

# **Queen Elizabeth's School**

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

### **incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy**

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#### **Introduction**

Queen Elizabeth's School recognises that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils forms a crucial part of their education and enables them to take their place as responsible and informed citizens of the local, national and global community. Through its spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision, the School also actively encourages respect for British values. SMSC development is integral to our educational provision and as such permeates all elements of our academic teaching, dedicated 'Personal Development Time' sessions, our system of pastoral care, broad range of extra-curricular activities and House system. SMSC development is central to the School's ethos and mission of producing young men who are "confident, able and responsible", who will enter the wider world to make a positive contribution.

The School has particular regard to the SMSC development standard set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations (as amended) ("the Independent School Standards" which regulate, inter alia, academies), the Education Act 2002 (in particular s.78), as well as all other relevant legislation and Government guidelines, such as the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (s.70) regarding the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship, with such provision included in the School's funding agreement.

#### **Aim of this Policy**

Through SMSC development, Queen Elizabeth's seeks to develop attitudes and values that will enable pupils to become responsible and caring members of society. We provide pupils with a curriculum that enables them to develop a knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures, from around the world and those within our own pluralistic society, and of the institutions, services and traditions of Britain. We seek to foster an attitude of tolerance and respect towards those from a culture or background different to one's own. Our pupils are encouraged to develop a knowledge and understanding of the world, society and the local community, and to accept their responsibilities as a citizen. Pupils should develop the capacity to tackle moral and spiritual dilemmas and to try to reach independent judgements. Through empathy, tolerance and respect for others as individuals, we expect our pupils to develop questioning, enquiring minds and learn how to express their ideas appropriately.

The aim of the School's SMSC provision is to encourage and enable pupils to:

- Develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Distinguish between right and wrong and have respect for the civil and criminal law;
- Accept responsibility for their behaviour and demonstrate initiative;
- Understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of others in the School community and wider society;
- Acquire a broad knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services in England and the UK;
- Develop personal relationships based on trust and mutual respect;
- Value everyone equally and reject all forms of discrimination;

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

### **incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy**

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- Acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions;
- Develop an appreciation of both human achievements and the natural world, and the interdependence of individuals, groups, nations and the environment; and
- Become active, responsible citizens who respect the values of the democratic society in which they live.

### **1. Spiritual Development**

“Spiritual” is not synonymous with “religious”, and the School recognises that whilst some pupils might express their spiritual awareness in religious terms, for others spiritual reflection involves other ways of thinking and forms of expression. Spiritual development is personal and unique to each individual, and includes imagination, inspiration and creativity.

Spiritual development is concerned with how a pupil develops:

- An awareness and understanding of their own and others' spiritual beliefs;
- An ability to communicate these beliefs in discussion and through behaviour;
- Self-respect and self-worth;
- Tolerance of and respect for other people;
- An understanding of the role of spirituality and religion in society;
- A sense of awe and wonder;
- A sense of empathy, concern and compassion;
- An ability to reflect deeply and to learn from this reflection;
- A readiness to challenge anything that constrains the human spirit, such as all forms of discrimination, injustice, fanaticism, indifference and narrow-mindedness.

### **2. Moral Development**

Moral development concerns the building of a framework of personal moral values, informed by society's shared and agreed views about right and wrong, which then regulates personal behaviour and attitudes. At Queen Elizabeth's, we aim to foster our pupils' knowledge and understanding of socially acceptable values and codes of behaviour. The School is a social organisation and its own successful functioning depends on the broad acceptance of rules, codes of conduct and a discipline policy based on a clear set of moral principles. Ultimately, moral development is successful if personal behaviour is regulated through principles per se rather than through reward or the fear of punishment.

Moral development concerns the building of a set of values in which pupils:

- Recognise the difference between right and wrong;
- Respect truth and honesty;
- Understand the necessity and importance of following appropriate rules and undertaking responsibilities;
- Possess an ability to think through the consequences of their own and others'

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## Queen Elizabeth's School

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

#### incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

---

- actions, and to take responsibility for their own actions;
- Respect the rights and property of others;
  - Respect the beliefs and practices of others in a diverse society;
  - Understand the importance of fairness and compassion;
  - Are willing to discuss and express their views on ethical issues;
  - Are able to make responsible and reasoned judgements in moral dilemmas;
  - Can appreciate the needs of the most vulnerable within their own community and wider society;
  - Have a desire to not only reap the rewards of becoming a successful citizen but to 'give something back' to society;
  - Respect and develop a sense of stewardship of their environment, whether at School or in the wider world;
  - Develop the self-confidence to stick to their moral principles against a variety of pressures.

### 3. Social Development

As members of the School community, pupils learn social skills and values that will help to shape their future lives as responsible citizens and function effectively in society. Social development is based not only on the development of self-confidence and the acceptance of group rules, but also on the ability to see oneself in a wider context so that a range of social situations can be dealt with appropriately and sensitively. The quality of the relationships formed in School is crucial in forming in pupils a sense of self-discipline and mutual respect for others.

Social development concerns the ability to:

- Adjust to a range of social contexts through appropriate and sensitive behaviour;
- Develop self-confidence, resilience and the maturity to deal with life's challenges;
- Relate well to other people's personal qualities;
- Work well as a member of a group or team;
- Communicate effectively and appropriately in a range of social and professional settings, including online;
- Celebrate the achievements of others;
- Recognise and respect social similarities and differences;
- Exercise tact, tolerance and a sense of inclusion towards other individuals or groups;
- Appropriately and safely challenge the conduct of others, be they peers or members of wider society, who act in an immoral, judgemental, discriminatory or exclusionary manner;
- Challenge, when necessary and in an appropriate way, the value of an individual's, or group's, viewpoint;
- Show unwavering respect for the right of others to challenge, in a similar way, one's own opinions and beliefs;
- Reflect on one's own contribution to society and the world of work;
- Understand the notion of interdependence in an increasingly complex world.

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## Queen Elizabeth's School

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

#### incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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#### 4. Cultural Development

The School seeks to develop in its pupils an understanding and awareness of their own background and culture, other cultures in their locality, and within the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world. To become a fully rounded individual, the School believes it is important that pupils appreciate the dynamic nature of cultural expression and traditions and can place them in their historical context. Promoting pupils' cultural development is closely linked with the School's position on valuing cultural diversity and thereby preventing racism and any other form of discrimination.

Pupils who are culturally aware are likely to:

- Recognise and understand the influences that have shaped their own cultural heritage;
- Appreciate cultural diversity and accord dignity and respect to other people's values, beliefs, artistic expression and ways of life;
- Develop an understanding of the customs, knowledge and skills which link groups together and give them a sense of identity;
- Understand how conflicts between cultural traditions have arisen and how they can be reconciled;
- Be open to new ideas and show a willingness to modify cultural assumptions in the light of experience;
- Be willing to participate in and respond to artistic and cultural activities;
- Have an understanding of British history and cultural achievement, and of the founding of their School and its history.

#### How the aims of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development are being achieved

SMSC is integral to our educational provision and its promotion pervades all aspects of academic teaching and learning, pastoral care and co-curricular provision. More particularly:

i) Academic curriculum

- The Philosophy, Religion & Society (PRS) syllabus has an obvious role to play in educating pupils about the tenets and practices of the major world religions, as well as humanism and atheism, thereby contributing to pupils' cultural development. It teaches what spirituality is and how it can be expressed through music, dance, prayer, buildings and symbols. It also broadens pupils' horizons through wider discussions of societal issues including citizenship, justice and democracy. (The School acknowledges parents' legal right to withdraw their son from religious education on the basis of belief).
- Geography concerns different cultural traditions, the natural environment and the allocation of world resources at a range of scales, including in the

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**Queen Elizabeth's School**  
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**incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy**

---

local community, nationally and globally. The teaching of History sets cultural norms in their historical context and explains how beliefs and values have changed over time.

- Politics and Sociology, taught at A-level, have an important role to play in disseminating ideas about structures of governance, participation in society, including the democratic process, and how the behaviour of groups or individuals can impact upon society.
- Philosophy, taught at A-level but also present within the Lower School PRS curriculum, builds essential intellectual skills such as the analysis, evaluation and construction of arguments, whilst also considering the conceptual foundations of morals and their logic.
- The study of languages enables pupils not only to converse with those from other countries but to understand their way of life; this is particularly enabled by the programme of language exchanges run in conjunction with schools in France and Germany. The teaching of ancient history is embedded into our Latin syllabus, and the School offers additional languages within the co-curricular programme from time to time.
- Economics teaches pupils not only about the framework for resource allocation, wealth creation and distribution but also about the associated moral considerations.
- The study of Art, Music and literature develops cultural appreciation and engagement, and can highlight the way in which society's norms and values change over time.
- The teaching of Science helps to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the complexity, magnitude and pattern in natural phenomena and the universe, as well as considering the ethical dilemmas produced by some new discoveries and their associated applications.

ii) Pastoral care

Through our system of pastoral care, SMSC development is promoted in the following ways:

- A Pupil Discipline Policy underpins the School's values and is applied consistently and fairly.
- The personal Development Time curriculum, delivered through the pastoral system, engages pupils directly with issues and questions relevant to forming healthy, happy and fulfilling relationships; understanding society and the world around them; and to navigating the challenges and opportunities of life in the modern world. Pupils learn about British values, the structures and processes of democracy, and pertinent aspects of the law.
- Academic achievement and acts of good citizenship are rewarded through a system of Merits and Good Notes, and celebrated at Junior and Senior Awards ceremonies.
- Pupils' successes in co-curricular activities and competitions are

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## Queen Elizabeth's School

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

#### incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

---

celebrated through the website, social media, Elizabethan magazine and other communications materials.

- For those in need of extra support, staff or peer mentoring is put in place, and for those who need greater support, counselling via the School's partnership with Rephael House;
- The bespoke system of tutor support enables members of staff to get to know every pupil well, including their strengths, weaknesses and aspirations, seeking to celebrate what is unique about each pupil and to guide them to find their optimum path;
- All members of staff are aware of the importance of SMSC development, and are expected to act as role models in terms of an attitude based on courtesy, mutual respect, positive intent and a willingness to listen.

iii) School practices and organisation

The following aspects of School life help to develop pupils' self-confidence and leadership skills, and create a sense of community:

- Positions of responsibility, including Prefects, House Captains and Form Captains, House Representatives to pupil voice panels, Pupil Librarians, and Eco-Network Representatives - as well as student leadership of QE Flourish co-curricular activities, teams and ensembles;
- The House system, which helps to foster a sense of allegiance, and through inter-House competitions, a healthy sense of competitiveness and teamwork;
- Assemblies, including House assemblies, which cover a wide variety of topics relevant to SMSC development and may include guest speakers or pupil participation;
- The work of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pupil ambassadors who prepare and share resources, as well as contributing to events to celebrate different cultures and identities; and
- Academic symposia and collaborations with other schools.

Spiritual and cultural development is encouraged by:

- The School Prayer, which is read in each Form group every morning, and represents a daily collective act of thanksgiving and worship to encourage spiritual reflection;
- Our annual Founder's Day Thanksgiving Service and Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, held in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Chipping Barnet, which provide further opportunities for the School community to gather together for contemplation and to reflect on our School's history;
- The School's Chronicle, a document which details the School's history from its founding in 1573 to the present day, which is recited every year by the Headmaster on Founder's Day.

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## Queen Elizabeth's School

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

#### incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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iv) Co-curricular activities

The School organises a wide range of co-curricular activities within the QE Flourish programme that broaden pupils' educational experience and thereby make a major contribution to their SMSC development. Our pupils have the opportunity to partake in:

- A very wide variety of orchestras, choirs and musical ensembles, including an Indian ensemble, which reflects the cultural heritage of some pupils, and a Chamber Choir, which sings occasional choral services in the Anglican tradition;
- Myriad sports teams, fixtures and competitions;
- Trips to museums, galleries, places of worship of different faiths, theatre productions, historical buildings, institutions such as the British Library and lectures given by experts in their field;
- Visits abroad, including cultural visits to European capital cities, foreign activity centres and skiing trips;
- Language exchange programmes;
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme;
- The Combined Cadet Force (CCF);
- School plays and dramatic productions, participating in a performance, technical or organisational capacity;
- A wide variety of national and international competitions, including writing and poetry, design and engineering, Economics and enterprise, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology;
- Mock trial competitions, held in magistrates' and crown courts;
- Public speaking lessons and qualifications;
- Formal debates, including Model United Nations, the annual Dinner Debate and the inter-House competitions;
- Lunchtime and after-school clubs and societies covering both major and niche interests – many of which are established and run by pupils;
- Religious societies, such as Hindu Society, Islamic Prayers, Christian Society, Jewish Society and Sikh Society, which are open to pupils of those faiths and others and include the opportunity to listen to speakers, to engage in prayer and reflection, and to share cultural traditions.

v) Engagement with the wider world

The School believes it is important to prepare its pupils for the wider world when they leave School, to prepare them for further education and the world of work, but also to instil in them the importance of being a responsible citizen who contributes positively to society. We will do this by:

- Providing advice on career options through tailored sessions, individual

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## **Queen Elizabeth's School**

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

#### **incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy**

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- analysis, careers guidance and events including the Careers Convention;
- Work experience, which is undertaken by boys in Year 11 in fields of their choice;
- Arranging mock university interviews with alumni, staff and outside professionals;
- Participating in symposia, debating and collaborative activities with other schools, especially partner girls' schools to enable the boys to interact in a formal context with young women;
- Requiring every pupil in Year 12 to undertake at least 40 hours of voluntary service, which can be served in a variety of community settings, including primary schools, care homes and charity shops;
- Running charity events in school and engaging pupils in contributing to worthwhile causes;
- Engaging in outreach activities in support of the local community and other young people.

#### **5. Promotion of British values**

The School seeks to ensure that by promoting British values through its SMSC provision, and by its safeguarding measures, none of its pupils fall prey to any form of extremism, fanaticism or radicalisation. Instead, they will develop into responsible citizens who are a credit to their School and to their country. The promotion of British values runs throughout the School's SMSC development programme, but the following particular facets of our educational provision encourage awareness of and respect for the core values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs:

- The diverse and multi-cultural nature of the School, where many different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds exist, is highly valued, and a harmonious atmosphere exists based on shared aspirations, interests and respect.
- A strong moral code, based on honesty, respect, compassion, responsibility and self-discipline, is emphasised.
- Democracy is promoted and practised by pupils in many ways, including mock elections, participation in the Model United Nations organisation, involvement in the Youth Parliament, debating competitions and voting on fellow pupils' standing for official roles of responsibility and leadership.
- Discussion is encouraged in lessons, where different viewpoints are considered and mutually respected.
- Guest lectures from leading public figures, including politicians from mainstream UK political parties, with a range of viewpoints and experiences, provide their insight and perspective and offer an opportunity for pupils to question them.
- Pupils are taught to understand the British political system, the workings of Parliament, and the way in which citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process.

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## Queen Elizabeth's School

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

#### incorporating Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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- Trips to the Houses of Parliament and other political and legal institutions are regularly arranged.
- Pupils learn in a variety of ways about the public services and institutions which exist in England, such as healthcare, education and welfare services, and the courts and police service; they are taught to understand that whilst the police and Armed Forces can be held to account through Parliament, the judiciary maintains its independence.
- As part of distinguishing right from wrong, pupils are taught to respect the civil and criminal law and that all people living in England are subject to the laws of the land, whether or not they also pay heed to religious laws.
- Pupils are taught to understand that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens, and is essential for their safety, well-being and the preservation of individual liberty.
- British history is taught in lessons so that boys may appreciate and obtain a nuanced understanding of Britain's achievements and place in the world in a historical context.
- Pupils also learn in a variety of ways about the development of Queen Elizabeth's School, from its founding in 1573 to understand their place in its long history.
- The School has an active CCF contingent, through whose activities and ethos the concepts of allegiance to crown and country, and the defending of freedom, are promoted; the School's CCF contingent represent the School at the local annual Remembrance Day commemorations.

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*LINKED  
POLICIES*

- School Development Plan*
  - Governors' Statement of Education*
  - Bullying Policy*
  - Equal Opportunities Policy*
  - Home-School Agreement*
  - Safeguarding Policy*
  - Relationships & Sex Education Policy*
  - Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy*
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- LINKED  
LEGISLATION  
AND  
REFERENCE  
MATERIALS
- ❑ Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, 2010 (as amended)
  - ❑ Equality Act 2010 s.78 *et al*
  - ❑ DfE guidance: *Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils*, November 2013
  - ❑ DfE guidance: *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools*, November 2014
  - ❑ DfE guidance: *Religious Education in English Schools*, February 2010
  - ❑ Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill 2014-2015
  - ❑ School Standards and Framework Act 1998 s.70
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Approved by the Governing Body on 27 February 2025

Signed .....

A.N. Gaskell, Chair of the Governing Body