SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

These four concepts are the building blocks for the sound moral foundation which Heath Farm School aims to achieve and on which its ethos is based. Although each component has its own distinct thrust and emphasis, when read and applied as a whole, this policy will empower us to achieve our goal of enabling our pupils to become informed, active and responsible members of local, national and global communities.

The spiritual development of our pupils can be equated to their seeking answers to life’s great questions - who and what you are, where you are going and why. It is a process of exploration, to give meaning to experience and to value a non material dimension which exists for all of us. Spiritual development is thus concerned with how individuals acquire personal beliefs and values and provides a sound moral basis for personal and social behaviour. It is incumbent upon us to help our pupils gain a knowledge of certain central beliefs and values, and in order to do this we must guide them to an understanding of how people have sought to explain the universe, draw their attention to these aspects of human nature which may give meaning and purpose to human existence and help them gain an awareness of the relationship between beliefs and actions.

Spiritual is not synonymous with religious and therefore spiritual development is the responsibility of the whole school throughout the whole curriculum. All teachers should lead pupils in the direction of open-ended enquiry, inviting them to take increasing responsibility for themselves and their work. We should strive to help our pupils gain an insight into their own personal beliefs (and if they have none, to help them discover some on which they can base their lives); to encourage them to show in their behaviour and attitude an awareness of the link between belief and action, and to elicit a personal response from each and every one to the big questions about the purpose of life and their experiences of it. Our pupils are especially needy in the area of spiritual development as most of them have an extremely poor self-image, which colours their whole outlook on life.

Moral development refers to pupil’s knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right and wrong. The moral behaviour of pupils should be based on value systems which they have made their own and their actions and behaviour should derive from these values. The school should provide pupils with a moral framework within which to operate i.e. a moral code which is, in turn, based on the broad acceptance of rules and laws. Great care must be taken in the handling of controversial moral issues so as not to abuse our position of trust and respect, but a clear and consistent stand on questions of morality must be taken if the school is to have a clear ethos and tone. School values should include self discipline in the use of language and control of temper, telling the truth, keeping promises, respecting the rights and property of others, acting with consideration towards others and above all, accepting personal responsibility for our own actions.
SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Pupils should be encouraged to develop a personal view on the ethical issues raised by science, technology, literature, history, music or any other subject. Moral development should thus be aimed at helping pupils display personal values in relation to:

a. Their self-awareness, confidence, esteem, control, reliance, respect, discipline and responsibility.

b. Relationships with others based on respect, tolerance, truthfulness, compassions and sensitivity.

Cultural development means that we should guide our pupils to an awareness of the fact that we do not live life in isolation but that we are part of a multi-cultural society. With this in mind there can be no place for racism, homophobia, sexism or any other intolerant behaviour or attitudes including verbal or physical bullying. Our pupils need to acquire knowledge of local, national and global issues so that they gain the skills and knowledge which will enable them to grow and function as useful members of society, taking pride in themselves and able to display tolerance and understanding towards others. Cultural development is the concern of the whole school and should be completely cross curricular, but it goes beyond academic borders. Our Behaviour Management Programme and IEP’s must be based on a recognition of individual differences, where pupils are encouraged to recognise these differences and yet be part of a cohesive group. If our pupils gain this understanding at school, it is highly likely they will carry this knowledge with them into their post school lives, and we will have succeeded in our aim of making them contributing members of our diverse society.

Social development cannot be achieved in isolation - it is pivotal to the whole SMSC policy. The objectives of our social policy therefore rest firmly on our spiritual, moral and cultural policy, which must be reflected in our BMP. Pupils should be given the knowledge of how society functions, and be encouraged to develop positive attitudes and skills such as taking the initiative, showing responsibility and sensitivity to others and to make a positive contribution to the successful functioning of the school as a whole. Each pupil’s growth in their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and understanding should be carefully monitored and targets should be regularly revised so that each individual can take pride in their own and the group’s progress.

Taking the above into account, it is therefore clear that the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of Heath Farm School must be cross curricular and part of the whole school policy.

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in Heath Farm School is strictly prohibited. All staff has a responsibility to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues
SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

are brought to the attention of students they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. Acorn Care and Education, in partnership with the school’s leaders, will monitor school policies and schemes of work across the curriculum. Rigorous monitoring of lessons will ensure balance in the presentation of all subject matter.

Heath Farm School will actively 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. Staff will challenge opinions or behaviours that are contrary to fundamental British values. Through the provision of SMSC, staff should:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- encourage respect for other people
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.
- Precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school
- Takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balance presentation of opposing view
- whilst they are in attendance at school
- While they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organized by or on behalf of the school or in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere

Students will develop:

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as
the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence

- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combating discrimination.

While it is not necessary for staff to ‘promote’ teachings, beliefs or opinions that conflict with their own, it is unacceptable for staff to promote discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinion or background.