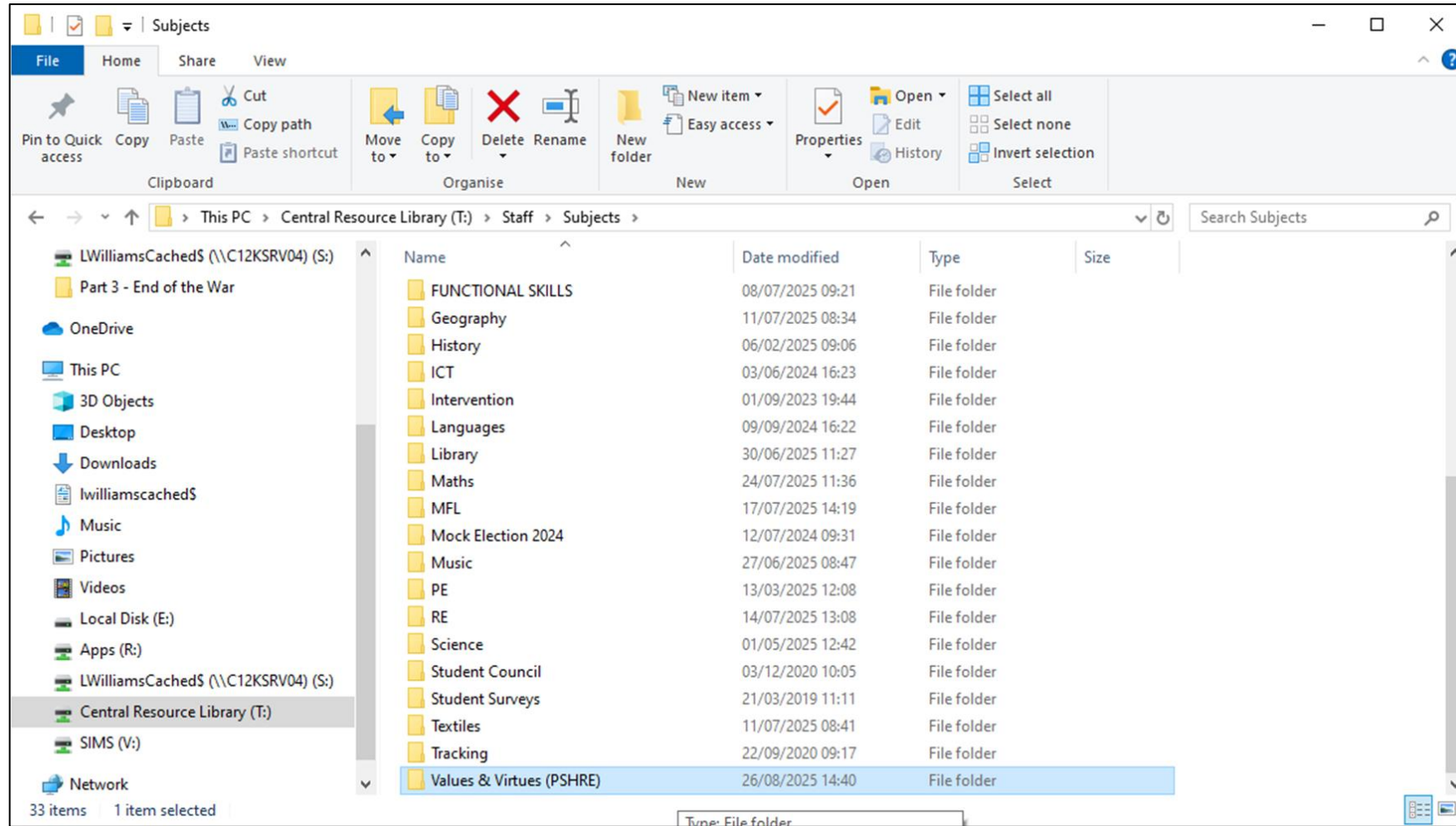
### Collection of resources

- **Folders for all forms in Year 7, 8 and 9 are ready to collect from the Library, each box contains one per pupil and one teacher folder.**
- **Years 10 & 11 will be available from Friday AM form,** also in the Library.
- Spares of all workbooks located in Staff Room.



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

The screenshot shows a Windows File Explorer window titled "Values & Virtues (PSHRE)". The address bar indicates the path: "This PC > Central Resource Library (T:) > Staff > Subjects > Values & Virtues (PSHRE)". The left sidebar shows the navigation pane with "Central Resource Library (T:)" selected. The main pane displays a list of folders and files:

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Admin	26/08/2025 14:42	File folder	
Lesson Resources for Teachers 2025-26	26/08/2025 14:40	File folder	
STAFF REVIEW & COMMENTS.xlsx			10 KB

A tooltip for the selected folder "Lesson Resources for Teachers 2025-26" displays the following properties:

- Type: File folder
- Date modified: 26/08/2025 14:40
- Size: 303 MB
- Folders: Year 07, Year 08, Year 09, Year 10, Year 11



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

The screenshot shows a Windows File Explorer window titled "Lesson Resources for Teachers 2025-26". The address bar shows the path: < Central Resource Library (T:) > Staff > Subjects > Values & Virtues (PSHRE) > Lesson Resources for Teachers 2025-26 >. The left sidebar shows the navigation pane with "Central Resource Library (T:)" selected. The main pane displays a list of folders:

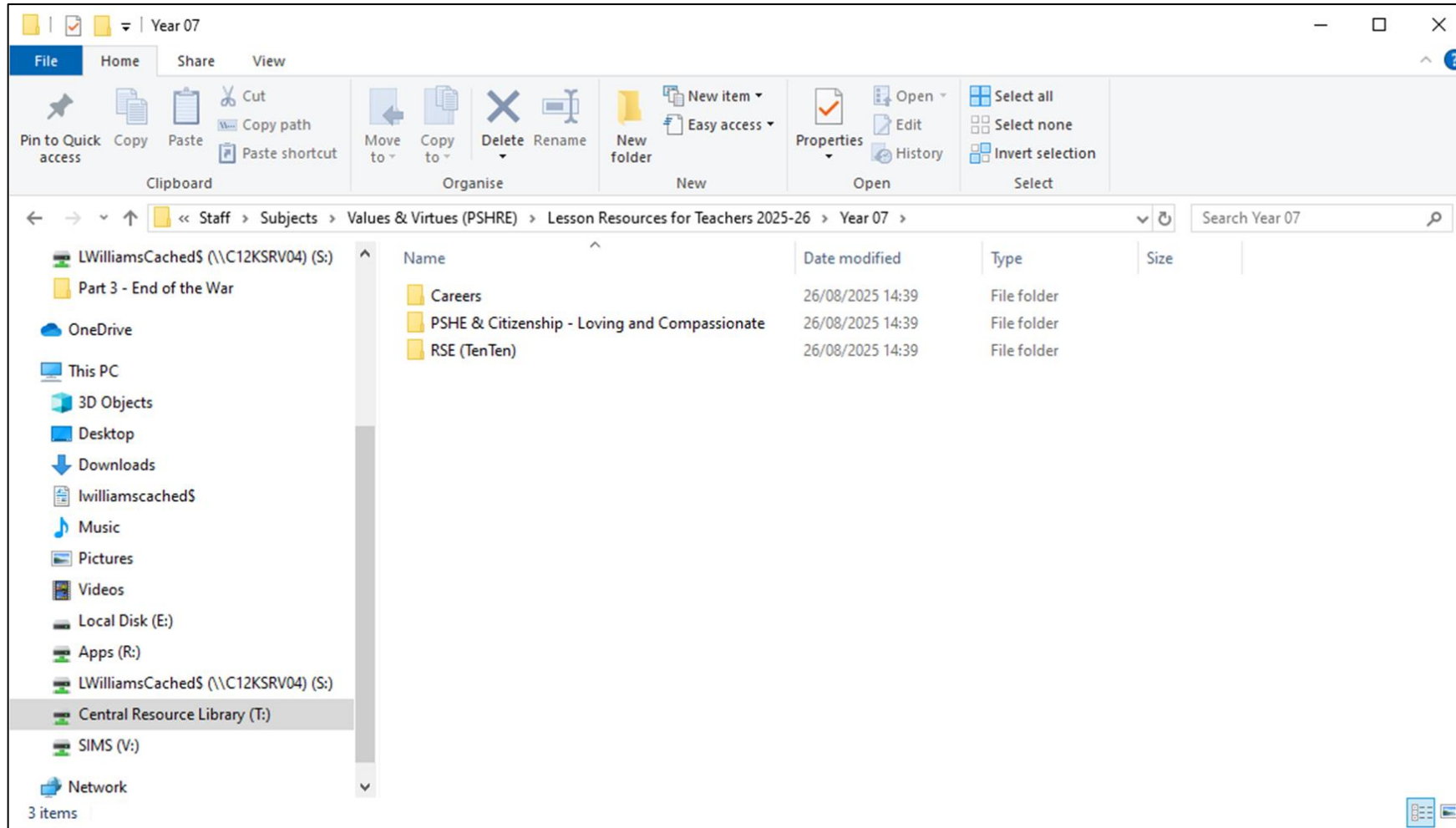
Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Year 07	26/08/2025 14:39	File folder	
Year 08	26/08/2025 14:39	File folder	
Year 09	26/08/2025 14:40	File folder	
Year 10	26/08/2025 14:40	File folder	
Year 11	26/08/2025 14:40	File folder	

The status bar at the bottom indicates "5 items" and "1 item selected".



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY





# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

Date	Year 7
<b>VIRTUE THEME</b>	<i>Loving and Compassionate</i>
03/09/2025	Timetables & Welcome to St Mary's
10/09/2025	7.1 - Baseline Assessment & What is PSHE?
17/09/2025	7.2 - What are the British Values?
24/09/2025	7.3 - How do we learn at St Mary's?
01/10/2025	7.4 - How do we communicate at St Mary's?
08/10/2025	7.5 - How do we build the St Mary's community?
15/10/2025	7.6 - How do we use social media safely?
22/10/2025	
05/11/2025	7.7 - What are the types of bullying?
12/11/2025	7.8 - What are the dangers of stereotypes?
19/11/2025	7.9 - How can we keep our bodies healthy?

Compassionate

Move to Copy to Delete Rename New folder Easy access Properties Organise New Open

chers 2025-26 > Year 07 > PSHE & Citizenship - Loving and Compassionate

Name	Date modified
Workbook	26/08/2025 14:39
7.1. Baseline and What is PSHRE.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.2. What are the British Values.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.3. How do we learn at St Mary's.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.4. How do we communicate at St Mary'...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.5. How do we build the St Mary's com...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.6. How do we use social media safely.p...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.7. What are the types of bullying.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.8. What are the dangers of stereotypes....	26/08/2025 14:39
7.9. How can we keep our bodies healthy...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.10. What are the dangers of smoking a...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.11. How can we keep our minds health...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.12. Why is connection to other importa...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.13. Why is it important to have aspirati...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.14. How can I keep safe on the road.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.15. How can I keep safe on the railways ...	26/08/2025 14:39
7.16. How can we be active citizens.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.17. Who represents me.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39
7.18. What are laws and how are they enf...	26/08/2025 14:39

**7.9** How can we keep our bodies healthy? Date:

Answer the questions below: **STARTER**

1. What does a healthy lifestyle look like?
2. How can we keep ourselves healthy?
3. Do you think you lead a healthy lifestyle?

**Why should we lead a healthy lifestyle?**

Watch the video clip and answer the questions below.

1. What does our physical health affect?
2. What does physical activity release?
3. What improves as a result?
4. What simple ways are there to improve the amount of physical activity?
5. What do studies show about spending time in green spaces?
6. What should we aim to eat?
7. What foods should we minimise?
8. What three products does the video suggest we should avoid?
9. What can these product disrupt?
10. What has the NHS developed for use by people trying to improve their lifestyle?

**What key terms will we be using?**

Match the key terms to the definitions below.

Key term	Definition
Sedentary lifestyle	The food and drink that a person typically consumes.
Body mass index (BMI)	A type of lifestyle that involves little or no physical activity.
Diet	Found deep within your abdominal cavity, surrounding organs.
Cardiorespiratory fitness	A measure that uses height and weight to work out if your weight is healthy.
Visceral fat	the ability of your body to deliver oxygen to your muscles during physical activity.



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

The screenshot shows a Windows File Explorer window titled "PSHE & Citizenship - Loving and Compassionate". The address bar indicates the current location is "Lesson Resources for Teachers 2025-26 > Year 07 > PSHE & Citizenship - Loving and Compassionate". The left sidebar shows the navigation pane with "Central Resource Library (T:)" selected. The main pane displays a list of files and folders:

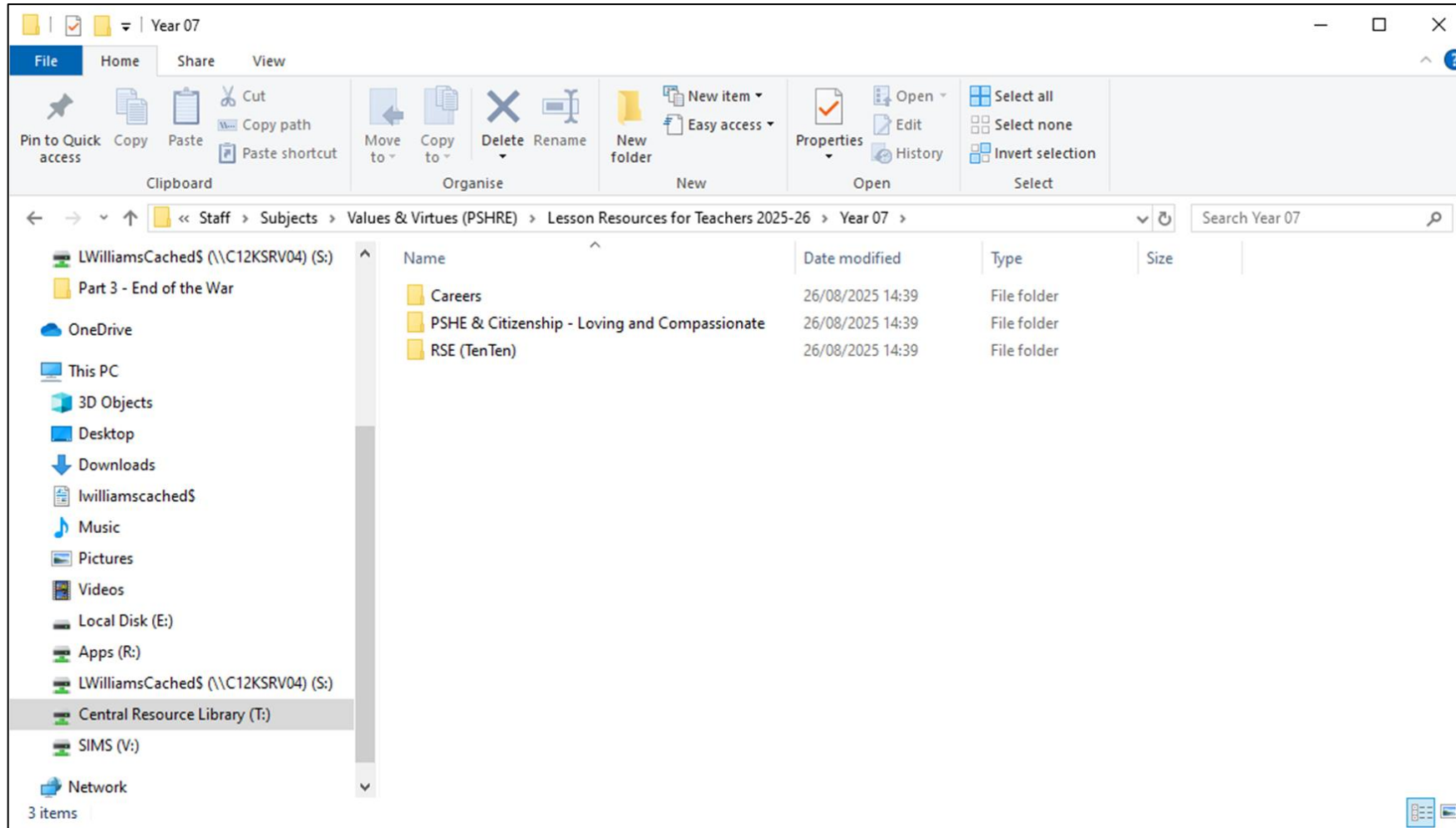
Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Workbook	26/08/2025 14:39	File folder	
7.1. Baseline and What is PSHRE.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,201 KB
7.2. What are the British Values.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	935 KB
7.3. How do we learn at St Mary's.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	10,900 KB
7.4. How do we communicate at St Mary'...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,470 KB
7.5. How do we build the St Mary's com...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	2,641 KB
7.6. How do we use social media safely.p...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	4,491 KB
7.7. What are the types of bullying.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,283 KB
7.8. What are the dangers of stereotypes...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,227 KB
7.9. How can we keep our bodies healthy...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,318 KB
7.10. What are the dangers of smoking a...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	22,828 KB
7.11. How can we keep our minds health...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	908 KB
7.12. Why is connection to other importa...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	933 KB
7.13. Why is it important to have aspirati...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,267 KB
7.14. How can I keep safe on the road.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	2,569 KB
7.15. How can I keep safe on the railways ...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,242 KB
7.16. How can we be active citizens.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	2,011 KB
7.17. Who represents me.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	34,263 KB
7.18. What are laws and how are they enf...	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	969 KB

The status bar at the bottom indicates "25 items" and "1 item selected 1.17 MB".



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## SUPPORTING DELIVERY

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
01. Who Am I	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
02. Changing Bodies	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
03. Healthy Inside and Out	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
04. Where We Come From	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
05. Family and Friends	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
06. My Life on Screen	26/08/2025 14:39	Internet Shortcut	1 KB
Y07_RSE_LearningLog.pptx	26/08/2025 14:39	Microsoft PowerP...	1,185 KB



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## PUPIL EXPECTATIONS

Pupils are expected to:

- ✓ Follow the '4Ps'.
- ✓ Treat 'Values & Virtues' as any other subject on their timetable.
- ✓ Keep their 'Values & Virtues' folders neat and tidy.
- ✓ Actively engage in the content.

*Pupils may not always wish to discuss their thoughts and feelings (nor should they be forced to) but they should still record their learning journey in the workbooks.*



AT ST MARY'S  
WE ARE ALWAYS:

-  **PUNCTUAL**
-  **PREPARED**
-  **PRODUCTIVE**
-  **POLITE**



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## DELIVERY EXPECTATIONS



### VALUES & VIRTUES

PER MARIAM

#### VALUES & VIRTUES EXPECTATIONS

To ensure our Values & Virtues curriculum is delivered meaningfully and consistently, here are **five key expectations** we ask all staff to follow:



##### TEACH WITH PURPOSE

These lessons matter – please deliver them directly and with care. They're not filler or cover lessons, but essential time to guide pupils through real-life topics that shape who they are and who they'll become. Please follow the Curriculum Map unless directed otherwise.



##### RECORD LEARNING CLEARLY

Make sure pupils record their learning in the right place:  
RSE (Ten:Ten) topics → *RSE Learning Log*  
PSHE & Citizenship → *PSHE and Citizenship Workbook*  
Careers Education → *Careers Workbook*  
This helps us track progress and evidence what's been covered.



##### BE PRESENT AND CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Give the lesson your full attention – your presence sets the tone. Discussions should be well-managed, calm, and inclusive. Everyone deserves to feel heard and respected.



##### BE SENSITIVE AND RESPECT PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

*Values and Virtues* touches on personal and emotional topics. While we encourage open conversations, pupils should never feel pressured to share personal experiences. Be mindful of different backgrounds, beliefs, and circumstances – every pupil's story is unique.



##### STAY ALERT TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Because of the nature of these discussions, students may disclose things that raise concerns. If this happens, follow the *St Mary's Safeguarding Procedure*. If you're unsure, speak to a DSL straight away – you're never alone in handling these situations.



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## DELIVERY EXPECTATIONS



**VALUES & VIRTUES**  
PER MARIAM

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# VALUES & VIRTUES

## MONITORING & EVALUATION

### Monitoring includes:

- ✓ Learning Walks
  - SLT
  - Heads of Year
  - Stakeholders
- ✓ Folder 'Looks'

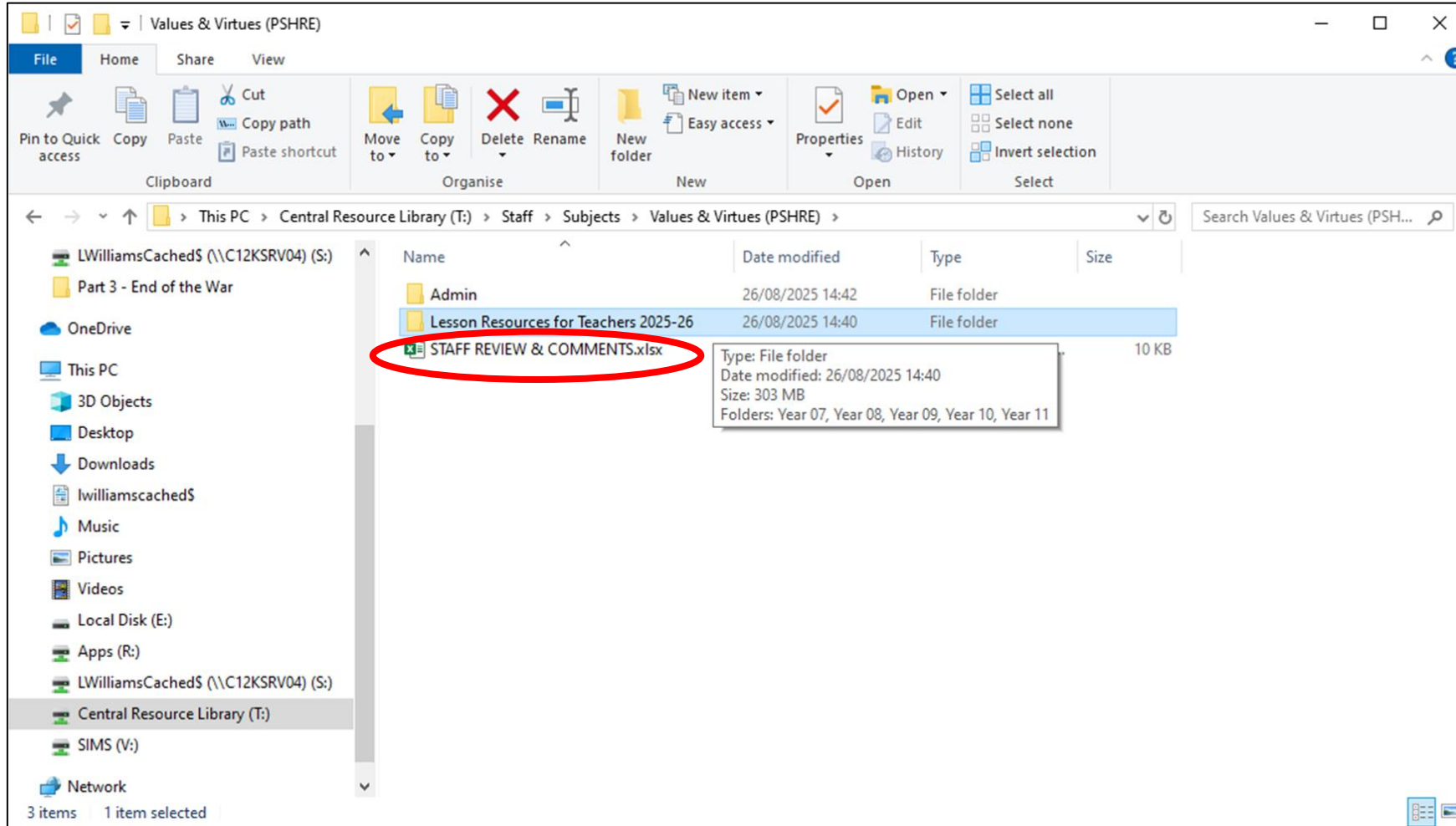
### Evaluation includes:

- ✓ Opportunity for regular staff review comments
- ✓ Staff Feedback Surveys
- ✓ Pupil Voice



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## MONITORING & EVALUATION





# VALUES & VIRTUES

## CHANGES TO TEN:TEN

Life to the Full - Year 7

### Theme 1: Who Am I

The core religious understanding taught at the outset of this programme of work is that we are created by God as one whole person, both body and soul. Students will be encouraged to celebrate their uniqueness, value and dignity, which derive from God, and subsequently to recognise the respect they should have for themselves and others as persons.

Theme Guidance



UNIT 1

GROUND  
RULES

#### Unit 1: Ground Rules (08:00)

The ground rules for Life to the Full are explored and students are invited to create their own.



Go to Unit 1

UNIT 2

#### Unit 2: Who Are You? (07:00)

Students will explore who they are and share how they can best describe




# VALUES & VIRTUES

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Life to the Full - Year 7


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Theme Guidance 


**UNIT 1**  
**GROUND RULES**

**Unit 1: Ground Rules (08:00)**  
The ground rules for Life to the Full are explored and students are invited to create their own.

 Go to Unit 1


**UNIT 2**  
**Who Are You?**

**Unit 2: Who Are You? (07:00)**  
Students will explore who they are and share how they can best describe themselves to others.

 Go to Unit 2


**UNIT 3**  
**WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE?**

**Unit 3: What Makes You Unique? (20:00)**  
Big questions about life, sex, puberty and God are introduced. Students consider the things that make them unique.

 Go to Unit 3

**UNIT 4**  
**BODY AND SOUL**

**Unit 4: Body and Soul (09:00)**  
Christians believe we are a unity of body and soul. Students will reflect on how hearing 'God loves you' makes them feel.

 Go to Unit 4

**UNIT 5**  
**LIFE TO THE FULL**

**Unit 5: Life to the Full (06:00)**  
A theme recap is shared, and the students are invited to get to know God better through the programme.

- Videos have been split up into 'units'.
- You will need to navigate through the 'theme' 'units'.



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## CHANGES TO TEN:TEN

Life to the Full - Year 7


### Theme 1: Who Am I

The core religious understanding taught at the outset of this programme of work is that we are created by God as one whole person, both body and soul. Students will be encouraged to celebrate their uniqueness, value and dignity, which derive from God, and subsequently to recognise the respect they should have for themselves and others as persons.

Theme Guidance

- Unit 1: Ground Rules (08:00)**  
The ground rules for Life to the Full are explored and students are invited to create their own.
- Unit 2: Who Are You? (07:00)**  
Students will explore who they are and share how they can best describe themselves to others.
- Unit 3: What Makes You Unique? (20:00)**  
Big questions about life, sex, puberty and God are introduced. Students consider the things that make them unique.
- Unit 4: Body and Soul (09:00)**  
Christians believe we are a unity of body and soul. Students will reflect on how hearing 'God loves you' makes them feel.
- Unit 5: Life to the Full (06:00)**  
A theme recap is shared, and the students are invited to get to know God better through the programme.

- Videos have been split up into 'units'.
- You will need to navigate through the 'theme' 'units'.
- RSE learning logs *should* reflect the units.
- **This does not apply to Year 10 tutors this year who will be using legacy materials for 2025-26.**

<b>Session 1</b> Who am I?	Date:
<b>Ground Rules</b>	
"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)	
Dear Lord, Open my heart and mind to your voice speaking to me throughout this session and throughout this day. Teach me your ways and bring me closer to you. Amen	
	
<b>Who are you?</b>	
What 5 things describe you?	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
<b>What makes you unique?</b>	
Notes and key points:	
Independent writing task:	
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# VALUES & VIRTUES

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## QUESTIONS



# VALUES & VIRTUES

## DEALING WITH SENSITIVE TOPICS & QUESTIONS

### INSET 2025 Dealing with Sensitive Topics and Questions

Adapted from the PSHE Association guidance 'Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE education classroom'



#### Introduction

Discussing and teaching about complex or sensitive issues safely is central to best practice in all PSHE teaching, as every topic in PSHE education has the potential to be sensitive for pupils. PSHE teachers should therefore approach all lessons with the assumption that at least one pupil could have direct experience of the topic being discussed or find it sensitive for another reason and should plan their language use, resources and activities accordingly. Furthermore, there are also immediate controversial issues rising from the news which may capture pupils' attention or cause them concern (e.g. recent painting of St George's flags on crossings or the Israel-Gaza conflict). Although the PSHE association does not advocate knee jerk reactions, in certain circumstances children and young people will naturally want to discuss high profile events and will look to adults in school to support them, to provide reassurance and to talk through these issues.

It is vital that in each case, pupils can have such discussions and engage in learning activities in a safe climate of trust, cooperation and support. PSHE education therefore has a key role to play in developing their knowledge, skills and confidence in approaching complex issues and in recognising that attitudes towards these are likely to be influenced by their own values, worldview and interpretation of messages from the media – both mainstream and social.

Whatever the subject matter, whether you feel it is a sensitive issue or not, following the guidance below will ensure a safe learning and teaching environment for your pupils and for you—allowing you to address any elements of PSHE education with confidence.

#### Establishing a safe learning environment

A safe learning environment helps pupils to share feelings, explore values and attitudes, express opinions and consider those of others, without attracting negative feedback. As well as encouraging more open discussion, it also helps to ensure that teachers are not anxious about unexpected disclosures or comments and that pupils are not put on the spot, upset or traumatised.

It is good practice for teachers to:

- work with pupils to establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other in discussion
- provide opportunities for pupils to discuss issues in small groups as well as sharing views with the whole class
- make boxes available in which pupils can place anonymous questions or concerns
- provide access to balanced information and differing views to help pupils clarify their own opinions (whilst making clear that behaviours such as racism, homophobia, bi-phobia, transphobia, discrimination and bullying are never acceptable in any form)
- be cautious about expressing their own views, bearing in mind that they are in an influential position and must work within the school's values, policies and the law
- be sensitive to the needs and experiences of individuals, as some pupils may have direct experience of some of the issues
- always work within St Mary's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality (and ensure that pupils understand school policies on disclosure of confidential information and following up concerns in a more appropriate setting outside lessons – never promise not to share information with the right people to keep children safe)
- make pupils aware of reliable sources of support both inside and outside the school – these resources and agencies will be signposted in lessons, teachers are not expected to seek them out themselves.

#### Reflection Questions

Discuss the below questions with a colleague based on the article adapted from the PSHE association.

- Introduction**  
How can I remain aware that some pupils may have personal experiences linked to the topic, and adapt my delivery in the moment to ensure sensitivity?
- Establishing a safe learning environment**  
How do I recognise when a pupil is feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in a discussion, and what can I do immediately to support them?
- Ground rules**  
How can I consistently uphold and model the agreed ground rules so that they become a natural part of classroom discussions?
- Distancing techniques**  
How can I use the provided scenarios or case studies to encourage objective discussion without personalising the issue?
- Handling tricky questions**  
How can I respond to challenging or unexpected questions in a way that maintains trust, curiosity, and protects pupils' wellbeing?

#### Scenarios – putting it into practice

Discuss the below scenarios with a colleague on how you would approach these potential scenarios.

##### Scenario 1: Sensitive disclosure

What would I do if a pupil shared something personal in class that suggested they may be at risk, even though I had set clear ground rules about not sharing personal experiences?

##### Scenario 2: Strong disagreement

What would I do if two pupils strongly disagreed during a discussion and it started to become personal, despite the ground rule of "challenge the opinion, not the person"?

##### Scenario 3: Tricky/embarassing question

What would I do if a pupil asked a question in front of the class that felt deliberately designed to embarrass me or make others laugh?

