



**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy

SMSC Policy

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Last Amended: October 2017

Review: October 2018

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Introduction

AIMS

- To educate the pupil in the fullest sense so that he begins to realise his academic and personal potential.
- To create a safe, enjoyable and caring environment within which pupils can develop a sense of security and individual self-esteem.
- To develop a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and a respect for others, their opinions, their beliefs and their rights (eg, the 'protected characteristics').
- To develop initiative, confidence, concern for others, independence and self-discipline in order to meet the challenges of life.
- To actively promote Fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and to provide students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain.
- To ensure that we preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in school, and to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that, where political issues are brought to the attention of students, a balanced presentation of opposing views is given. This should apply whether students are in attendance at school or taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school.

OBJECTIVES

- The acquisition of knowledge and skills in terms of literacy, numeracy, aesthetic sensibility and physical well-being.
- The development of social, moral, cultural and religious values through the curriculum.

The School's aims and objectives assert that MTBS offers an education in the fullest sense including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each pupil. This development occurs throughout the whole curriculum, both within the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. The School emphasizes honesty, high standards of behaviour, respect for others, integrity and self-discipline.

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School is a non-denominational Christian school. We work in partnership with parents to provide instruction and guidance in all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

1. Spiritual development includes personal beliefs and values, especially, but not exclusively, in connection with religion. Spiritual development may also be fostered through a deepening appreciation of music, art and literature. These areas, as well as those traditionally understood as religious, seek to help explore the values and meaning of life. The methodology adopted is that of discussion, exploration and reflection through what is taught in the curriculum, through participation in music, drama and artistic activity, through collective meetings and assemblies and through the School's ethos.

We aim to foster the spiritual development of our students by:

- Promoting an environment where every pupil is given the opportunity to reach his full potential regardless of race, disability or other equality issues;

- Providing a school ethos which is tolerant, non-judgemental and respectful of the individual beliefs and values of every member of the Merchants' community;
- Modelling this ethos in the relationships established between staff and students and within the staff community;
- Demonstrating that there are many different legitimate belief systems, religion and ways of celebrating and that all deserve understanding and appreciation;
- Proactively exploiting opportunities provided within the taught curriculum to explore issues relevant to spiritual development. This may well be more appropriate in some subjects than others, but is far wider than just RS.
- Encouraging students to explore and develop that which animates and inspires them and others through debate, discussion and reflection, both in class and through other opportunities that present themselves both in and outside school;
- Taking advantage of our small class sizes and relatively informal teacher-student relationships to foster a climate in which aspects of spirituality may be discussed actively, frankly and openly without undue embarrassment or self-consciousness;
- Using the PSHE and Tomorrow Today programmes to allow the exploration of spirituality;
- Developing a sense of 'awe and wonder' both inside and outside the curriculum.

2. Moral Development is concerned with a pupil's knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour to enable an individual to distinguish 'right' from 'wrong' and to respect the civil and criminal law of England. These are important assumptions and judgments about how people should behave and act. The intention at MTBS is that boys, as they develop a sense of morality, will adopt and acquire value systems which are their own, together with an understanding that their behaviour and actions will significantly impact on those around them and encourage them to understand how they can make a worthwhile contribution within their local community and further afield.

We aim to foster the moral development of our students by:

- Maintaining an ethos which is characterised by mutual respect and tolerance throughout our school community;
- Defending these core values as the foundational context in which moral understanding develops and modelling them in staff attitudes and behaviour;
- Providing a clear framework of values and behaviours which is promoted consistently through all aspects of school life;
- Operating an effective and explicit system of sanctions and rewards which is based on reason and fairness;
- Giving students opportunities across the curriculum and, where appropriate, in extra-curricular activities to explore and develop moral concepts and values, such as right and wrong, justice, personal rights and responsibilities;

- Offering students a degree of freedom and self-regulation (eg, in the School Council), that is often greater than they have experienced previously, in order that they may develop their own autonomous moral values and understanding in a manner appropriate to their age, and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own moral decisions;
- Combining this sense of freedom with secure and effective support and monitoring mechanisms, in order that students may receive whatever support and guidance may be necessary as they develop their own moral awareness and values;
- Ensuring a prompt, decisive response to any expressions of discrimination, bullying or abuse;
- Encouraging conflict-resolution based on co-operation, discussion and agreed responses;
- Addressing moral and ethical issues through formal debates, assemblies, the Tomorrow Today programme and the PSHE programme;
- Encouraging students to get involved in supporting charities and fundraising events and activities.

3. Social Development refers to the progressive acquisition of the competences and qualities needed to play a full part in society. It is primarily concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society by being a member of the community. The School can only complement and extend what the home and society in general can achieve. As they develop boys will become aware of their own identity as individuals, as well as the importance of taking into account the feelings and wishes of others within the group or community. Social development is closely related to the development of moral principles.

We aim to foster the social development of all of our students by:

- Developing a student community that is anchored in shared values of respect, co-operation, self-discipline and friendship;
- Developing links between staff and students characterised by concern for individuals, open discussion and consultation and encouragement of individual personality and talents;
- In small class settings, ensuring the practice of respectful listening to others and encouraging individuals to contribute with confidence;
- A preference for promoting co-operation and self-motivation, rather than hierarchy and imposed discipline;
- Providing a range of opportunities for larger scale group activities (assemblies, sporting, musical, and dramatic events, the annual Leavers' Ball, etc.) to foster a sense of community amongst the whole student body;
- Ensuring that all students have a voice that is actively heard and taken into consideration (e.g. through the Student Council);
- Teaching students about public institutions and services in, for example, Economics and Government and Politics;

- Providing positive and effective links with the world of work and with the wider community (for example, through the work experience programme in Year 12 and other aspects of the school's wide-ranging Careers education programme, involving contributions from current parents and former students as well as external speakers);
- Providing opportunities for students to learn about, and to engage in, local and national democratic processes, including having democratic processes within the school whose members are voted for by the students (School Council, involvement in Youth Parliament, and Mock Elections etc.);
- Providing activities which promote awareness of the wider world, e.g. visiting speakers, field and D of E trips etc;
- Encouraging students to develop valuable personal qualities such as thoughtfulness, honesty and respect by acting as Form Monitors, School Council or Charity Reps;
- Encouraging students to work co-operatively and providing opportunities for students to work in a variety of social groupings;
- Providing effective pastoral care and, where necessary, helping students to resolve any tensions and conflicts that may arise within school fairly, respectfully and considerately;
- Encouraging students to support nominated charities through school events;
- Encouraging students to develop pastoral awareness and support for one another e.g. through the system of student mentorship (eg, Year 12 students acting as Peer Supporters for pupils in Year 7; Sixth Form students acting as Monitors to assist in the running of the school day);
- Encouraging tolerance for individual, cultural and other differences. This, coupled with a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying, helps to create an atmosphere in which students feel secure and form strong friendships which often span year groups, nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

4. Cultural Development refers to the boys' increasing understanding and command of those beliefs, values, customs, knowledge and skills which, taken together, form the basis of identity and cohesion in societies and groups. This area of development is principally concerned with the boys' understanding and appreciation of the religion, language, music, art, drama, poetry, science and technology of the society in which they live and the changing historical context.

We aim to foster the cultural development of our students by:

- Cultivating a harmonious, well-knit student community which is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. We are fortunate in Merchants' to have a broad mix of students from different nationalities and cultures and we value the richness and diversity, and the opportunities to learn from one another, that this gives to our school community.
- Tackling any issues of discrimination or prejudice directly, and doing so in a way that ensures that any such occurrences become useful learning experiences for those involved and for others around them;
- Encouraging expressions of cultural diversity e.g. in the creative arts, through food (themed lunches) and language and through the curriculum;
- Providing opportunities for students to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encouraging students to reflect on their significance;

- Giving students the opportunity to explore different values, beliefs, and cultures through a variety of approaches, including discussion and debate, in order to gain a broader cultural understanding;
- Developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness (regular visits to theatres and galleries and to other organisations such as universities; participation in a wide variety of competitions eg, the Bank of England Competition etc);
- Trips abroad give students extended and direct experiences of other cultures, e.g. trips to France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, America and Australia;
- Maintaining an effective equal opportunities policy and practice.

To achieve its aims, the School has a number of formal structures which are intended to contribute to the general process of moral, spiritual, social and cultural development. It is **not** intended that these structures obviously and clearly deliver moral, spiritual, social, or cultural development, but that collectively they underpin the more important aspects of the general social relationships which exist within a school. They also provide some of the contexts within which creative personal interaction and development may take place.

1. **The Curriculum:** All subjects and all teachers contribute to personal development simply by the way they interact with pupils during lessons. Certain subjects such as RS, PSHE, English, Theatre Studies, History, Geography, PE and Biology by their subject matter have a particular contribution to make, although all subject departments have an important part to play.
2. **Fundamental British Values:** There are regular opportunities for members of the school community to reflect on the multi-cultural and pluralistic nature of British society and to consider British identity and value systems. Whole school and year group assemblies lend themselves to such issues on a semi-regular basis (for instance, the Assembly on Scottish Independence in September 2014 (PEH/IDM) and in January 2015 'UKIP and the Expression of Englishness' (RAS) [T:\#Assemblies\UKIP AND BRITISHNESS ASSEMBLY JAN 2015.docx](#) . In World Tomorrow Today the Year 10 Prize Essay competition is explicitly concerned with Fundamental British values and the perceived challenges to these [T:\The World Tomorrow Today\BRITISHNESS - PRIZE ESSAY.docx](#); HoDs are encouraged in departmental development plans to include 'Fundamental British Values' in the SMSC section. 2015 Mock General Election to be run by the Politics Department, explicitly foregrounded in discussion on democracy and liberal values with a leading Assembly on 24th February. Staff training in September 2015 was partly focused on Fundamental British Values: [BRITISH VALUES AND THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY- notes for staff.docx](#)
3. **Displays and publications:** The School reinforces its ethos through imagery in displays, posters, and notice-boards as well as items on the website and in the newsletters. It is common to celebrate pupils' work and achievements in and out of school in academic and extra-curricular activities.
4. **Assemblies:** By what they applaud, celebrate, encourage and disallow, assemblies make a significant contribution to the values which the School wishes to promote and develop. In line with the School's foundation, assemblies are of a broadly Christian character, which provide the

opportunity for prayer, worship and reflection as well as commentary on personal development. Contributions to and from the wider community and other faiths, are sought and celebrated through charities and guest speakers.

5. **PSHE programme:** the PSHE programme has an important part to play within the SMSC development plan and includes regular weekly slots with Form Tutors and Heads of Year as well as a comprehensive programme of outside specialists.
6. **The Tutor System:** Each boy is a member of a Form or Tutor Group whose tutor is responsible for his academic, social and personal welfare. As part of their role, tutors conduct two tutor periods a week, which as well as dealing with routine administration, deal with welfare and pastoral care and the promotion of personal values. Depending on the Year Group pupils will make presentations and participate in discussions on current affairs.
7. **Year Activities:** In each Year Group, specific activities take place which are designed to further personal development. In Y7-10 this includes a Merit and Commendations system and charity events such as the Shoe Box Appeal. In Y10 there are planned sessions such as personal security and alcohol awareness whilst in the Sixth Form the programme includes safe driving, opportunities for Community Service and the Young Enterprise scheme.
8. **Extra-Curricular Activities:** There are numerous and diverse extra-curricular activities which make a major contribution to personal development, especially in sport, music and drama. A wide variety of overseas trips and tours, visits to the theatre and art galleries, the creation of the in-house magazine, a thriving CCF and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and the GTX Friday afternoon slot, all contribute to the social and cultural development of pupils.
9. **Charitable Events:** Throughout the year, all members of the School community are encouraged to initiate, participate and contribute to events.
10. **Responsibility and Leadership:** The system of Senior Prefects, Monitors, Peer Support and the School Council provide both formal and informal opportunities for boys to exercise leadership, service and responsibility.
11. **Specialist Staff:** In addition to the teaching staff, specialist staff the School Nurse, the Head of Learning Support, the Head of RS and the Head of Careers - have a particular role to play in working closely with individuals to assist them to prepare in diverse ways for the outside world.
12. **Special Services:** During the school year there are occasions, such as the End of Year Service, and the Carol Service, held at St Faith's Church. There is a weekly Christian meeting (Crossfire) and the Head of RS presides over assemblies on Thursdays and is generally available for staff and pupils.
13. **The School Ethos, Code of Conduct and the School Rules** underpin the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the staff and pupils.