

## **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	2011	Vice Principal
Last Review	September 2022	Pastoral Leads, Compliance Manager
Approved	September 2022	Principals and Heads
Next Review	September 2023	Pastoral Leads, Compliance Manager

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS. Thomas's London Day Schools operates as a united group of schools with a similar ethos and values and as such is referred to as a singular body.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Aims and Values, Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, PSHE Policy, RSE Policy.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Thomas's is a group of "Christian schools, open to children of all faiths or none". It adheres to the principles of Christian belief which govern the behaviour of one person towards another. Each individual is encouraged to behave in a natural, happy and responsible way and to be mindful of the needs of others. Thomas's pupils learn at an early age the most important school rule: "Be Kind".

Whilst the principles governing our behaviour are based on Christian belief, we wish for each school to be a welcoming community, open to all, regardless of race, colour, religion or creed.

The School has a fundamental base of 10 core values which are intrinsically linked to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These are: Kindness, Courtesy, Honesty, Respect, Perseverance, Independence, Confidence, Leadership, Humility and being Givers not Takers.

Our ethos, aims and values actively support the upholding of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; British values which we cherish, equipping pupils for life in modern Britain.

### **2. AIMS**

To give guidance to staff about the ways in which they should help foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and support the School Values.

To focus on the development of the pupil as an individual and as a personality, aiming to enrich and extend the human existence of each child in relation to the values, attitudes, beliefs and consequent behaviour acquired during school years.

To support pupils to embrace diversity and to guard against discrimination of any groups of people, pupils or adults, including those listed as having "Protected Characteristics" as identified in the Equality Act 2010 and its Schedules: disability,

ethnicity (including gypsy and traveller groups), gender, gender identity and transgender, faith, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age. In this way we aim to offer equality of opportunity for all.

In contrast to the policies for specific curriculum subjects, this policy relates to the whole life of the school and awareness of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) principles should filter down and be a fundamental part of the school philosophy. Of particular importance in promoting SMSC development is the example set by adults in the school, the quality of relationships and the standard of assemblies and collective worship.

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **3.1 *Spiritual development***

Relates to the quest of individual identity and the search for meaning and purpose in our existence. It is associated with a dimension of life which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses, but has much to do with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs. The term 'spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'.

Understanding of self and others is at the heart of spiritual development and is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith. Spiritual development is, therefore, accessible to everyone. All areas of the curriculum should contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

#### **3.2 *Moral development***

Concerned with pupils' ability to make judgments about how they should behave and act and the reasons for such behaviour. It refers to their knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes in relation to what is right or wrong.

Acquiring a knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong is central to moral development. It is the basis upon which the pupils may develop the ability to make judgments about how to behave and it is the standpoint from which to consider the behaviour of others in school and society in general.

The system of rules and codes of behaviour is an important introduction to issues of fairness for all and to the consequences of operating outside the accepted rule system. Pupils are encouraged to understand the need for a common code and to follow it from conviction rather than because of consequences or sanctions. Moral development, based on Christian principles, should enable pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

#### **3.3 *Social development***

Refers to the development of abilities and qualities that students need to acquire if they are to play a full and active part in society. It also relates to the growth of knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects.

Development in this area enables pupils to become conscientious participants in their house groups, the school and the wider community. Provision for social development should balance the positive, satisfying elements of belonging to a group or society with the demands and obligations such membership requires.

The school, but in particular the classroom, provides a suitable environment for promoting social development. Pupils learn to lead, to use their initiative and to use individual skills and strengths when working together towards a common goal. The

ability to be led, to support others and to recognise the different skills of other group members can be developed when children work co-operatively. These aptitudes are further enhanced by our Outdoor Learning programme.

### 3.4 *Cultural development*

Refers to the development of knowledge and understanding of differing cultural beliefs, customs and traditions. It is an increasing appreciation of the systems of values and attitudes which form the basis of identity and cohesion within societies and groups.

At the heart of cultural development lies the necessity to develop a sense of personal identity, whilst at the same time acquiring awareness, understanding and tolerance regarding the cultural traditions of others.

In order to make provision for cultural development, existing knowledge, interests and experiences are strengthened and then built upon further. In this way pupils gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and the factors which influence it and gain a broader understanding of other cultures and cultural influences. All areas of the curriculum can be used to promote and develop cultural awareness, although the arts are those used more frequently.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

### 4.1 *Spiritual development*

Our aims for spiritual development are to help pupils develop:

- a sense that they belong to a universe that is bigger than themselves and their immediate concerns;
- an awareness of the past;
- a sense of optimism, or at least equanimity, about the future;
- an ability to trust.

#### Provision for spiritual development

- a) within the curriculum, departments should seek ways to encourage pupils to:
  - use their imagination in solving problems and empathising with others;
  - develop a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness;
  - feel comfortable with discussions about the holy or the sacred;
  - develop an awareness of order and pattern in the world;
  - respect the integrity of each person and their differences;
  - explore instances of symbol, image, allegory and metaphor in the curriculum;
  - explore what commitment means.
- b) beyond the formal curriculum, the school will:
  - encourage pupils in personal conversations and during discussions in lessons, to express such feelings as transcendence, wonder, transience and change, paradox and unease, injustice or inequality whilst listening carefully to others' questions and responses;
  - treat pupils, staff, principals and visitors with respect, regardless of personal feelings;
  - invite close involvement with the local church, and regular participation in church services.

## 4.2 Moral Development

Our aims for moral development are to help pupils:

- distinguish between right and wrong;
- respect the law;
- understand the principles lying behind decisions and actions;
- be able to take moral decisions for themselves, and not be swayed by peer pressure;
- assume moral responsibility through belief and conviction.

Therefore, we want them at all times to:

- tell the truth;
- respect the rights and property of others;
- fulfil commitments, readily;
- help those less fortunate than themselves;
- act considerately towards others;
- take responsibility for their own actions;
- exercise self-discipline;
- develop high expectations;
- develop positive attitudes;
- conform to rules and regulations for the good of all;
- seek to understand and develop worthwhile relationships with their peers, their teachers and other adults in the community.

### Provision for moral development

- a) within the curriculum:
  - in lessons such as RE, PSHE, English, History and others, moral questions will be discussed whenever appropriate;
  - pupils will be encouraged to reflect upon and develop a personal view on ethical questions raised in science, information communication technology and other areas.
- b) beyond the formal curriculum:
  - through the school rules, values and other formal ways, the school will make clear the moral ethos;
  - through informal discussions in classes and in houses moral questions will be discussed whenever appropriate, particularly in any discussion related to disciplinary action so that pupils understand the school's moral framework;
  - the Head, members of the Senior Leadership team, local vicar, visiting preachers and others who lead assemblies will on regular occasions use their assemblies to raise and address moral questions.

## 4.3 Social development

Our aims for Social Development are to create an environment in which pupils feel ready, willing and able to:

- relate positively to others;
- participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and in the school;

- use appropriate behaviour, according to situations;
- engage successfully in partnership with others and work as part of a group;
- exercise personal responsibility and initiative;
- understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school and society;
- show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others;
- develop an understanding of citizenship and experience being part of a whole caring community;
- realise that every member of the community has a worthwhile contribution to make;
- develop resilience and a growth mindset towards tackling challenges.

#### Provision for social development

- a) within the curriculum:
  - in all lessons pupils must be taught and encouraged to listen to and respect the viewpoints and ideas of others;
  - good behaviour is praised positively and rewarded publicly;
  - collaboration, perseverance and using initiative are an intrinsic part of Thomas's Outdoors programme, incorporating Woodland Adventure and Young Explorers.
- b) beyond the formal curriculum:
  - in houses, tutor groups, games and activities, pupils must be taught and shown how to work together in groups, and to be inclusive and supportive of others;
  - through the School Council to enable pupils of all ages to participate in the running of the school;
  - through the relationships between staff and pupils to foster a respect for the individual, as long as their actions do not undermine the community as a whole.

#### *4.4 Cultural development*

Our aims for Cultural Development are to help pupils to:

- develop a sense of belonging to their own culture and be proud of their cultural background;
- respond to cultural events;
- share different cultural experiences;
- respect different cultural traditions;
- understand codes of behaviour from other cultural traditions;
- develop an awareness and recognition of what a 'cultured person' appreciates in terms of music, art, drama, literature etc;
- develop a love of learning;
- build resilience to radicalisation and challenge extremist views whilst still appreciating the values and customs of other ethnic and faith groups which make up modern British society, and the world beyond;

- be aware of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

#### Provision for cultural development

- a) within the curriculum:
  - in all lessons acquiring an understanding of the contribution of British thinkers to the subject being discussed;
  - in all lessons understand the importance of the work done by people from other cultures in bringing us to our current understanding of the subject being discussed;
  - in Music, RE and Art, undertake a study of other cultures and their forms of cultural expression;
  - within RE and PSHE, discuss and explore differences, similarities, equal rights, peer pressure and discrimination;
  - teach pupils about the main public institutions within the UK and their relationship with the institutions in the wider world, particularly the UN and the EC.
- b) beyond the formal curriculum:
  - the school will provide opportunities for all pupils to attend musical and theatrical events;
  - the opportunity will be provided for pupils to take part in a wide variety of cultural events including concerts, theatre, choral singing, book clubs, poetry readings;
  - Prep School lectures will provide access to cultural topics;
  - Year 8 and Year 6 11+ post examination programmes will often include aspects of local culture or other cultures;
  - expeditions and tours and foreign exchanges will give pupils sometimes profound experiences of other cultures;
  - charity links will enable pupils to think beyond their own culture and share the aspirations of people in a variety of different cultures.

### **5. ASSESSMENT**

Precise formal assessments about the four aspects of SMSC development are challenging and likely not to be beneficial. Teachers carry pupils via observation of pupil attitude and behaviour and through pupil voice.

### **6. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE statutory guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (2019)

DfE advice 'The Prevent Duty' (June 2015) from The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

DfE advice 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' (May 2014)

DfE The Independent Schools Standards: Guidance for independent schools (April 2019)