Policy: Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) and Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) Education

Policy Owner:	School Management
Approved / Last Reviewed:	August 2026
Approved / Last Reviewed by:	Rob Brown
Next Review:	August 2027
Policy basis	Independent School Standards, KCSIE

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes
1.0			Historic
2.0	August 2026	Rob Brown	Reviewed / Revised - Compliance

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POLICY STATEMENT

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is central to the educational work of our school and supported through our whole-school approach to Personal, Social, Health and Economic education. We aim to enable pupils to be aware of and look after their health and wellbeing, manage social situations and relationships, and develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values which are necessary for them to make sense of the responsibilities, opportunities and experiences which are part of their lives, both now and in the future, and so be able to successfully and happily make their way in the world. This policy has regard to Part 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum) and Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The PSHE curriculum is informed by the PSHE Association's Programme of Study. This policy should be read alongside the school's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy, which sets out statutory RSE content and parents' right of withdrawal.

Definitions

Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being, acquiring a sense of identity, self- worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose, within a system that gives opportunities to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the ways they affect people's lives.

Moral development is personal development relating to human behaviour, especially the distinction between good and bad, right and wrong and respect for the law.

Social development is personal development concerned with living in a community, the ability to accept responsibility for behaviour, show initiative, and understand how to contribute to community

life in and out of the school environment, and through a broad, general knowledge of public institutions and services in England.

Cultural development is personal development concerned with the total of inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitute the shared understanding of the society in which we live, acquiring an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions.

PSHE education enables pupils to develop:

- Self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, an understanding of what will make them physically and mentally healthy and happy and learning how best to navigate the issues that may represent a challenge to this (for example drugs, alcohol, pornography and online harms), managing risk (including personal safety) and making sensible, informed decisions.

- The quality of their relationships, with friends, families and sexual partners, promoting physically and mentally healthy approaches to these, treating each other with tolerance and respect and encouraging care, compassion and understanding. Developing the understanding and skills to set appropriate boundaries, be assertive, resolve conflict, and support others. An awareness of social justice, human rights, community cohesion and global interdependence.

- An understanding of, and engagement with current affairs, and contribution to community life.

- An understanding of how the UK is governed, how one participates politically, to critically engage with political questions, to recognise the importance of democracy and the value individual liberty.

- An ability to distinguish right from wrong, to take responsibility for their behaviour, an understanding of the justice system and how our laws are shaped and enforced, to be aware of their rights, but also of their responsibilities, and to better understand and respect the rule of law.

- Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, an appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different national, religious and ethnic traditions. Pupils are encouraged to challenge injustice, inequality and discrimination. This includes encouraging respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- An understanding of personal finances, the payment of tax, its expenditure by government, and also an awareness of wealth inequality domestically and globally.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of each pupil is seen as the responsibility of all members of staff, and much of this development is assimilated through everyday school life. Our curriculum is built around developmental stages and provides many opportunities for PSHE education as well as specific issue-based content, and this is further supported by activities such as morning verses, assemblies, and whole school celebration of festivals.

Kindergarten

During the early years, children learn through imitation and play. The development of physical, practical and social and emotional competence is supported through a mixed age, family-like group where children learn to share and work together, caring for each other and the environment. A moral sense of fairness and right and wrong is awakened and developed through stories and traditional fairy tales and reinforced by the 'Golden Rules' relating to kindness and appropriate behaviour. Collaborative, co-operative play enables positive social skills and empathy to develop naturally. Playing and working outside provides a strong experiential relationship to nature, the children learn how to dress for the elements, and build confidence, self-esteem, strength, stamina and resilience. Staff act as role models, support and facilitate the development of life skills and good habits, providing a range of social, practical, domestic and artistic activities. Healthy nutritious mid-morning snacks are provided, and the children help to prepare this by making bread, preparing vegetables and setting the table.

For more information, please see our Framework of Kindergarten Education.

Lower school

Education in the lower school has a strong emphasis on PSHE, which is delivered through age-appropriate dialogue, stories and biographies, as well as direct presentation of topics such as internet safety (including content related to online harms such as gaming, monetisation, and scams), relationships and behaviour. Stories which support pupils to manage change, loss, and bereavement are included, helping pupils to navigate the reality of the experiences. Stories remain an important resource, and many subjects (such as art, music, history, geography, maths and biology as well as sex education) offer scope for PSHE, and learning opportunities also arise spontaneously, with discussions, incidents or news being integrated into the overall educational work of the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are also brought through culture and belief lessons, where a constant, underlying theme is exploring how, as human beings, we become who we are, how do we become the fullest person we can be. Stories, fables or parables from a particular religious tradition are used to prompt discussions and to explore areas including relationships, friendships, disability, oppression, morality, truth, illusion and the environment.

For instance, in Class 6, when studying astronomy as a main lesson, in culture and belief lessons pupils may look at astrology and the myths and stories behind the constellations. From that they may go on to explore the 12 different character types connected with the 12 signs. This is done not to teach astrology but rather to help the students to understand the ways in which we habitually

categorise others into convenient boxes, rather than striving to find what is unique in each particular person.

When bringing awareness to pupils about what the particularly modern conundrum of what is real and what is illusory, the Allegory of Plato's cave is used, whereby a group of people are chained in a cave from birth, in such a way that they can only look at the wall in front of them. A fire burning behind with shadows being cast upon the wall is the undeniable reality of the people. It is only when one leaves the cave and steps into the sunlight that they realise that their understanding of the world was merely partial. Such topics provide a useful way in to discuss issues such as information technology, what is real, what is hidden and how to stay safe.

Major faiths are explored in culture and belief lessons but teachers also like to examine the 'edges' where people have, if not broken the boundaries, then at least asked searching questions of their respective religions. In this way, when bringing content about faiths, the teachers are also encouraging the children to question the orthodoxy of the faiths and to explore different perspectives. For example, the children may be shown that Islam isn't just about the Koran, but to also look at Rumi's Masnavi. The Masnavi contains hundreds of stories that illustrate the many ways there are to understand oneself, one another and the world, such as the one about five blind men and an elephant. In this story, one by one, the blind men go up to the elephant and try to describe it. One touches the tail and describes the animal as a very long thin animal, another touches the legs, another the trunk…but the essence of the story is that all five develop a different idea about what the truth is; and all are either incomplete or wrong. The lessons also consider, through these stories, how the cultures that have given rise to these faiths can still be relevant to us and to explore how we can still draw on them in our decisions about how to live our lives.

In class one the teacher builds on the good habits of personal care, care and respect for others and appropriate behaviour developed in kindergarten, using morality stories and fables to lay the foundations for increasingly conscious and focused dialogues about specific topics as the children grow through the school.

Biographies, for example, of Christie Brown or Helen Keller, may be used in class 6 to explore overcoming the challenges of disability in order to live a nevertheless full and rewarding life. In class 7, the teacher may bring the stories of 'Goodnight Mr Tom' and 'I am David' to help explore a whole range of topics which bring about discussion with the pupils, including subjects such as escaping oppression and child abuse.

Debating is also used in the middle school years to broaden the moral viewpoint and to help pupils develop the ability to see things from different perspectives. Topics that may be used include debating whether Roman society was fair or not; looking at poverty and wealth, including the industrial revolution and workers' rights; and whether we should have a Monarchy. School issues, such as looking after the space and keeping the washrooms clean, are also used as topics for debate. Debating issues helps young people to develop their critical skills, consider a wide range of political, social, ethical and moral problems, and explore opinions and ideas other than their own. They evaluate information, make informed judgements and reflect on the consequences of their actions now and in the future. They learn to argue a case on behalf of others as well as themselves and speak out on issues of concern.

Upper school

The upper school PSHE curriculum is delivered through subject lessons and sponsor and PSHE lessons, focussing on Health and Wellbeing (healthy lifestyles, gender related issues, sex and love, drugs, food and diet, internet safety including scams and fraud etc), Relationships (beliefs and values, emotions, self-esteem, conflict and conflict resolution, communication, etc) and Living in the World (democracy, money and debt, rights and responsibilities, personal safety including whilst travelling and the harms of knife crime, educational choices, work experience, careers, UCAS applications, and accessing support etc).

It also addresses issues relating to social justice, human rights, community cohesion and global interdependence, and encourages pupils to challenge injustice, inequalities and discrimination, and helps pupils to become informed, critical, active citizens who have the confidence and conviction to work collaboratively, take action and try to make a difference in their communities and the wider world.

Upper School classes have weekly sponsor lessons which explore and work with emergent class issues in a transparent and democratic manner. These could be issues relating to the physical state of the classroom, social issues (gender, drugs, bullying behaviour, and/or issues emerging online etc.) or school issues, such as class dynamics. Specific topics that are age and stage appropriate for the class are also introduced and explored. These could be teacher led discussions, case studies, debates, role plays or guest speaker discussions. Student readiness and the content appropriateness are always considered, and students may bring, present, and debate topics that are important to them.

Subject lessons such as history, art, drama, philosophy, English, music studies and sciences continue to address SMSC/PSHE issues, for example through global politics, world literature, art history, philosophical thought, music and ethnicity, ethics.

POLITICAL IMPARTIALITY AND BALANCED TREATMENT OF POLITICAL ISSUES

In accordance with Part 2, paragraph 5(c) and (d) of the Independent School Standards, teaching at the school does not promote partisan political views, and where political issues are brought to pupils' attention – including through debating activities, culture and belief lessons, or subject teaching – pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views appropriate to their age and understanding.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rob Brown is responsible for this policy and for oversight of PSHE/SMSC provision at each phase (e.g., named trustee lead, Kindergarten/Lower School/Upper School curriculum leads), and how staff are supported and trained to deliver sensitive content confidently and consistently.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH SEND

The school is committed to supporting all pupils in the school and ensures that PSHE education is accessible for all pupils. In most cases pupils with SEND are taught PSHE alongside their peers using high quality teaching and effective differentiation. Some pupils' needs may be more fully met through teaching in small groups or 1:1. Where this is the case teachers will liaise with the school inclusion co-ordinator and the pupil's parent(s) and/or carer(s). The school also recognises that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable than their peers to bullying, exploitation, and online harms such as scams and fraud. Pupils with SEND may also need additional support with building independence, understanding available post school options, and taking next steps. Accordingly, this is taken into consideration during lesson planning.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

- This policy should be read alongside the school's:
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- British Values Policy
- Visiting Speaker Policy
- Internet Safety Policy

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually, considering feedback from pupils, parents and staff. The programme will be reviewed regularly through staff monitoring and pupil feedback. The mechanism used to gather pupil voice varies depending on age and includes but is not limited to post lesson signalled responses (thumbs up/in the middle/down); verbal feedback; anonymous written feedback; pupil feedback forms; and discussions during circle time and sponsor lessons.

MONITORING, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492

Compliance is monitored through internal audits, policy review as part of self-evaluation, and annual reporting to Trustees on concessions awarded, value, and any compliance issues.