Policy to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students

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Legal framework

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Education Act 2002, Section 78
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Independent School Standards Regulatory Requirements Part 2
- DfE guidance on Fundamental British Values
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 and updates for 1 September 2026

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all members of the school's community, including students, parents, employees, temporary staff, contractors, agency workers, visiting music teachers and other peripatetic workers, volunteers, governors and all other people when working in or for the school. It applies whenever staff or volunteers are working with students, even where this is away from the school, e.g. on a school trip.

What this policy is for

This policy aims to:

- describe how the school aims to promote positively the spiritual, moral, social and cultural values of its students.
- embed these values in the curriculum and all school activities
- promote Fundamental British Values as part of the above
- reflect and reinforce the underlying values of the school

Other relevant school policies

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy
- PSHE/RSE policy
- Curriculum policy
- Wellbeing/Mental Health policy
- Behaviour policy
- Equal Opportunities for Students policy
- School Values

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What do we understand by Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education?

1.1 It is acknowledged that it is not easy to define what is to be understood by 'spiritual', 'moral', 'social', and 'cultural' development. The following definitions are, however, seen as being appropriate for use across the whole provision at St Paul's Girls' School.

Spiritual Development:

1.2 Spiritual development is associated with the search for meaning and purpose in life. It relates to a dimension of life which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses but has much to do with feelings, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. The term 'spiritual' need not be synonymous with 'religious'. All areas of the curriculum should contribute to students' spiritual development. For example:

- the sense of self
- explore beliefs
- respect different faiths
- unique potential
- understanding strengths and weaknesses
- curiosity about themselves and their place in the world
- developing their knowledge and skills which are non-material or immeasurable
- reflective and epiphanic moments in lessons.

Moral Development:

1.3 Moral development is concerned with students' ability to make judgements about how they should behave and act and the reasons for such behaviour. It refers to their knowledge, understanding of justice, respect for law, values and attitudes in relation to what is right or wrong, and investigating the consequences of actions. For example:

- right and wrong,
- moral conflict,
- a concern for others, the will to do what is right,
- the ability to reflect on the consequences of their actions,
- learning to forgive, and
- developing the skills and knowledge of responsible decision making.

Social Development:

1.4 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. For example:

- responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global)
- the ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good including developing tolerance and cooperation with peers
- belonging and participating or an active contribution to the community or democratic process.

Cultural Development:

1.5 Cultural development refers to the development of knowledge and understanding and the appreciation of differing cultural beliefs, customs and traditions. Understanding British democratic heritage and participating

in arts and sports. A central theme concerns the development of a sense of personal identity, whilst at the same time acquiring awareness, understanding and respect regarding the cultural traditions of others. For example:

- cultural traditions
- respect for their own culture and that of others
- an interest in differences
- appreciation of or contribution to culture.

Guiding Principles

1.6 The following guiding principles apply:

- All aspects of the school's taught curriculum and co-curricular activities will offer opportunities for, and contribute to, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students
- Staff will model and promote expected behaviour, recognising the unique qualities and inherent value of each student while fostering mutual respect among students, parents, and all members of the school community
- The promotion of the school's Values should seek to use illustrations and examples drawn from as broad and diverse a range of cultural contexts as possible
- The school's approach to behaviour and discipline should reflect the school's Values and it will aim to promote positive behaviour
- Every student should be given the opportunity to consider, reflect upon and discuss their beliefs and values. Students should be encouraged to develop a sense of their individual and group identities
- The school will provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the broader social-cultural 'make up' of the communities to which they belong and aim to develop an appreciation of how other cultures can enrich these communities
- The school will give each student the opportunity to consider British Values, namely democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- The school will protect students from being drawn into terrorism. Protecting children from radicalisation is a key part of our school's safeguarding strategy.

Objectives

2.1 Through its SMSC provision, the school is required actively to promote principles which enable our students to develop:

their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence

- the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of the UK
- a willingness to take responsibility for their behaviour, to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely
- an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online
- a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in the UK
- further harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures

- respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 - age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- 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 the UK

Delivery of SMSC

3.1 The delivery of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development at St Paul's Girls' School is via both the taught curriculum and the numerous co-curricular activities on offer, including assemblies, societies and clubs and talks and presentations by visiting speakers.

Pastoral Care

3.2 We aim to provide the highest levels of pastoral care for all students. In safe form times and tutorial spaces, students are able to foster confidence, respect others and feel happy to discuss wide-ranging issues. This is particularly the case in the two protected periods for PSHE a week – one a taught session, the other a period of reflection. In this way, they can develop their spiritual, cultural, social and moral awareness.

3.3 We also have a Chaplain who is available to all students, those of faith and those of no faith, and who reinforces the values set out in this policy.

Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions

3.4 The school aims to create an environment where students feel safe and confident in discussing their opinions and values. This is in line with our Behaviour Policy. Our policies and guidelines are in place to promote:

- positive contributions to school life
- taking responsibility for behaviour in and out of school
- inclusivity and equal opportunities for all the community
- respect for the rule of law.

Taught Curriculum

3.5 All departments are expected to implement aspects of SMSC development in their teaching.

Co-Curricular Activities

3.6 The school promotes a wide range of co-curricular activities and societies, many of which provide opportunities for SMSC development. Where possible, these activities are student-led, providing opportunities for leadership and collaboration. The co-curricular programme also promotes a sense of duty to one's community through activities which allow students to represent the school or actively help others (e.g., voluntary/partnership service activities)

3.7 More information about these activities can be found on the relevant pages of the school portal under co-curricular activities.

Themed Events

3.8 In addition, students and staff organise themed events for the whole school based on contemporary issues and historical events. Every half-term, the school also has a dedicated Reading Week where students are encouraged to read around their academic subjects, to reflect at their leisure and to research wider aspects of the taught curriculum.

Partnerships

3.9 St Paul's Girls' School works with a number of local primary and secondary schools from the maintained sector, involving shared staff inset, student mentoring, and support with university preparation. Partnerships are also forged with local organisations working with vulnerable adults and children, such as the elderly.

The St Paul's Programme

3.10 Senior School students (Years 12 and 13) engage in a weekly lecture, usually delivered by a visiting speaker, on diverse and contemporary topics. Year 12 students also participate in a year-long carousel of volunteering, academic enrichment and life skills. The students rotate through each of the activities in termly blocks, including seven weeks of service and a 'closing the gap workshop' to help them develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain. The electives and the academic enrichment elements of the course are run in collaboration with St Paul's School.

Student Voice

3.11 There are many opportunities for the "student voice" to be heard within the school and these include:

- **School Council**: comprising representatives from every year group to assimilate and distil the views of their peers. The Council is chaired by a student with the Senior Deputy Head and High Mistress usually present. It is viewed by staff as the most reliable forum from which to ascertain students' feedback.
- **HoST (Head of School Team**) an elected body, which meets the High Mistress weekly. They each have designated responsibilities, and the group is run by the Head of School and the Deputy Head (Senior School). They often lead assemblies and are frequently consulted on all manner of concerns affecting the whole student body.
- **CAR (Consent and Respect) Committee**: consisting of Senior School students; the committee works in close collaboration with St Paul's School and mentor students in Year 10 within this school. Their remit is to discuss sensitive and challenging issues such as assault, consent, reporting crimes and justice. They also sometimes lead PSHE sessions.

3.12 Additionally, we have a team of PSHE Ambassadors, Lower School buddies, Peer Mentors, sports mentors, a Senior School Wellbeing Team, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, RAISE (a committee for students of all ages who work to promote the profile of bursary students within and without the school) and many more. Most societies and clubs are student-led, and students are encouraged to set up new ventures if there is perceived to be a gap in our co-curricular provision.

Promoting Fundamental British Values

4.1 Since September 2014, schools are required to 'actively promote' Fundamental British Values. Under the Prevent Duty 2015, the school teaches Fundamental British Values to build resilience against extreme views. These values teach safety and respect.

4.2 The idea of "Fundamental British Values" was coined by the Prevent strategy in 2011. It was introduced into the Independent School Standards on 1 January 2013, and this was supported by non-statutory advice dated November 2013.

4.3 Further amendments were made to the Standards in September 2014 and supplementary guidance was issued in November 2014 to support these additional changes.

4.4 The four key values are:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty

- Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

4.5 St Paul's Girls' School promotes these values through their inclusion in the taught curriculum and through the hosting of various co-curricular events. The school would seek to challenge opinions or behaviour that are contrary to these fundamental values and recognises that promoting views that undermine these fundamental values would be at odds with this goal.

4.6 The school aims to develop in our students the following through the promotion of Fundamental British Values:

- Democracy: An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- The rule of law: An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety - through the sixth form citizenship course, Model United Nations and visiting speaker programme and inclusion in various aspects of the taught curriculum
- 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
- Individual liberty: An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- Tolerance and respect for others: an acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and respected and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour and an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.