

Personal Development: Our Wider Curriculum

At The Willows School, we believe personal development extends far beyond the classroom, encompassing every experience as an opportunity for growth and learning. We are committed to nurturing well-rounded individuals who will thrive in an ever-changing world.

What do we do?

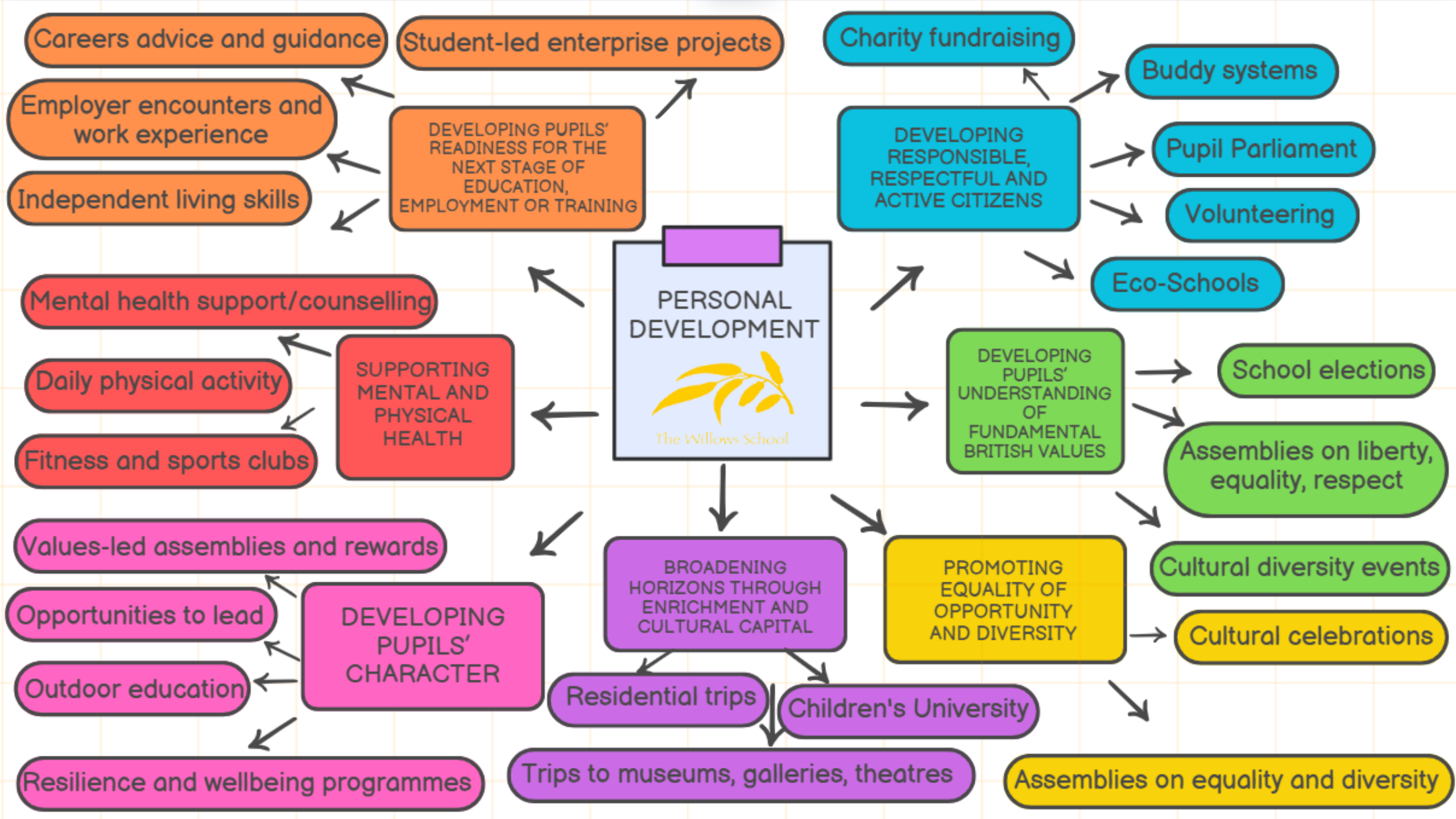
We ensure that each pupil receives a rich variety of experiences that enhance their lifelong learning in the following ways:

- Our pupils develop a deep **understanding of diversity** and **appreciate the richness** this brings to our world, embracing our school values of tolerance and respect.
- We encourage every child to **take pride in their potential future role** in society and recognise how they can **make a positive impact** as responsible citizens and advocates for positive change.
- Through learning outside the classroom, outdoor learning opportunities, and creative curriculum, we nurture pupils who are **confident, curious, and compassionate** as they engage with the world around them.
- We support each pupil to develop secure **decision-making capabilities** that consider multiple perspectives and the needs of others.
- We create opportunities for pupils to **use their voice effectively** while developing skills as **active listeners**, fostering meaningful communication and empathy.

Our approach includes:

- A values-based curriculum that promotes character development
- Regular outdoor learning experiences connecting children with nature and their community
- Strong community partnerships that enhance learning experiences
- Curriculum enrichment activities that develop cultural capital
- A focus on wellbeing and emotional intelligence

Through this holistic approach to personal development, we prepare our pupils not just for academic success, but for happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives.



Personal Development: Assembly approach

At The Willows School, we are committed to promoting equality, inclusion and respect through our weekly assemblies and Post-16 seminars. Each half term, we explore key protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010, linked to a whole-school personal development theme. These assemblies are delivered in a clear, accessible, and age-appropriate way, tailored to the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). They focus on celebrating difference, developing self-awareness, building respectful relationships and helping every pupil feel seen and valued.

Assembly Schedule

Lower & Middle School Assemblies – Tuesday mornings

Upper School Assemblies – Thursday mornings

Post-16 Seminars – Monday or Thursday mornings (discussion-based format)

Half-Termly Focus

Half Term	Protected Characteristic(s)	Whole-School Theme
Autumn 1	Disability	<i>I can dream big</i>
Autumn 2	Age	<i>I can build positive relationships</i>
Spring 1	Sex & Sexual Orientation	<i>I can celebrate differences</i>
Spring 2	Pregnancy & Maternity Marriage & Civil Partnership	<i>I can make positive choices</i>
Summer 1	Gender Reassignment & Sexual Orientation	<i>I can express myself and be understood</i>
Summer 2	Race & Religion or Belief	<i>I can celebrate differences</i>

How This Supports Pupils

Through these assemblies and seminars, pupils will:

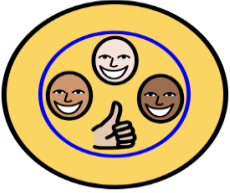
- Build understanding of themselves and others
- Learn to recognise and respect difference
- Celebrate what makes them unique
- Develop confidence to express their identity
- Be prepared for life in a diverse society

Assemblies will be supported in class through PSHE, social communication groups, and themed displays.

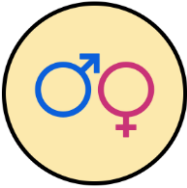
Post-16 pupils will also engage in mature, reflective discussions in their Thursday seminars.

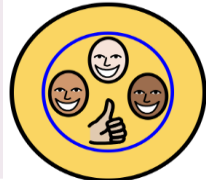
Autumn 1 2025		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Protected Characteristic Focus		Disability - learn about what makes us unique, what having special needs means for different people in our school, community and in the wider world.							
Personal Development Driver		I Can Dream Big - Challenges limiting beliefs about disability and capability - Explores diverse role models from various backgrounds and abilities							
British Values Focus		Rule of Law - This means appreciating that laws exist as an essential way of protecting the safety, freedom and rights of individuals. As laws protect everyone, each person has a responsibility to follow the rule of law							
PHSE/RSE Focus		Belonging to a community - Pupils will learn about the importance of respect, inclusion, and active participation in their communities, helping them understand their roles and responsibilities as members of a diverse society. Media literacy and digital resilience - Pupils will learn how to critically evaluate information online, recognise trustworthy sources, and develop the skills to stay safe and resilient in the digital world.							
Assemblies	Welcome Back & Introduction to Disability as a Protected Characteristic Visible and Invisible Disabilities Autism Acceptance European Day of Languages Celebrating Difference Through Talent Black History Day Kindness and Language Black History								
House and Cultural Events	WC 01/09/25	WC 08/09/25	WC 15/09/25	WC 22/09/25 Bikeability Y9 26/09/25 - European Day of Languages	WC29/09/25	WC 01/10/25 Black History Month 100 Years	WC 13/10/25	WC 20/10/25	

Auntumn 2 2025		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Protected Characteristic Focus		Age - learn about how things change as we get older, what is the difference between an adult and a child (link to worries), consider old age and illness						
Personal Development Driver		I Can Build Positive Relationships - Focuses on developing friendship and social skills - Develops awareness of different types of relationships and families						
British Values Focus		Democracy - This means giving everyone a say in how things are run. In Britain, this happens through voting in elections and encouraging people to share their views. Schools promote this by giving pupils a voice, like through school councils or group discussions.						
PHSE/RSE Focus		Media literacy and digital resilience - Pupils will learn how to critically evaluate information online, recognise trustworthy sources, and develop the skills to stay safe and resilient in the digital world. Money and work - Pupils will learn about the value of money, different ways people earn a living, and how to make informed choices about spending, saving, and managing financial risks.						
Assemblies	Welcome Back & What Is Age as a Protected Characteristic?	World Kindness Day Children in Need	World Prematurity Day	UK Parliament Week	Advent	Respecting Older People Age Stereotypes – Busting Myths!	Christmas Message	
House and Cultural Events	WC 03/11/25	WC 10/11/25	WC 17/11/25	WC 24/11/25	WC 1/12/25	WC 08/12/25	WC 15/12/25	

Spring 1 2026		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Protected Characteristic Focus		Sex & Sexual Orientation - learn about how our bodies are the same and different. understand that some people are attracted to people of the same sex					
Personal Development Driver		I Can Celebrate Differences - Promotes understanding and acceptance of different abilities, cultures, and backgrounds - Develops awareness and respect for various protected characteristics					
British Values Focus		Mutual respect - Respecting others means treating people kindly and fairly, even if they are different from you. This value teaches the importance of listening, being polite, and valuing others’ contributions in all areas of life – from school to work to communities.					
PHSE/RSE		Physical health and Mental wellbeing - Pupils will learn how to make healthy lifestyle choices, understand the importance of physical activity and nutrition, and develop strategies to support their mental wellbeing and emotional resilience. Growing and changing - Pupils will learn about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, develop a positive body image, and understand the importance of respecting their own and others’ boundaries.					
Assemblies		What Is a Protected Characteristic? (Introducing Sex & Sexual Orientation)	Celebrating Boys and Girls Equally	Different Families, Same Love	Being Proud of Who You Are	TT Rockstars	Chinese New Year
House and Cultural Events		WC 05/01/26	WC 12/01/23	WC 19/01/26	WC 26/01/26	WC 02/02/26	WC 09/02/26

Spring 2 2026		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Protected Characteristic Focus		Pregnancy and Maternity & Marriage and Civil Partnership - learn about different families and the choices people make as adults.				
Personal Development Driver		I Can Make Positive Choices - Develops understanding of healthy relationships and personal boundaries - Supports students to recognise and respect different family structures and relationships				
British Values Focus		Respect and Tolerance - Britain is a diverse society with many cultures, religions, and beliefs. Tolerance means understanding and accepting this diversity, even if you don't share the same views. Schools support this by teaching about different religions and encouraging open-mindedness.				
PHSE/RSE Lower/Middle		Growing and changing - Pupils will learn about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, develop a positive body image, and understand the importance of respecting their own and others' boundaries. Keeping safe - Pupils will learn how to recognise potential risks in different situations, both online and offline, and develop the skills and confidence to stay safe, seek help, and make responsible choices.				
Assemblies		Introduction to Protected Characteristics – Focus on Family & Choices Understanding Pregnancy and Maternity	World Book Day	STEAM WEEK Safer Internet Day	Odd Socks Day Red Nose Day	Positive Choices in Life and Relationships
House and Cultural Events		WC 23/02/26	WC 02/03/26	WC 09/03/26	WC 16/03/26	WC 23/03/26

Summer 1 2026		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Protected Characteristic Focus		Gender reassignment and Sexual Orientation - learn about the difference between sex and gender and the role they play in identity and stereotypes. Understand that some people are attracted to people of the same sex					
Personal Development Driver		I Can Express Myself and Be Understood - Emphasises the importance of student voice regardless of communication method - Supports students to express their identity, including cultural, religious, and personal aspects					
British Values Focus		Individual Liberty - People in Britain have the freedom to make their own choices about their lives – such as what they believe in, how they dress, and how they spend their time – as long as they’re not harming others. This value is about protecting personal freedoms while encouraging responsibility.					
PHSE/RSE		Families and friendships - Pupils will learn about the different types of families and friendships, the qualities of healthy relationships, and how to communicate respectfully and resolve conflicts. Safe relationships - Pupils will learn to recognise the characteristics of healthy relationships, understand the importance of consent and boundaries, and develop skills to identify and respond to situations where they or others may be at risk of harm or exploitation.					
Assemblies		Introduction – What Makes Me Me?	Wellbeing Day St George's Day (Nexus Charity)	What Is Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment?	National Children's Safeguarding Day	Celebration Assembly – We All Belong	Big Eid Celebration
House and Cultural Events		WC 13/04/26	WC 20/04/26	WC 27/04/26	WC 04/05/26 Kingswood Y7 Residential	WC 11/05/26	WC 18/05/26

Summer 2 2026		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Protected Characteristic Focus		Race and belief - learn about diversity and understand the value of sharing the world with people who are different to you.						
Personal Development Driver		I Can Celebrate Differences - Promotes understanding and acceptance of different abilities, cultures, and backgrounds - Develops awareness and respect for various protected characteristics						
British Values Focus		Revisit all of the British Values I understand that fundamental British Values are the foundation of what it means to be a responsible citizen in today's diverse and modern Britain. I also recognise that these values are not unique to Britain—they are shared by democratic nations around the world.						
PHSE/RSE		Safe relationships - Pupils will learn to recognise the characteristics of healthy relationships, understand the importance of consent and boundaries, and develop skills to identify and respond to situations where they or others may be at risk of harm or exploitation. Respecting ourselves and others - Pupils will learn to value their own self-worth and dignity whilst recognising and appreciating the unique qualities and differences of others, developing empathy and understanding to build positive relationships based on mutual respect and acceptance.						
Assemblies		Welcome & What Are Race and Belief?	National School Sports Week Sports Day	What Is Race?	What Is Religion or Belief?	Celebrating Who I Am	Transition Assemblies	Moving on up & End of year celebration assemblies
House and Cultural Events		WC 01/06/26	WC 08/06/25	WC 15/06/26	WC 22/06/26	WC 29/06/26	WC 06/07/26	WC 13/07/26