



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Ripley Court School recognises that the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. The School actively promotes SMSC development of all its pupils, as the pupils sit at the very heart of the School Community and everything the School does.
- 1.2. The School provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs through a development of their spiritual awareness, their need for high standards of personal behaviour, and having a positive caring attitude towards other people, as well as an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world.
- 1.3. All schools have a duty to 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.
- 1.4. By actively promoting these values, the School will challenge the opinions or behaviours in School that are contrary to fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and foster a mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.
- 1.5. This policy outlines how the School nurtures and supports children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development throughout the School, including the EYFS. The policy is not exhaustive but rather gives a flavour of the ways in which the School supports children to appreciate the world around them and how to be a valuable member of their community.
- 1.6. This policy is informed by the DfE documents:
 - Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils (Departmental advice for Independent schools, academies and free schools) November 2013

- Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils: supplementary information (Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools) November 2014
- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools (Departmental advice for maintained schools) November 2014

2. Political Impartiality in Schools (DfE Guidance) March 2025 Aims

2.1. SMSC education at Ripley Court School aims to be thoughtful and wide-ranging, promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being to enable them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community. To do this the School will:

- ensure that all children have a voice, that is listened to via the democratic process of the School Council
- ensure a consistent approach to the development of SMSC understanding throughout the curriculum and the general life of the School
- ensure that a pupil's education is set within a context that is meaningful and appropriate to their age, aptitude and background
- ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and why
- give each pupil a range of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and personal experience
- enable pupils to develop an understanding of their individual and group identity
- enable pupils to begin to develop an understanding of their social and cultural environment, and an appreciation of the many cultures that enrich our society
- give each pupil the opportunity to explore social and moral issues, and develop a sense of social and moral responsibility.

2.2. In each of the areas of SMSC, the School has defined the behaviours, attributes and abilities that it aims to help to develop within children.

3. Spiritual Development

3.1. The School sees spiritual development as the way children acquire personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and basic personal and social behaviour. It is associated with a dimension of life which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses, but has much to do with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs. The term 'spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'. Understanding of self and others is at the heart of spiritual development and is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith. Spiritual development is, therefore, accessible to everyone. All areas of the curriculum should contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

3.2. The School's aim for spiritual development is to create an environment in which pupils feel ready, willing and able to:

- sustain their self-esteem in their learning experiences
- develop their capacity for critical and independent thought
- develop their social and emotional literacy and enable them to express their feelings and respect and value others
- experience moments of stillness and reflection
- discuss their beliefs, feelings, values and responses to personal experiences
- form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships
- reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life
- explore the surrounding world using imagination and creativity

3.3. Therefore, pupils are encouraged at all times to:

- use their imagination in solving problems and empathising with others
- develop a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness
- feel comfortable with discussions about the holy or the sacred
- develop an awareness of order and pattern in the world
- respect the integrity of each person and their differences
- explore instances of symbol, image, allegory and metaphor in the curriculum
- explore what commitment means.

3.4. Beyond the formal curriculum, the School will:

- encourage pupils in personal conversations and during discussions in lessons, to express feelings whilst listening carefully to others' questions and responses.
- treat everyone with respect, regardless of personal feelings.
- visit places of worship and invite visiting speakers in to enable children to deepen their understanding and provide them with a lived experience in preparation for the wider world in which they live
- provide support via the ELSA (Emotional Learning Support Assistance) Programme
- make available a wellbeing space – The Nest
- utilise “Bubble Time”

4. Moral Development

4.1. The School regards moral development as the way children acquire an understanding of the difference between right and wrong, show concern for others and reflect on the consequences of their actions and the actions of others. Moral development should enable pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

4.2. The School's aim for moral development is to create an environment in which pupils feel ready, willing and able to:

- recognise the unique value of each individual
- listen and respond appropriately to the views of others

- gain the confidence to cope with setbacks, learn from mistakes, and understand consequences
- take initiative and act responsibly with consideration for others
- distinguish between right and wrong and to respect school rules and the law
- investigate moral and ethical issues
- show respect for the environment
- make informed, independent and reasoned judgements and understand the principles lying behind decisions and actions
- value individual liberty

4.3. Therefore, pupils are encouraged at all times to:

- understand that all actions have consequence
- be able to make moral decisions for themselves, and not be swayed by peer pressure
- assume moral responsibility through belief and conviction
- have respect for others' needs, interests and feelings, as well as their own
- develop a desire to explore their own and others' views, and an understanding of the need to review and re-assess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience.
- tell the truth and respect the rights and property of others
- fulfil commitments
- help those less fortunate than themselves and act considerately towards others
- take responsibility for their own actions and exercise self-discipline
- develop high expectations and develop positive attitudes
- follow the rules for the good of all
- seek to understand and develop worthwhile relationships.

4.4. Within the curriculum pupils will be encouraged to discuss, reflect upon and develop a personal view on ethical questions raised in PSHE, English, History, RS, Geography, Computing, Science and wider curriculum.

4.5. Beyond the formal curriculum the School will:

- through the School values, rules and other formal ways, make clear the moral ethos of the School
- through informal discussions in classes and in houses, moral questions whenever appropriate, particularly in any discussion related to disciplinary action, so that pupils understand the School's moral framework
- use regular assemblies led by the Headmaster, members of the Senior Leadership team, to raise and address moral questions.

5. Social Development

5.1. The School believes social development is concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society. Building these skills and qualities enables pupils to become conscientious participants in their

house groups, the School and the wider community. Provision for social development should balance the positive, satisfying elements of belonging to a group or society with the demands and obligations such membership requires. The School, but in particular the classroom, provides a suitable environment for promoting social development. Pupils learn to lead, to use their initiative and to use individual skills and strengths when working together. The ability to be led, to support others and to recognise the different skills of other group members can be developed when children work cooperatively. These aptitudes are further enhanced by the Forest School, physical education and Enrichment programmes.

5.2. The School's aim for social development is to create an environment in which pupils feel ready, willing and able to:

- relate positively to others
- participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and in the wider school community
- use appropriate behaviour, according to situations
- engage successfully in partnership with others and work as part of a group
- exercise personal responsibility and initiative
- understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school and society
- show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others
- develop an understanding of citizenship and experience being part of a whole caring community
- realise that every member of the community has a worthwhile contribution to make
- develop resilience
- adjust to a range of social contexts by appropriate and sensitive behaviour
- relate well to other people's social skills and personal qualities
- share views and opinions with others
- resolve conflicts maturely and appropriately
- reflect on their own contribution to society
- show respect for people, living things, property and the environment
- understand how societies function and are organised in structures such as the family, the school
- understand the notion of interdependence in an increasingly complex society.

5.3. Therefore, pupils are encouraged at all times to:

- listen to and respect the viewpoints of others
- develop ideas and consolidate understanding by using paired discussions and group work
- display good behaviour which will be praised positively and rewarded publicly
- collaborate, persevere and use initiative when taking part in Ripley's Court's curriculum and enhanced in the Forest School programme, PE and Enrichment.

5.4. Beyond the formal curriculum, the School will:

- teach pupils how to work together in groups, how to be inclusive and supportive of others, in houses, tutor groups, games and activities
- enable pupils of all ages to participate in the running of the School through the School Council
- foster a respect for the individual, as long as their actions do not undermine the community as a whole, through the relationships between staff, parents/guardians and pupils
- embed the School's values through Weekly Awards given in School Assembly and by the awarding of stickers and a trophy – perseverance, aspiration, curiosity and kindness.
- encourage pupils to form friendships and support one another via the Buddy System and House Meetings.

6. Cultural Development

6.1. The School believes pupils' cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and an ability to respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. At the heart of cultural development lies the necessity to develop a sense of personal identity, whilst at the same time acquiring awareness, understanding and tolerance regarding the cultural traditions of others. In order to make provision for cultural development, existing knowledge, interests and experiences are strengthened and then built upon further. In this way pupils gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and the factors which influence it and gain a broader understanding of other cultures and cultural influences.

6.2. The School's aim for cultural development is to create an environment in which pupils feel ready, willing and able to:

- recognise the value and richness of cultural diversity in Britain by sharing different cultural experiences
- participate in cultural opportunities
- recognise and develop an understanding of world-wide faiths, traditions and cultures and their contribution to our society
- understand, accept, respect, be tolerant of and celebrate diversity and know that it should not be the cause of any prejudice or discrimination
- develop an understanding of their social and cultural environment
- develop a sense of belonging to their own culture and be proud of their cultural background
- respect different cultural traditions
- understand codes of behaviour from other cultural traditions and develop a love of learning
- build resilience to radicalisation and challenge extremist views whilst still appreciating the values and customs of other ethnic and faith groups which make up modern British society, and the world beyond
- be aware of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without a faith mindset

- an ability to reflect on important questions of meaning and identity
- an interest in exploring the relationship between human beings and the environment.

6.3. Therefore, pupils are encouraged at all times:

- to acquire an understanding of the contribution of British thinkers to the subject being discussed in all lessons
- to understand the importance of the work done by people from other cultures in bringing us to our current understanding of the subject being discussed
- to undertake a study of other cultures and their forms of cultural expression in Music, RS, PSHE, Philosophy and Art
- to discuss and explore differences, similarities, equal rights, peer pressure and discrimination within RS, Philosophy and PSHE
- to acquire knowledge by taking part in school trips to places of cultural interest
- to acquire knowledge by viewing displays around the School on items of cultural interest
- to learn about the main public institutions within the UK and their relationship with the institutions in the wider world, particularly the United Nations and the European Community.

6.4. Beyond the formal curriculum the School will:

- provide opportunities for all pupils to attend musical and theatrical events
- provide opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide variety of cultural events including concerts, theatre, choral singing, clubs, poetry readings
- arrange expeditions and tours to give pupils experiences of other cultures/religions
- create charity links to enable pupils to think beyond their own culture, share the aspirations of people in a variety of different cultures and provide a lived experience to prepare pupils for the wider world
- arrange for visiting speakers to talk about different cultures and trips to places of worship

7. Teaching and Organisation

7.1. SMSC development and the promotion of British values are addressed both through the curriculum (as above) and through wider school events, such as:

- the overall positive ethos and values of the School
- discrete, age appropriate lessons which focus on aspects of SMSC
- opportunities in the curriculum and especially the curriculum for Jigsaw RE and Jigsaw PSHE
- assemblies
- responsibilities undertaken by children e.g. Anti-Bully Ambassadors, classroom monitors, School Council representatives, sports leaders, School Captain and Heads of Houses

- whole School initiatives such as participation in activities for Anti-Bullying Week or raising money for various charities e.g. MacMillan Coffee Morning and Inter-Faith Day
- adults acting as role models, requiring high expectations of staff behaviour
- celebration assemblies and reward systems
- reinforcement of pupil behaviour around School, setting high expectations for manners, respect for School property etc.
- clearly defined School rules for behaviour – Ready, Respectful Safe, and Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy.
- opportunity to work with representatives of different faith communities, other cultures or from different countries
- taking part in events of national importance e.g. Remembrance Day activities, King’s Birthday celebrations.
- engaging in extra-curricular activities
- using teaching resources from a wide variety of sources to help pupils understand a range of faiths, and cultures.

7.2. The above list is not exhaustive but is included to reflect on the range of ways in which SMSC is addressed throughout the School.

7.3. The School recognises that development in SMSC will also take place in Jigsaw RE, Art, Music, PE, PSHE and across all curriculum areas, within activities that encourage pupils to recognise the spiritual dimension of their learning, reflect the significance of what they are learning, and to recognise any challenges that there may be to their own attitude and lifestyle.

7.4. All curriculum areas should seek illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible.

8. Links with the Wider Community

8.1. The School endeavours to foster close links with the wider community, both establishing new links and maintaining long held ones.

8.2. Visitors are welcomed into School (subject to the requirements of our Visitor Access Policy and Visiting Speakers Policy).

8.3. Links with religious communities in the local area are maintained with new links sought. Local places of religious worship are used as part of curriculum work.

8.4. The development of a strong home-school link is regarded as very important, enabling parents and teachers to work in an effective partnership to support the pupil.

8.5. Pupils will be taught to appreciate their local environment and to develop a sense of responsibility to it. For example, the “Eco Team”, Litter Picks, Little Court vegetable patch etc.

8.6. Via extra-curricular opportunities and through links with local Secondary Schools. For example, our weekly enrichment programme in partnership with Reed's School, participation in the Inter-Schools Maths Challenge etc.

9. Promotion of British Values

9.1. The promotion of British values is an important part of the School ethos and is used as a means to develop the pupil's understanding in the following areas:

- 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 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 combatting discrimination

9.2. **Appendix 1** shows an overview of current opportunities in School that promote fundamental British Values. This list is not exhaustive but demonstrates the range of activities, events and systems within school that link with British values.

10. Monitoring and Evaluating SMSC Development

10.1. It is difficult, if not impossible, to administer tests or to make precise formal assessments about the four aspects of SMSC development.

10.2. Ripley Court School uses a SMSC Grid-Maker to capture evidence of lessons, assemblies and opportunities for SMSC development. This allows staff to ensure a broad curriculum for SMSC development is offered to all pupils and tracks the promotion of British values.

10.3. The School teaches PSHE and RSE through the Jigsaw 3-11 Programme. Jigsaw have mapping documents which evidence how SMSC development and the promotion of British values are covered in Jigsaw PSHE lessons. Further details are available in our PSHE/RSE Policy and from the SMSC subject leader.

10.4. At Ripley Court School, RSE is taught through Jigsaw RE. Jigsaw have produced mapping documents which evidence how SMSC development and the promotion of British values are covered in the RS/P lessons. Further details are available from the SMSC subject leader.

11. Policy Review

11.1. The SMSC policy is reviewed annually by Governors via the Education & Pastoral Committee.

11.2. The planning and co-ordination of SMSC are the responsibility of the Headmaster and RE/SMSC subject leaders, who also:

- support staff in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in the subject, and by providing strategic lead and direction for SMSC
- speak to pupils about different elements of SMSC and uses this to inform future planning.

12. References and links to other Policies

12.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- PSHE/RSE Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SEN Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy

Compiled by: SMSC Subject Lead	Revision Number: 6 (Autumn Term 2025)
Approved by: Education & Pastoral Committee	Next Revision date: Autumn Term 2026

Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
6 – Autumn 2025	1.6	Add reference to DfE guidance on political impartiality in schools
	4.4	Delete reference to 'IT' and replace with 'Computing'
	5.4	Add 'House Meetings' to final bullet point
	7.1	6 th bullet point - add reference to Inter Faith Day 10 th bullet point – add reference to 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' and Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy 12 th bullet point – updated list of celebrations
	8.5	Updated examples
	11.1	Governor Committee now specified.

Appendix 1 – Overview of current SMSC opportunities in School

Mutual Respect ✓ After School Clubs ✓ Sports Competitions ✓ Links with other schools/teams ✓ Curriculum (Discover RE & Jigsaw PSHE) ✓ Assemblies ✓ Special Focus Weeks ○ Anti-Bullying ○ Children In Need etc. ✓ Parent's Forum & Coffee Morning ✓ Parent Workshops ✓ Winter Festival & Summer Fair ✓ School Policies ○ Behaviour ○ Anti-Bullying etc. ✓ Home School Agreement	Personal Responsibility & Liberty ✓ School Uniform ✓ Reading records/homework ✓ Behaviour on Trips ✓ Conduct around School ✓ Lunch choices/salad bar (EY-Yr 6) ✓ Job monitors ✓ Sports Leaders / Captains ✓ Peer coaching in lessons ✓ Assemblies ✓ Classroom monitors ✓ E-Safety ✓ After School Club choices ✓ Forest School
Tolerance of Culture, Faith and Others ✓ Jigsaw PSHE ✓ Discovery RE curriculum ✓ Assemblies ✓ Multi-cultural toys/books/dolls/puppets ✓ Outside visitors	Democracy ✓ School Council Elections ✓ Children write 'Class Rules' ✓ Charity vote ✓ Assemblies
Rule of Law ✓ Developing links with local counsellor ✓ Behaviour Policy – consistency ✓ Parental Questionnaire ✓ Behaviour drop in open to parents ✓ Developing links with PCSO to visit School regularly ✓ Fire Safety Visit from Fire Service – assembly ✓ Citizenship course – Year 6	