



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development Policy

October 2023

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1.4	June 2022	Change of policy contact and review of contents (no amendments)
1.5	Oct 2023	Change of policy contact information and review of contents, updated methods of coverage

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Statement of Policy

The Academy is committed to offering students the opportunities to:

- develop positive values about tolerance, justice, equality and compassion,
- extend their thinking about spiritual aspects such as beauty, love, order, pain and suffering,
- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence,
- respect other people,
- develop an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination e.g. homophobia and racism,
- foster a care for the environment,
- identify, reflect on and explore experiences and the law. To distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England,
- discuss moral issues with respect for the views and aspirations of others,
- develop and talk about their own attitudes and values whilst understanding and appreciating those of others,
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England,
- take responsibility for their own decisions and develop an understanding of social responsibilities and citizenship plus an appreciation of the values and characteristics of the social framework in which they live, especially the Academy, family, local and British communities, including an understanding and respect for British democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes,
- understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the localities of Sandwell and the West Midlands and to society more widely,
- respect the basis on which the law is made and applied in England,
- celebrate a diversity of cultures and develop positive attitudes to people from different cultures and faiths,
- participate in a range of cultural activities, communities and visits, thus preparing them positively for life in modern Britain.

Sandwell Academy aims to create an ethos which fosters the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students whilst recognising the multi-cultural, multi-faith and changing nature of the United Kingdom.

SMSC, which includes the promotion of key British values, is developed through the whole Academy ethos, the Academy environment, the curriculum, assemblies, PT Citizenship and PSHE sessions, the weekly Broadcast, a wide range of extra-curricular activities, opportunities for 'student voice' and student leadership, trips, celebrations of success, charity work, volunteering opportunities, displays, and performances. Sandwell Academy actively promotes British values and challenges opinions or behaviours in the Academy that are contrary to fundamental British values. Teachers are expected to uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, both within and outside the Academy.

Spiritual Development

Sandwell Academy supports the process of acquiring positive personal beliefs and values as:

- an active basis for personal and social behaviour
- for the consideration of the meaning and purpose of human existence

- the seeking of answers to questions about the self and the universe

The aim is to underline the spiritual concerns of humanity (e.g. the value of life and the environment, the purpose of life and choices in life). The 'Thought of the week' allows all students an opportunity to reflect on pertinent spiritual and moral themes. The Academy's aim is to:

- sustain students' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect in their learning journey,
- foster students' ability to express their feelings and discuss their beliefs,
- encourage students to reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life,
- enable students to recognise the unique value of each individual,
- provide students with the opportunity to experience moments of stillness and reflection,
- foster respect for people's different faiths (including those with no faith), feelings and values,
- promote an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law,
- promote 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;
- foster respect for people of different races, gender, ages, ability / disability, sexual orientation and other protected characteristics.* (Ref, Equal Opportunities Policy.)

Spiritual development is experienced throughout the Academy, but notably through Religious Education (R.E.). The R.E. curriculum provides a broad and balanced education on a range of faiths, religions and cultures. Teaching resources from a wide variety of sources are used to help students understand a range of faiths. All subject areas are committed to using and displaying resources which reflect the diversity of our Academy, country and community. All students study R.E. in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and students can opt to study Religious Studies for GCSE and at Key Stage 5. Religious Education sessions aid students to gain insight into their own religious beliefs and loyalties and to consider their personal and spiritual values and practices.

Teaching staff identify opportunities in the Academy's curriculum to enable students to develop spiritually and appreciate the variety of faiths as well as heighten awareness of the spiritual dimension in our lives. Higher order tasks are created which promote students to question, debate and reflect, as well as to enable students to work out and express their own position on issues, both spiritual and moral. Curriculum planning and the Sandwell Academy ethos aim to equip students with the ability to understand their place in a culturally diverse society and to provide opportunities to experience such diversity within the Academy community. Students benefit from a number of international visits and visitors, and from the celebration of festivities throughout the year; these are shared with the whole Academy via the weekly broadcast.

Moral Development

Moral Development:

- encourages students to develop fundamental precepts about behaviour and the reasons for behaviour,
- helps students to develop the skills and confidence to make decisions,
- gives students the confidence to listen to and respect others and their viewpoints,
- fosters a respect for the civil and criminal law of England.

Sandwell Academy's values permeate the ethos of the Academy. These are mutual respect, driving ambition, nurturing talent, dynamic enterprise and community spirit.

The Academy's aim is:

- to stimulate students into giving expression to their own moral beliefs and understanding,
- to challenge students into trying to justify their beliefs and understanding with reasons,
- to enable students to share with others their reflections, listen to others and struggle to resolve their disagreements,
- to help students to apply their growing moral competence in the context of the Academy, the wider community and English law and assist them in recognising their responsibilities, the difference between right and wrong, and the consequences of their behaviour,
- to facilitate the extension of students' moral reflections beyond their own immediate experience to national and global issues and thus appreciate the viewpoints of others and challenge the veracity of statistics,
- to ensure that key British values are taught. These are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of all faiths and beliefs,
- to foster an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety,
- to support students in an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process; and also in an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary.

All students are mentored at least once during each module by their Personal Tutor. Records are kept of positive achievement, behaviour, attendance and effort, and there is appropriate logging of interventions that have occurred where students have not behaved appropriately. Effective communications are maintained between the Academy and parents to ensure students maximise their potential. Formal parental contact is made through commendations, Module Reports and End of Year Reports, parent evenings and information evenings. Concerns are regularly monitored and prompt action is taken when required. Contact is made through telephone calls, emails and ad hoc meetings in the Academy with individual members of staff. Codes of conduct and expected standards of behaviour are reiterated.

The importance of laws, whether they are those that govern the class, the Academy or the country are consistently reinforced. Students are taught the value and the reasons behind laws that govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. At the same time, students are actively encouraged to make independent choices with the knowledge that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment at Sandwell Academy. Staff educate and provide boundaries for students to make informed choices through an empowering education. Students are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are advised on how to exercise these safely, for example through e-safety education. Sandwell Academy has a robust anti-bullying culture.

Social Development

Through social development, students acquire the skills and personal qualities necessary to live and function effectively in society.

The Academy's aim is to enable students to:

- develop an understanding of their individual and group identity,
- learn about service in the Academy and the wider community and promote volunteering

- begin to understand the need for social justice and a concern for the vulnerable / disadvantaged,
- develop their consideration for others and an appreciation of human rights and individual liberty,
- develop a concern for justice in society and the fundamental British values of democracy,
- develop respect for the practices of different religious faiths and a sympathetic understanding of their underlying values and concerns,
- develop tolerance for the variety of beliefs and the customs of the citizens of our world,
- demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain,
- keep students safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Students are encouraged to identify themselves as members of the Academy community and citizens of the wider community. This involves an increasing awareness of their own identity as individuals and a need to work with the feelings and wishes of others. Both the formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities promote team work and cooperation. Students democratically choose their Headship team in all years, following broadcasts / assemblies outlining the system and providing a voice for the candidates. Thus the principle of democracy is consistently being reinforced at Sandwell Academy. Resources on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and on how democracy and the law work in Britain are used, and contrasted to other forms of government in other countries.

All students are exposed to a wide variety of social / team experiences. Teachers actively guide students to work in groups outside their friendship groups. Equal opportunities guidance and legislation guarantee that there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status or similar.

Individuals are encouraged to participate in enrichment and extension activities outside the normal Academy timetable. An international perspective is encouraged through the Academy's support of a variety of charitable organisations and through trips abroad.

External speakers are used to expose the students to a variety of viewpoints and opinions. The emphasis is to allow students to take responsibility for their own actions and provide them with a solid base of information on which to build the kind of self-confidence and self-control expected from our students. Curriculum planning provides students with opportunities to learn how to argue and defend points of view.

If we were concerned about a student's vulnerability, we follow guidance set out in the Academy's Safeguarding Policy which requires us to work alongside a range of organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students.

Cultural Development

The Academy reinforces the values and customs of society as a whole and celebrates diversity and multi-culturalism. Respect is a core value at Sandwell Academy. Students learn that their own behaviour has an effect on their own rights and those of others. The cultural influences of home, community and religion are explored in order to extend the students' awareness and breadth of understanding. This is achieved through the formal curriculum, through extra-curricular activities and the value placed overtly on the students' own cultural interests and achievements. All members of the Academy community expect to treat others and to be treated with respect and this is reiterated across the Academy. Staff model mutual respect

through their day to day working relationships with each other, the students and the consistent application of our behaviour codes.

The Academy seeks to develop and strengthen students' current cultural awareness by:

- promoting an appreciation of cultural diversity,
- recognising the richness and value of cultural diversity in Britain,
- incorporating students' own home influences into discussions,
- by providing the opportunity for students to express their views in a safe environment,
- encouraging an appreciation of influences which have shaped their heritage and that of others.

Students should be able to:

- know about their own culture and society and to value their own cultural identity,
- be aware of, respect and celebrate, cultural diversity and different faiths,
- understand the interdependence of groups within society,
- know about and demonstrate tolerance towards societies, cultures and groups with protected characteristics other than their own – locally, nationally and globally,*
- know Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values,
- embrace mutual respect throughout the curriculum,
- be aware of the principal ways in which different people interpret the world.

Sandwell Academy strives to ensure that its students leave with the strongest foundation of values upon which to build a successful life and to make a positive contribution to society.

*By protected characteristics we refer to the following:-

- Race
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation