

## The Rowans AP Academy: Personal Development Framework

### The 'WHY'

#### Why Personal Development Matters at The Rowans

At The Rowans AP Academy, we believe that an exceptional personal development offer is not an add-on—it is fundamental to the transformation and success of our pupils. Many arrive disengaged, with disrupted educational journeys and complex social, emotional, and mental health needs. For these pupils, traditional academic routes alone are not enough. Our personal development framework is designed to rebuild self-worth, develop resilience, and provide every child with the character, skills and cultural literacy they need to thrive both in and beyond school. We do this not just to prepare them for exams—but to equip them for life so they are well rounded individuals who can make positive contributions to their communities.

“Positive childhood experiences, also known as PCEs, are protective experiences that help heal the brain from trauma and promote healthy mental health in adulthood.”

#### Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE)

This framework sets out The Rowans AP Academy's inclusive and tailored approach to personal development, rooted in its core values, trauma-informed ethos, and emphasis on relational practice. The offer is shaped by the academy's unique context—serving pupils with significant disadvantage and/or SEND—and is deliberately designed to be broad, bespoke, and impactful. Personal development at The Rowans is accessible to all and closely aligned with the diverse needs, ambitions, and aspirations of its pupils. Positive relationships, built on mutual respect and trust, are central to school life and are consistently celebrated by pupils, families, and staff alike.

The Rowans AP Academy's commitment to personal development concentrates on three main areas:

**The development of pupils' character**

**Access to a wide, rich set of experiences**

**Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents & interests**

The Personal Development (PD) curriculum, delivered through PSHE lessons, form time, assemblies and woven throughout the curriculum in all years aims to support pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives: now, and in the future.

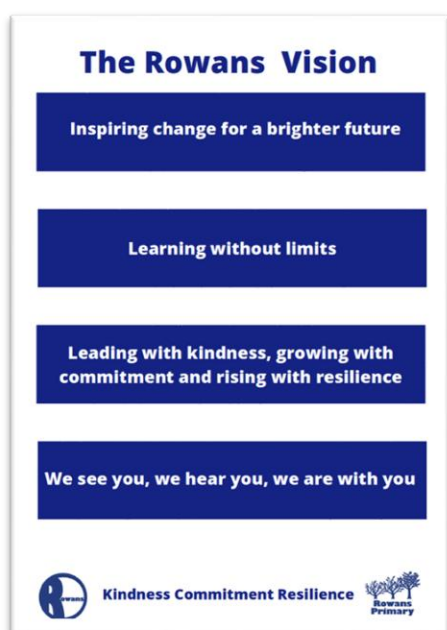
It aims to help children and young people to stay healthy and safe, whilst preparing them to make the most of life and work. All years engage in PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) where there are 3 core strands to the curriculum: Health & Wellbeing, Relationships, and Living in the Wider World. Alongside PSHE, there is focus on RSE (Relationships & Sex Education); EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion); British Values; CRC (the Convention of the Rights of the Child), and Careers. House events build on our sense of community and all Years participate in House events. We also focus on each individual's sense of achievement through our robust daily tracking and rewards system with the use of day sheets and values points and weekly awards for student of the week, attendance star and interventions star of the week.

The Academy's vision aligned with The Howard Academy Trust values supports our ambition for disadvantaged pupils:

## THAT Values

<b>Inclusivity</b>	Ensuring that our disadvantaged children have the same opportunities and experiences as other children who do not face the same barriers.
<b>Dignity</b>	We understand the implications and stigma attached to the terms 'disadvantaged' which families may feel.
<b>Respect</b>	Therefore, we conduct all our work sensitively and with respect for the family without drawing adverse impact to them.
<b>Ambition</b>	We aim for all of our children to reach the expected standard by the time they leave a THAT academy so they are ready for the next step of their journey.

## Rowans AP Academy Vision and Values



## The 'WHAT'

### The Rowans overarching philosophy and culture

- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** The Rowans operates with a trauma-informed approach, where all stakeholders work together to ensure continuing success and enable young people to change the direction of their lives. This includes an open, honest platform for pupil voice, taking time to listen within a non-judgemental trauma-informed approach, and looking past the behaviour to see the child. Therapeutic interventions are embedded, and staff are trained as emotionally available adults.
- **Core values:** Daily school life is based on Rowans values of kindness, commitment, and resilience. Our ethos and values are "inspiring change for a brighter future," "where the alternative is not inferior," and "equipping pupils with qualifications and core values". Team spirit is promoted and celebrated through shared values. All children who attend The Rowans have experienced some level of disappointment of failure in their educational lives and it is our core belief that by seeing the child and working with them holistically all children can experience success.
- **Character Education:** Character education is embedded through daily interactions, the values system, the PSHE curriculum and weekly themes. Pupils are explicitly taught and recognised for demonstrating character traits such as integrity, resilience, empathy, and responsibility. These traits

are also modelled consistently by staff and reinforced through the use of day sheets, assemblies, and values celebrations. The hidden curriculum explicitly shows how character education is implicitly woven in everything we do.

- **Child-centred environment:** Staff recognise and value the importance human connection and relationships, encouraging new experiences to enhance pupil's understanding of the world. A safe environment is provided for pupils to discover and express themselves whilst developing and growing at their own pace.
- **Safe and consistent boundaries:** The school environment is safe, reliable, and consistent, with staff providing clear boundaries rooted in kindness.

### Relationships and Community

- **Positive relationships:** Staff continually model and develop positive and supportive relationships built on mutual respect and trust. Positive relationships are a strong focus that helps pupils re-engage with education. Where pupils have experienced trauma in their lives secure and safe attachments are crucial to overcoming barriers to learning and for pupils to experience success which can take many forms.
- **Healthy relationships:** Pupils are supported to identify and build healthy relationships with those around them, encouraging self-respect and respect for others. Weekly sessions on healthy relationships and consent are taught as part of the curriculum.
- **Community engagement:** Pupils are supported to foster relationships with multi-agency professionals and the wider community. The school maintains strong and sustained relationships with parents/carers and external agencies to provide the best possible care, guidance, and support. Community is fostered through family-style lunches, working closely with local community groups, shared responsibilities, the house system and belonging to a team, and the innovation, information and celebration assemblies held weekly.
- **Sense of belonging:** Pupils are part of a strong and loving community, understanding their place within it. Team spirit is promoted and celebrated through shared values, creating lasting memories. All pupils feel welcome, valued, respected, and that they belong within the school community. This is particularly important given the previous experiences of education that many of them have had.

### Well-being and mental health

- **Holistic support:** The school community provides an open, honest platform for pupil voice and co-regulation support. Leaders ensure support is appropriate, and staff are vigilant in identifying vulnerable pupils or groups needing additional support. All staff are active and highly vigilant in supporting and caring for pupils, possessing the necessary expertise for high-quality support. They are highly skilled emotionally available adults. The community recognises and assists all pupils and their families, offering guidance and support. The systems in place to support pupils and their parents are thorough with various avenues of support available. The welfare and attendance lead, the interventions lead and the form tutors play a crucial role in this every day support. There is a directory of mental health support routinely used to support pupils and to make appropriate referrals. We have been awarded the Carnegie centre of excellence for mental health in schools gold award.
- **Emotional literacy and resilience:** Core values and daily emotional check-ins are integral to the trauma-informed culture. Pupils are equipped with tools to build resilience and make sustained positive changes. The personal development program covers content related to pupils' mental and physical health.

- **Nurture and care:** The Rowans models compassion, communication, and care. The form tutor and TA model ensures every pupil is 'known' and receives targeted support.
- **The behaviour curriculum:** A core element of developing pupils' character is teaching them how to be a positive part of the community with a clear understanding of how to behave appropriately. This is a proactive, trauma informed approach from all staff. The behaviour curriculum focuses on firm and consistent boundaries, relational practice and restoration alongside consequences. Restorative practices are based on 'why', 'what' and 'how', ensuring consistency of approach.
- **The Hidden curriculum:** Outlines the implicit, relational, and emotional aspects of school life that support pupils' personal growth, structured around key themes—Relationships, Opportunities, Aspirations, Nurture, Sense of Belonging—and emphasises a trauma-informed, compassionate approach that fosters resilience, self-worth, and community connection.



### The curriculum

- The curriculum is the main driver for developing pupil's personal development. Throughout the academy's curriculum there is a relentless focus on:
  - Responsible, respectful and active citizens who are able to play their part and become actively involved in public life as adults.
  - Pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance.
  - Pupils' character, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others.
  - Pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy.
  - Pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy, eat healthily and maintain an active lifestyle, including giving ample opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day and through extra-curricular activities.
  - Pupils' age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through appropriate relationships and sex education

- **PSHE curriculum:** In particular, the PSHE curriculum includes weekly sessions on key topics such as healthy relationships, consent, drugs, and resilience. Pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe, and prepare for school, life and the world of work. The PSHE curriculum is divided into the 3 main strands of: Living in the wider world, Relationships and sex education (RSE) and Health and wellbeing. A broad range of topics are delivered through a series of assemblies, guest speakers, educational visits, inter- house competitions and tailored lessons, on a series of topics, both current and historical. The Rowans has won the Medway outstanding PHSE provision award and the better Medway silver award.
- **Safeguarding, including Online Safety:** An important part of personal development is how pupils keep themselves safe. As well as the reactive safeguarding support and input, there is a clear and coherent plan on what the school teaches to the pupils and when this is delivered.
- **Skills for learning:** The programme is designed to close learning gaps and support pupils in making meaningful progress across the curriculum. This is delivered through a carousel of targeted interventions and emotional regulation input, including:  
Times Tables Rockstars to build numeracy fluency  
Speech and Language support to enhance communication skills  
Reading interventions to boost literacy and comprehension  
This holistic approach ensures that academic progress is supported alongside emotional development, enabling pupils to thrive both in and beyond the classroom.
- **Practical skills for adulthood:** This curriculum also equips pupils with practical skills for independent living, including budgeting, CV building, and interview preparation.
- **Tools for personal growth and readiness for next steps:** Pupils are equipped with the tools to become the best versions of themselves, fostering confidence and resilience. The school uses a holistic tracking measure.

#### Careers, aspirations and future pathways

- **Growth:** Staff celebrate and acknowledge all steps of personal growth, achievement, and development. The school creates a platform where pupils aspire to show others their true potential and worth.
- **High-quality careers guidance:** Careers education is Gatsby-aligned, providing tailored support, extended work experience placements, employer workshops, and vocational tasters. The careers provision is of high quality, structured, sequenced, and fully integrated into the curriculum, tailored to the needs, ambitions, and aspirations of individuals. Staff work in continuous partnership with parents/carers, local employers, and further education institutions to provide a comprehensive package of guidance, opportunities, and experiences to help pupils decide on their next steps.

#### Opportunities and enrichment

- **Flexible response:** Pupils are given continual opportunities to restart, reset, and re-engage without judgement through a flexible approach.
- **Enrichment Week:** Each academic year includes a dedicated Enrichment Week, providing pupils with immersive learning opportunities beyond the classroom. These weeks are themed and designed to promote cultural capital, curiosity, and the application of personal development skills in real-world contexts.
- **Leavers' Celebrations:** Year 6 and Year 11 pupils are supported with transition planning, celebration events and bespoke personal development sessions to ensure readiness for their next phase. End-of-

year leavers' assemblies and events allow pupils to reflect on their journey and be celebrated by the school community.

- **Wider opportunities:** Enrichment is a key area of The Rowans. Pupils participate in a wide range of experiences in addition to the curriculum, there is a comprehensive offer of trips and visits balancing the importance of the academic curriculum and interventions with exposure to cultural activities and experiences. The Rowans aims to widen and broaden pupils' life experiences and truly showing them what is available in the world around them.
- **Celebration of achievements:** The Rowans actively celebrates pupil success. There are many avenues and opportunities for this including initiatives like "Student of the week," "Interventions star of the week," "Attendance star of the week," and the "Headteacher's award," acknowledging academic and personal efforts. The Rowans holds end-of-term assemblies which showcase pupil achievements across the term, reinforce core values, and promote community spirit. Achievements are also celebrated through regular newsletters sent to parents and carers, which include updates on trips, enrichment activities, and individual successes.

### **Pupil voice**

- **Pupil voice:** The Rowans provides an open, honest platform for pupil voice, taking the time to listen within a non-judgemental approach. Leaders listen to and take account of pupils' views. The school encourages pupil participation through initiatives like the Student Council.
- **Equitable access:** The personal development program is an entitlement for every pupil, with appropriate adaptations made for individuals. The Rowans takes all reasonable steps to ensure all pupils can access the same personal development and careers program. The form tutor model ensures every pupil is 'known'. Celebration assemblies, the use of social media and shout-outs celebrate individual achievements. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND benefit fully from all opportunities, which are expertly designed to meet their specific needs, ambitions, and aspirations.

### **The 'HOW'**

Area	Key Elements
<b>Philosophy &amp; Culture</b>	Trauma-informed, core values, character education, safe environment
<b>Relationships &amp; Community</b>	Positive relationships, healthy relationships, community engagement, sense of belonging
<b>Well-being &amp; Mental Health</b>	Holistic support, emotional literacy, resilience, nurture and care
<b>Curriculum &amp; Skills</b>	PSHE (Health, Relationships, Wider World), Skills for learning, "Rowans 6"
<b>Careers &amp; Aspirations</b>	Gatsby-aligned careers guidance, vocational tasters, future planning
<b>Opportunities &amp; Enrichment</b>	Enrichment Week, trips, cultural capital, celebration of achievements
<b>Pupil Voice &amp; Equity</b>	Student council, equitable access, SEND and disadvantaged support

## Character Education at The Rowans AP Academy



At The Rowans, we believe that Character Education is not a standalone initiative—it is embedded in everything we do. Through our PSHE curriculum, enrichment activities, and cultural capital experiences, we nurture the whole child, helping pupils to grow in confidence, resilience, and self-worth.

Our approach is rooted in experiential learning, providing meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore their interests, develop their strengths, and build positive relationships across the school community.

### Character Education at The Rowans supports pupils to:

- Build resilience and develop strategies to overcome personal challenges.
- Engage in co-curricular opportunities that broaden horizons and spark curiosity.
- Grow in independence, self-esteem, and a sense of personal responsibility.
- Recognise and celebrate their own achievements and those of others.
- Make informed, ethical choices and manage risks with confidence.
- Develop a strong sense of belonging, voice, and influence within the school community.
- Prepare for future pathways, with a clear sense of purpose and aspiration.
- Become confident communicators, able to express themselves clearly and empathetically.

Our core values—Kindness, Commitment, and Resilience—are woven through every aspect of school life. These values are not only taught but lived, modelled by staff and celebrated through our daily interactions, rewards systems, and community events.

We also focus on developing key personal attributes such as:

- Initiative and intrinsic motivation: Encouraging pupils to take ownership of their learning and personal growth, and to embrace new opportunities with confidence.
- Communication: Supporting pupils to develop strong verbal and non-verbal communication skills, including active listening, empathy, and respectful dialogue. The Rowans communication standards set out our agreed commitment for communication.

At The Rowans, Character Education is a powerful tool for transformation, helping pupils to re-engage with learning, rebuild trust, and realise their full potential.

### **THAT Personal Development Pillars**

As a THAT school our pupils Personal Development is based around allowing all pupils to have experiences based upon the following pillars of personal development, these pillars are used to measure the impact of the Personal Development offer.

⇒ **Leadership, Community & Service**

Developing the pupils' contribution to their society and their role as a positive member of the community.

⇒ **Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Maths (S.T.E.A.M)**

Explores pupils critical thinking and creativity skills as well as helping pupils develop a variety of skills, including communication, collaboration, and flexibility.

⇒ **Health & Sports**

Explores developing the pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle including physical and mental health.

⇒ **Cultural**

Broadens pupils' understanding and appreciation of the diverse world around them. It encourages exploration of different traditions, beliefs, arts, and histories—both locally and globally.

⇒ **Enterprise, Economy & Careers**

Helps students develop skills and mindsets that can benefit them in many areas of their lives. These skills can help pupils become more employable and entrepreneurial, and can also help them develop resilience, confidence, and self-esteem.

⇒ **Curriculum Enrichment**

Looks at experiences and opportunities which extend the pupils curriculum beyond the classroom.



