

Character Development Programme at APA 2021-2

Mission statement



Preparing every

Student to be

pillar of

any community

Our over-arching vision for all students at Ark Putney Academy is for them to stand as pillars within any community. Through the delivery of an ambitious academic, vocational and pastoral curriculum, our goal is to enable APA students to enter a higher education course, or career of their choice by the time they leave our school. This is not just about academic qualifications; it is also about developing the character traits that provide students with the soft skills and wider knowledge that will ensure that they are successful whilst they are in our care and beyond.

Our core purpose is based on the following four principles:

Our Character Programme is founded upon our academy's core values:

Value 1 

An appreciation and
curiosity
for life and learning

Value 2 

The **courage**
and **ambition**
to unlock their
full potential

Value 3 

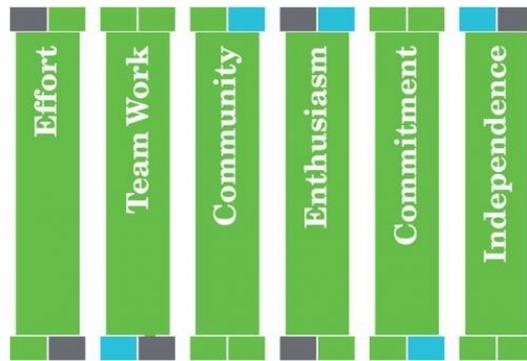
A desire to
contribute to
society in a
positive way

Value 4 

A sense of
self-awareness
combined with the
integrity to be
compassionate
towards others

Our Six Pillars

This vision is supported by six key values which drive our common purpose. We call them our “pillars” after the strong columns that support our main school building. These are effort, team-work, community, enthusiasm, commitment and independence. These values permeate every level of academy life at APA. They are the focus of our assemblies, reflections and tutorials. They guide us in how we behave, how we work and in what kind of people we want to be.



Our Character Development Programme

Incorporates the following:

RSE/PSCHE and RE

Citizenship and British Values

Our understanding of the 9 protected characteristics as part of the Equalities Act 2010

Careers and Destination Education

How our Character Development programme is delivered

Our Character Development programme is embedded into the everyday life of the school and is threaded through the taught curriculum and pastoral structures of the academy which includes:

- **Curriculum Lessons**

Through the taught curriculum, teachers re-enforce character traits through the application of the six pillar skills. Pillar points are awarded to students in lessons when they display pillar traits to celebrate and model success. Teachers also send postcards home at the end of each week to mark a successful week in a subject. In addition to this pillar skills are signposted on the teaching power points to denote when an activity incorporates a pillar skill. An example of this could be the teamwork pillar being used when students are working in groups.

The broader APA curriculum also creates opportunities for staff to teach the nine protected characteristics and citizenship from year 7 to year 13. This ensures that students have a contextualised understanding of what it means to be a reflective,

responsible and pro-active citizen who understands fundamental British Values combined with an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

For a full outline of how Citizenship and the nine protected characteristics are taught across the curriculum please refer to our citizenship map in the curriculum section of the website

• **PSHE /RE/RSE Lessons**

The personal and social development of students is a fundamental aim of education. PSHE and RE are the planned learning which Ark Putney Academy provides in order to support and enhance the personal and social development of students and their awareness of cultural diversity through other religions and cultures. The PSHE curriculum complements and further develops the cross curricula citizenship programme.

The PSHE programme at Ark Putney Academy, aims to give students the knowledge, skills and understanding to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. The Ark Putney Academy PSHE curriculum helps our young people to achieve their potential by supporting their wellbeing and tackling issues that can affect their ability to learn, such as peer on peer violence, mental health, anxiety and unhealthy relationships. These are important life-skills and experiences that simply aren't covered developmentally by other aspects of the curriculum.

The RE programme at Ark Putney Academy, aims to give young people an opportunity to understand different faiths, develop their knowledge of their own cultural moral and social opinions. It also encourages our students to think about religion and its place in their life. Learning about religious, moral and ethical issues ensures their growth towards becoming **a pillar of any community**.

Young people's personal and social development will be influenced by their gender, sexuality, racial, social, cultural or religious background. Ark Putney Academy aims to create a positive environment in which the nine protected characteristics are celebrated and access to the curriculum and corporate life of the school is a reality for all students. PSHE should help pupils become aware of the barriers that exist in society and enable them to challenge prejudice and make safe choices in their lives.

The PSHE and RE curriculum has the following objectives:

- Helps students to deal with difficult moral and social questions that arise in their lives and in society.
- Helps students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives, as individuals, parents, workers and members of society.
- Give students the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society at local, national and international levels.
- Provides education in citizenship and democracy, which will provide coherence in the way in which all pupils are helped to develop a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
- Creates opportunities to understand and respect different religions and their stance on moral issues.

We want our students to be aware and able to act and react when witnessing or being part of an unhealthy relationship. The intent of this curriculum is to highlight through our **six pillars** the importance of all students feeling comfortable when working through Sex and Relationship Education. With a focus on the RSE and HE curriculum students will be able to understand the risks, legality, signs and truths during their relationships and sex education.

PSHE is taught by tutors through a rolling programme of 50- minute lessons with every third week being an RE lesson in addition to RE dropdown days and visits. It is also linked to other aspects of the character curriculum.

To access the full PSHE/RSE/RE curriculum please go to the curriculum section of the website within character development

- **Assemblies**

Assemblies are an important aspect of life at APA and are directly linked to each of our values and pillars, thus further embedding our character programme. Each student at APA experiences two assemblies per week. One is in the form of a whole school assembly and the second is in the form of a year group led predominantly by the Head of Year. Each whole school assembly is directly linked to a **pillar skill**, British Value and world religion context. The whole school assembly programme is utilised to complement the RSE/PSHE curriculum and delivered in line with the world calendar of events, memorials, and celebrations.

Heads of Year assemblies link directly to a pillar skill and also complement the RSE/PSHE curriculum by developing character through tailoring the moral message to the current needs and demands of the year group. For example, supporting students in their use of appropriate language when faced with conflict, or accepting students who may be different to themselves through gender, ethnicity, sexuality or religion. These assemblies also support students on the wider journey through school and the key milestones they face such as Y9 options or Y11 applying to sixth forms. They provide students the opportunity to participate through presenting or performing which personifies our **pillar skills**.

- **Tutorial Programme**

The pastoral tutor programme is an opportunity to reinforce the values and ethos of the academy. Students have a chance to explore messages shared in the assemblies and reflect on them. Each week students complete a range of sessions including; a current affairs session written by our sixth formers which encourages them to practice their pillar skills of independence and community, as well as having the chance to debate and discuss topical issues which improves their oracy skills. This links directly to British Values and our citizenship curriculum. The tutor reading programme enables the students to engage with current British authors such as Benjamin Zephaniah and Alex Wheatle and provides an entry point into discussions around issues facing students in modern day Britain such as racism. It enables a focus on the pillar skills of effort and enthusiasm as students are expected to read out loud, and work in teams during the discussion tasks. Students spend one morning a week

focusing on one key area of the career market where there is under-representation of diversity, for example the energy sector. They then have the chance to review their pillar skillset and identify areas for development.

• **Pillar Days and Mornings**

At the beginning of each new school term we always start with a pillar morning or day. The purpose of these events is to provide the academy with the opportunity to remind students of our character building values and our pillar skills after a break from school life. These days always start with an equipment and uniform check, to reinforce the pillar skill of commitment to the community and their own learning. Each year group have an opportunity to come together as a community to reflect on their year group values, reset and focus on the term ahead. Students have the chance to reflect on their Attitude to Learning scores from the previous term and identify individual areas for development, which are linked to the six pillar skills, and how they can make a more positive impact to their wider community. This is where tutors can use their knowledge of their tutor groups to guide them in their target setting and help those who need more support. In-line with the academy's reading focus, we also take the time to do an extended reading session where students will look into some of the wider issues around the book they are reading, for example looking in more detail about the author's life or where/when the book is set.

• **Extra- Curricular Programme**

Our Extra -Curricular programme has been developed to complement our academic curriculum. We believe that our extra-curricular programme offers a wide range of enriching opportunities that are designed to broaden and develop the character of our students at Ark Putney Academy. At APA, there is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities on offer including popular sport and creative arts provision, and opportunities to take part in subject-specific workshops, which provide opportunities for students to enrich and extend their learning beyond the classroom. These activities are an important and exciting feature of school life and contribute enormously to our student's social, moral, spiritual and academic development and helps develop their pillar skills. So, whether it is cooking or coding, football or netball, debating or film club; we have something that celebrates the diversity of our school community. Some of the extra-curricular opportunities are led by external agencies in order to broaden the experiences further. Programmes such as Debate Mate, Urban Scholars, Jack Petchey and Duke of Edinburgh provide our student body with invaluable opportunities to develop themselves as well-rounded individuals, build self-esteem and inspire higher aspirations for their future. In addition, where our staff body do not have specific expertise e.g. in dancing or coding, we expand our offer and employ external agencies to run regular activities in these areas.

All students in KS3 are expected to attend at least two extra-curricular clubs of their choice. Clubs are run at lunchtime or after school clubs start straight after school and will finish by 4.30pm. Students can sign-up with their tutor in advance and clubs are run on a first come first served basis, so we encourage them to register their interest as soon as possible. The extra-curricular offer is fully expanded throughout the school; please see the sixth form section of the website for further details.

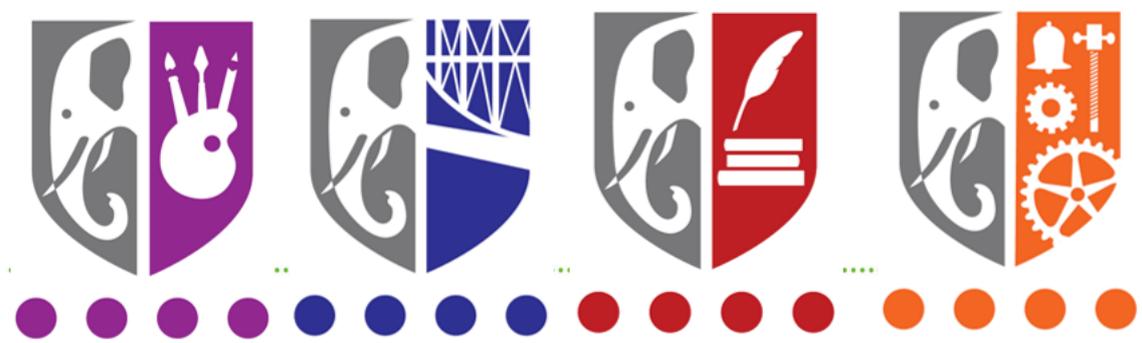
In addition, we run a band programme at KS3, where all students are given the option of learning a musical instrument of their choice from voice, keyboard, drums and guitar without cost. Students initially learn a musical instrument in groups and then are placed in small 'bands' where they practise together with a view to performing in assemblies, in competitions such as APA's got talent and in public forums. The Band programme is an important part of the character development programme at APA as it teaches students the pillar skills of teamwork, effort, enthusiasm and commitment through practise and community and independence through performance.

For further information regarding our clubs please click on the Enrichment tab in the life a school section of the website

- **Trips and Visits**

Trips and visits are a crucial part of life at APA as they provide students with the cultural capital to further develop into rounded individuals who can speak confidently about their experiences of living in the capital city. As part of this offer, we utilise the location of the academy by organising trips to an extensive range of places; from The Globe Theatre, to The Royal Parks; Sky Sports Studio, to The Cine Lumiere, as well as the plethora of London museums available. The Academy has committed to providing each student with a minimum of three trips or visits per academic year. Two of these take place in trips and activities week in the last week of term, and one is a curriculum-based trip linked to the year group's curriculum content. Residential trips such as WW1 battlefields and trips abroad have been a traditional part of APA and are being re-introduced following the COVID restrictions. Finally, trips are embedded as part of our rewards system with termly reward trips taking place to celebrate high attendance and attitude to learning.

- **The House System**



The House System is a vertical system that includes all stakeholders in the APA community. There are four houses which were selected by students in 2017 (Rowling, Brunel, McQueen and Turing) The role of the House System at Ark Putney Academy is to extend the curriculum beyond the academic with a broader personal development focus on building character. The House System gives students a range of opportunities to develop and stretch their talents and interests outside of a classroom and re-enforces the values of the school and their individual and collective pillar skills. The House System promotes a culture of healthy competition through the various house cups that are presented at the end of each term in our whole school rewards assemblies. The House System is also implicitly linked to the APA Rewards System and the APA leadership programme creating opportunities for celebration and recognition of character developing traits.

Rich and varied house events take place each week and are led by the four staff Heads of House supported by sixth form house leaders. Each event creates opportunities for student to engage in competitive extra-curricular activities and collect points linked to the house cups. At the end of each term there are substantial House Days which are directly linked to building character and celebrating success and diversity.

For further details of the house system please click on the relevant tab in the life at school section of the website

- **Student Leadership and Voice**

Character is at the heart of our student leadership programme by promoting respectful, inspirational and active leaders within the academy who are involved in the day-to-day leadership, feeding into the mission of the students being a pillar of any community. Student Leadership and Voice is directly linked to British Values and citizenship, in particular, *‘the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities’*

Through being a student leader, students are immersing themselves and promoting the Ark Putney Academy culture and ethos. These students represent the Academy’s pillars of: enthusiasm, effort, teamwork, independence, commitment and community

through modelling exemplary behaviour and attitude towards learning, other students and leading on extra-curricular opportunities. The student leaders support the leadership and management to promote an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all students, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation in accordance with the nine protected characteristics.

The student leadership is a 'bridge' between the staff and the students; to ensure that the students' voices are heard, and that positive change occurs within the academy.

The student leadership programme is implicitly linked to our house system. There are 4 house captains across year 7-12. One from each year group for each house in the house system: Brunel, Rowling, McQueen and Turing. Each student will hold a responsibility in working with the Heads of House within the academy to run house events and increase engagement across house-led activities.

Alongside the house leaders are the 4 senior student leaders, 2 Head Students and 2 Deputy Head Students. These students are responsible for overseeing the student council, reporting to the SLT and supporting staff with whole school events.

All students have the opportunity to and are encouraged to participate in student voice to ensure that they are part of the positive change that they want to see in the academy. Students have two opportunities to participate in student voice:

1. Through half termly surveys on their Chromebook via Microsoft Forms
2. Through the student council system each half term in their tutor groups

Each half term a question or area of discussion is sent out to the whole school and then the feedback is shared with the SLT, who in turn provide students with a response and set of action steps.

Further details of our student leadership and voice programme can be found in the life at school section of the website

• **The Rewards System**

The rewards system is implicitly linked to our house system and serves a measure how successful students are in the development of character. Positive rewards are collected in the form of pillar points for each of our six pillars both inside and outside of lessons. Students and their families can monitor the rewarding of these points via MCAS. Students also collect pillar points for their individual houses which fosters a sense of community and healthy competition. Public celebration is an important part of this process and models to the whole community the importance this element of our culture and ethos. Students are rewarded at these events with pillar badges through teacher nominations which are worn with pride on blazers. We have recently introduced a 'golden pillar' badge to acknowledge members of our community who are demonstrated outstanding character traits. The distribution of pillar badges is not exclusive to the student body as staff are peer nominated and awarded these in recognition of their contribution to the school community. The collection of the full

suite of pillar badges is the ultimate ambition with success being recognised through our 6 pillar leader board in the reception area of the academy.

- **The ATL League (Attitude to Learning)**

The ATL League is an academy wide system that sits alongside the six pillars as a measure of character. Each student in every subject is scored 1-4 on the following; attendance (commitment), classwork (effort), homework (independence), and Tone, Time, Place (community). This data is collated and students are given an average ATL score in each category. Students are then ranked across each year group. As this is a regular event, using the same criteria and students can move fluidly up and down the rank order. All criteria is non-attainment based but measures the character traits that facilitate student success. This data is shared publicly and informs parental conversations. In addition, the ATL league is linked the house and rewards system in a similar way to the pillars.

- **Our Restorative system**

The Restorative Five is at the heart of our community and is central to our behaviour system. Its goal is to work through incidents of conflict in a reflective and empathetic way. Based on five key questions it provides an opportunity for both staff and students to reflect on how they interact with each other, repair the relationship if damaged (momentarily) and set action steps to move forwards. The process is undertaken in a restorative manner and is such that it helps build character as it promotes the skills of empathy and reconciliation, it also reinforces our desire for a strong community that requires the pillar skill of effort from all to maintain.

- **Careers Education**

The academy provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for students to prepare for and encounter the world of work and HE/FE educational pathways. This is demonstrated through the APA destinations journey which forms part of our character development programme

All students receive careers advice and guidance from year 7 upwards. This is built into whole school and year group assemblies delivered by the Destinations Manager, as well as the PSHE scheme of work which is delivered by their tutor weekly. This has a focus on developing pillar skills which form the basis for success in the workplace. In addition to providing information regarding pathways to destinations and interpreting labour market information. Each term we spotlight a particular industry/sector through the Career of the Term programme, and work in partnership with employers to raise the profile of a growth sector, bring in visiting speakers, running workshops and competitions and offering workplace visits. We align career activities with subjects to embed careers within the curriculum, student and teacher 'subject leads' support this. In our Career of the Term programme we consider future

jobs and careers with current skills gaps. We have an annual careers, higher education and university fair which is accessed by Y7-13 so that all students across the academy have the opportunity to meet with aspirational employers and education providers.

In the last two years we have had inward/outward visits to/from employers such as NHS, Group M, Thames Tideway, Burberry, Royal Courts of Justice and Capgemini. All students from Y7-10 have a career focussed day once per year (in conjunction with Young Enterprise) where they meet employers in small groups and develop and practice employment related skills based on an entrepreneurial project.

All of Year 10 and 12 complete a work experience placement. Our Year 10 placement focuses on developing digital literacy skills through creating a marketing campaign for a range of employers. Our Year 12 students have completed work placements and insight days across healthcare, the built environment, law, finance and technology. Year 12 and 13 also receive a structured careers and preparation for University programme which is delivered during PSHE and off-timetable workshops (in conjunction with IntoUniversity) to ensure they make informed decisions about their future.

Overall, ARK Putney Academy is exceptionally high performing in its careers and pathways provision having completely secured 7 out of 8 Gatsby benchmarks

Further details regarding our careers offer can be found in the Life at school section of the website

• **Sixth Supplementary Programme**

The sixth form is embedded into the life of the academy and the structures and systems that are in place in KS3 and KS4 are replicated in KS5. This includes all the facets of the character development programme with some adjustments. Below is a summary of the offer at APA which continue to be based upon the principle of developing character through our six pillars.

Post-16 transition presents a pivotal life change for many students entering young adulthood. As such, it is essential that the post-16 curriculum “nurtures the whole student”, not merely in their academic studies. This is done through a varied age appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum broadly separated in to four strands: community (focusing on relationships/discrimination), health (mental/physical wellbeing/RSE), careers (enhancing knowledge of career pathways) and current affairs (understanding local and global issues and their significance to young people).

In addition, all students are encouraged to engage in super-curricular and extra-curricular activities during their time in sixth form to:

- A) develop knowledge and transferable skills for higher education and the workplace
- B) provide experiences which support their applications for university, apprenticeships, and work
- C) improve their own physical and mental well-being

Students have an opportunity to engage with super-curricular and extra-curricular activities through:

- A) Mandatory Y12 work experience and varied work placement opportunities
- B) a guest speaker programme which invites speakers from all walks of life to share their expertise and life experiences
- C) a dedicated “enrichment afternoon” one day per week

To access further details of the sixth form supplementary programme please go to the sixth form section of the website