

# Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy (incorporating Religious Education)

<b>Date updated:</b>	April 2018
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<b>Review date:</b>	April 2019

## 1. Introduction

Sunfield School regards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspect of education as a core entitlement for all students. It is provided in all formal and informal settings and permeates every aspect of the school's work, although there are many ways of interpreting the terms Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

Through the school's SMSC curriculum British values are promoted.

The development of SMSC is an inherent part of the way we work. It is embedded in the culture of the school, modelled by staff and students throughout the day, taught overtly in Personal Social Development (PSD) and Religious Education (RE) themed days and weeks, and is recognised and celebrated alongside academic achievement.

## 2. Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:

### 2.1 Spiritual development

The spiritual development of students is shown by their:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences. (**Ofsted definition**)

For students at Sunfield, the following areas of spiritual development are considered to be essential:-

**Development of a sense of awe, wonder and curiosity** – being inspired by the natural world, social world and human achievement; although this is not easy to teach, it is possible to offer students the opportunities to try to develop this sense for themselves.

Outdoor learning is a very important aspect of the whole curriculum, giving all students the opportunity to explore and engage with nature and the natural environment. The school has a farm and gardens for students to explore and engage with, as well as opportunities for animal care. The vast grounds surrounding the school offer opportunities for learning in a range of natural environments, including wildflower fields and woodland.

Students are given opportunities to learn about caring for animals, through fortnightly visits from a Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog, and opportunities to care for the animals on the farm. KS4 and KS5 students can also access Vale Head Farm to work with animals.

Weekly celebrations and festival days throughout the year offer opportunities for students to socialise with peers and staff, developing a sense of community and giving opportunities for social interaction and engagement. Weekly celebrations provide opportunities to work with peers from other classes, as well as providing a regular space within the week for the organisation to come together as a whole and celebrate success and achievement.

**Self-knowledge** – an awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; a growing understanding and acceptance of individual identity; an ability to build up relationships with others.

This is an essential part of our work with all our students. Some students have to be helped to understand who they are and how they are separate from other people. Students are helped to understand what they are good at, through praise, reward and celebration. For many students, the PSD curriculum focuses on aspects of self-knowledge - from the very practical aspects of “*who am I?*” to more fundamental questions of “*what am I good at?*”, “*what do I still need help with?*” and “*how can I move forward?*”

**Relationships** – recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community; the ability to build up relationships with others.

A key area of our work at Sunfield School is the development of positive relationships. Although most students can make relationships with the adults who reach out to them and empathise with them, often find it harder to develop friendships with peers. Therefore, in order to help the students to develop the confidence and skills needed to form positive relationships, members of staff model the key behaviours throughout school life. These skills are also taught in PSD, supported in class via Circle Time and social skills activities and promoted through weekly celebrations and group activities. Through these supported activities, the students are given strategies through which they can develop relationships with their peers.

**Creativity** – expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, art, music, literature and crafts; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight.

Sunfield has a strong focus on crafts within the curriculum, including felting, pottery and woodwork. Some students have Eurhythmy Therapy (movement) and Therapeutic Art sessions with specialist therapists. The school benefits from a music therapist who is able to help some students individually to express their inner feelings through music. Creative Arts are woven into the curriculum themes and weekly celebrations and festivals.

**Feelings and emotions** – the sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when to it is important to control emotions and feelings, and how to learn to use such feelings as a source of growth.’ Our school has specialist resources to help students understand their feelings and emotions. Students are helped to express feelings and emotions through a range of activities such as role play. The use of Intensive Interaction, as well as Music Therapy, Therapeutic Art and Colour Light Therapy support individual students express, understand and manage their emotions.

We recognise that students learn better when they have an emotional attachment to the person imparting information or knowledge. Students are supported through positive, caring relationships based on comfort and forgiveness.

## 2.2 Moral development

The moral development of students is shown by their:

- Ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, readily apply this understanding in their own lives and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- Interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and being able to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues. (**Ofsted definition**)

At Sunfield we regard moral development as the building of a framework of values which regulates personal behaviour. It is also about the development of students' understanding of society's shared and agreed values. Moral development is about gaining an understanding of the range of views and the reasons for the range. It is also about developing an opinion about the different views.

At Sunfield we seek to ensure that students have an ability to distinguish right from wrong, based on a knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures; a confidence to act consistently in accordance with their own principles; an ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions; a willingness to express their views on ethical issues and personal values; an ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas; a commitment to personal values in areas which are considered right by some and wrong by others; a considerate style of life; a respect for others' needs, interests and feelings, as well as their own; a desire to explore their own and others' views; an understanding of the need to review and reassess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience.

We promote moral values through: providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school; promoting a range of measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria; giving the students a variety of opportunities, across the curriculum, to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example, personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong; developing an open and safe learning environment in which students can express their views and practise moral decision-making; rewarding the expression of moral insights and good behaviour; encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions; for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour; providing models of moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship; reinforcing the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays.

We have an established and embedded ethos that underpins our school aims and is mirrored in the school.

### **2.3 Social development**

The social development of students is shown by their:

- Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with students from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds

- Willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- Acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the students develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

**(Ofsted definition)**

At Sunfield we regard social development as focusing on supporting young people to work effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together. It is about functioning effectively in a multiracial, multicultural society. It involves growth in knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects.

We encourage students to identify with key values and principles on which our school is based; foster a sense of community, with common, inclusive values which ensure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation and religion can flourish; encourage students to work co-operatively; encourage students to recognise and respect social differences and similarities; provide positive group experiences – for example, through assemblies, team activities, residential experiences, weekly celebrations and festival days. We help students develop personal qualities which are valued in a civilised society - for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, self-respect, interdependence, independence; help students to challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community; help students resolve tensions between their own aspirations and those of the group or wider society; provide a conceptual and linguistic framework within which to understand and debate social issues provide opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life; provide opportunities for students to exercise leadership and responsibility; provide positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community.

All students have a status in the school. Many students have jobs to do in their own classrooms and this extends into the work of the school as they become older and more able to take on more responsibilities. Additionally, we take every opportunity for the students to also have a role in the local community.

Students are encouraged to show respect to staff and peers, through overt teaching and through good modelling.

## **2.4 Cultural development**

The cultural development of students is shown by their:

- Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- Understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain

- Knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
  - Willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- Interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity, and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities. (**Ofsted definition**)

At Sunfield we promote cultural development through providing practical opportunities for students to explore experiences, values and traditions of diverse cultures. We seek to extend students' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language; recognise and nurture particular gifts and talents; provide opportunities for students to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encourage students to reflect on their significance.

We aim to support students to become culturally aware by providing opportunities for each to have an openness to new ideas and a willingness to modify cultural values in the light of experience; an ability to use language and understand images/icons – for example, in music, art, literature which have significance and meaning in a culture; a willingness to participate in, and respond to, artistic and cultural enterprises; a sense of personal enrichment through encounter with cultural media and traditions from a range of cultures; a regard for the heights of human achievement in all cultures and societies; an appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of cultures.

### **Promoting British Values at Sunfield School**

The Department for Education have identified a need “to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.”

Much of our work on values is achieved as part of our Social, Moral and Spiritual and Cultural curriculum (SMSC) as well as our approach to teaching about “good choices”.

#### **Democracy:**

We listen to students' and parent's/carer's voice. We are clear in showing that we want the young people to contribute and co-operate and consider the views and needs of others.

#### **The Rule of Law:**

We consistently reinforce our high expectations of young people. Whenever appropriate learners are taught the value and reasons behind our expectations (rules), that they are there to protect us, that everyone has responsibility and that there may be consequences when rules are disregarded.

#### **Individual Liberty:**

Within school, everyone is actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school we try and help our young people learn about what makes a good choice. Young people are encouraged to express their views and we respond to their preferences and interests throughout our teaching.

**Mutual Respect:**

All staff demonstrate respect to everyone they come into contact with. They consistently promote the behaviours and attitudes that are the foundation of positive relationships. The strong school ethos encourages everyone to consider and support each other and to celebrate the worth and individuality of every member of the school community.

**Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:**

A key theme in our teaching is understanding the world around us, and this includes providing experiences relating to different faiths, beliefs and cultures. This school will not tolerate any extremist political or religious views expressed openly by staff or governors either in school to students or other staff members or in more public forums such as social media. Staff members may be subject to disciplinary action if necessary.

This school does not tolerate extremist views expressed by any visitors to the school, including parents. If a staff member hears such views then they must refuse further dialogue with that person and inform a member of the SLT immediately.

**How we protect students from extremist views, including religious and political extremism**

Religious Education at Sunfield School covers the main world religions and promotes tolerance and understanding of world views.

We follow the Hertfordshire agreed syllabus in its requirement to:

- promote discernment
  - have secure values and beliefs, and have principles to distinguish right from wrong.
- challenge injustice, are committed to human rights and strive to live peaceably with others.
- reflect on the impact of religion and belief in the world, considering both the importance of interfaith dialogue and the tensions that exist within and between religions and beliefs.

Students are given opportunities to visit different places of worship.

Different cultures are explored and celebrated through themed days and weeks, and weekly celebrations and festivals.

Any of our students may come into contact with extremist views, literature or propaganda at any time, including when on school trips. Staff leading or accompanying trips must be vigilant to this possibility. It is our duty to support students who may be distressed or frightened by what they read or see. We must always help students to have a balanced view as well as give them coping strategies in dealing with what may be external pressures.