

British Values & Community Cohesion Policy

Policy approved by Governors: April 2015

Next review: April 2017

Aims and Objectives

This policy sets out the framework of values that underpin the school's approach to "British Values" and to preparing students for life in British society. It also addresses the ways in which we teach such issues, and promote understanding and respect between different traditions of Judaism, and between Judaism and other faiths.

Ethos, Philosophy and Values

The underlying ethos of the school is expressed in the school's Statement of Ethos as agreed by Governors and Trustees in 2015:

"The school is inclusive, open on an equal basis to a broad spectrum of Jewish children in accordance with English law, irrespective of their status under Jewish law or synagogue affiliation. The school engenders an ethos which offers due respect for differing faiths, traditions, beliefs and practices. The teaching of Judaism is a fundamental element of the school, respecting all strands and traditions of that faith. The school's aim is to offer educational experience at all levels within a unique Jewish ethos, augmented by the teaching of wider multiculturalism and modern day British values."

Jewish Pluralism

JCoSS was founded as a pluralist Jewish school: the concept of community cohesion is woven into our values. By 'pluralist' we mean that all traditions of mainstream Judaism are regarded as equally valid expressions of Jewish tradition. Our admissions policy is designed to ensure access to the school for members of all those traditions; our teaching ensures that all students are required to learn about and from the full spectrum of Judaisms; our approach to prayer involves all students experiencing a range of traditions of Jewish worship and reflection. We never, however, require students or staff to practise or believe outside their own choices.

Pluralism does not mean that there is no such thing as truth, nor that belief and practice do not matter. It recognises – in line with our motto "*elu v'elu divrei elohim chaim*" (these and these are the words of the living God) – that while there may be one truth in heaven there are many truths on earth.

As a Jewish school, we see it as our first responsibility to give students a secure grounding in the beliefs, traditions, texts, history and practices of Judaism so that they are confident of their heritage and proud of their identity as Jews, however they understand that identity. This is achieved through formal teaching, through informal educational experiences, through the environment and ethos of the school, and through the modelling of staff who are explicitly inducted into the ethos and values of the school on joining.

Other Faith Traditions

We also see it as our responsibility to ensure students are educated about the major faiths of the UK and the world, and can hear at first hand from representatives of those faiths. This is not only an outworking of "*v'ahavta l'raecha kamocho*" (love of neighbour) but also part of the necessary preparation of our students for life in British society and the wider world. By encountering other faiths and beliefs, we also gain deeper knowledge and understanding of our own tradition and may come to appreciate it all the more.

British Values

JCoSS, as a part of the Jewish community, is proud to be part of British society and recognises the privilege of freedom this represents. We consider that 'British values' as the term is used in educational debate are coterminous with 'Jewish values': democracy and the rule of law, freedom and responsibility, equality and respect are at the heart of both systems, and the strong traditions of Judaism enhance and reinforce the laws of Britain. We endorse the Jewish principle of "*dina d'malchuta dina*" (the law of the land is the law). The British flag (together with the Israeli flag) is on prominent display in the Heart Space of the School, reflecting our desire that students should be educated as British citizens who also, as Jews, have a relationship with Israel however they choose to develop it.

Tolerance or Respect?

The school regards the aim of pluralism as not merely tolerance but respect. Public support for faith schools – financially and politically – rests on their being able not only to promote a particular religious identity but also to support community cohesion. It is not enough for students simply to acknowledge the existence of other faiths or other traditions of Judaism; community cohesion rests on them understanding and respecting the beliefs of others, being willing to enter imaginatively into other world views and value systems, and seeking common ground as well as celebrating difference.

Practical Implications

The values outlined above are woven into the experience of students and staff in various ways:

The Formal Curriculum

Opportunities exist across the curriculum for explicit learning about British Values and the importance of respect for other's views. For example:

- **Jewish Education:** the pluralist nature of our teaching about Judaism establishes habits of dealing with difference and conflict. Each year at Key Stage 3 includes a module of study that includes the perspective of other faiths. Where appropriate, faiths are presented by representatives of those faiths, with opportunities for direct question and discussion. The GCSE specification currently includes Jewish perspectives on ethical issues and we welcome the requirement to teach more than one faith in future specifications. At A level the study of Jewish belief and history is complemented by philosophical study which draws on various traditions.
- **PSHCE** (we call this Kvutzah, related to the Hebrew word for community): the curriculum includes treatment of multiculturalism, community, culture and identity, rights and responsibilities, bullying including homophobic bullying, British democratic institutions and processes, the rule of law, prejudice and discrimination.
- **Humanities:** students study the history of British democracy such as the Great Reform Act, the Chartists and the Suffragettes; all students follow a programme of study on exclusion and social inequality, and on the Geography of crime and social deviance. They study contrasting political ideologies such as Communism and Socialism, the geography and economy of Asia, and Hitler's anti-semitic laws and the Holocaust.
- Further examples may be seen in the appendix which maps the school's provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (**SMSC**).

The Informal Curriculum

Students' learning and experience is enriched in various ways also, including the following:

- Visits from the 3 Faiths Forum, a visit to several different places of worship, work with other schools on the Alan Sennitt Leadership Programme.
- Our Student Parliament, Prefects system and Head Student Team give opportunities for the student voice to be heard and acted upon. The views of students are taken formally into account in Faculty Reviews. Mock elections are held to coincide with national elections in the UK and Israel.

- An active Social Action programme, for which we employ a dedicated member of staff, ensures students have opportunities and incentives to volunteer within the Jewish and local communities. The duty of “*tikkun olam*” (healing the world) is well embedded in the life of the school
- A Charities Fair exposes students to a range of voluntary organisations; they then vote on which charities should be the focus for fundraising efforts for the year
- Students take part in work experience, many benefiting from our links with the Special Needs Charity Norwood.
- On the Year 9 Israel Journey, students encounter Palestinian perspectives as well as Israeli ones.

School Policies

The following extracts from other policies make clear the school’s commitment to equality, diversity and mutual respect

From the Behaviour for Learning Policy

A key part of the school’s behavioural ethos is “teshuvah”. This richly nuanced notion includes the ideas of *return, repentance, repair and reconciliation* following wrong or hurtful behaviour. Whatever sanctions may be administered, there is an overriding need for making good the damage that has been done in relationships with the person injured, with the wider community, with one’s truest self and with God. After any serious incident, all those involved need to reflect upon what has happened and take responsibility for their own behaviour, asking questions such as:

- What went wrong and why?
- What is the wider context which may have led to this incident?
- How can I put it right?
- How can I avoid the same thing happening again?
- How can I avoid bitterness and entrenchment of attitudes in myself and in the wider community?

From the Equal Opportunities Policy:

The JCoSS community comprises a wide variety of people, with varied backgrounds, lifestyles and cultures, both within and beyond the Jewish community. It is a diversity which enriches our lives and the educational process... Central to our ethos is the phrase ‘*elu v’elu divrei elokim chaim*’ – these, and these, are the words of the living God. In practice, this means that every member of our community is equally valued, their beliefs and choices are equally valid, and their happiness, safety and security are equally important.

We recognise, value and welcome the diversity of our school community. This is reflected in our intake, our stakeholders, our curriculum and our values. We are committed to the pursuit of equal opportunities for all members of the school community, and are opposed to all forms of unfair discrimination which may hurt or disadvantage individuals or groups in school.

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In line with (and in addition to) this Act, we are opposed to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

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| • disability | • age |
| • physical appearance | • socio-economic status (class) |
| • religion and belief | • Jewish status as a result of descent or conversion |
| • ethnicity | • gender |
| • marriage and civil partnership | • gender reassignment |
| • maternity and pregnancy | • trade union activity |
| • sexual identity | • supremacism |
| • HIV-positive/AIDS status | |

From the Staff Code of Conduct:

Staff need to demonstrate the characteristics they are trying to inspire in students, including a spirit of intellectual enquiry, tolerance, honesty, fairness, patience, a genuine concern for other people and an appreciation of different backgrounds.

From the Performance Appraisal (Teachers) Policy:

Teachers are required to demonstrate that they fulfil the Teachers' Standards which include the following (included in the policy)

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

1. Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
2. Having regard to the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
3. Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
4. Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
5. Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

From the Sex, Relationships and Family Life Education Policy:

Our approach to SRFLE will take account of:

- Gender similarities and gender differences. Male and female students may be taught with only members of their own gender if deemed appropriate by the leadership of the school. We are proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying.
- Sexual Orientation: Our approach to SRFLE includes sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexual orientation. We actively tackle homophobic bullying.

Evaluation

The school's work in this area is kept under review by the Governing Body, especially through the Teaching and Learning and Inclusion Committee. Success is monitored through behaviour reports, surveys of all stakeholders, learning reviews and the normal self-evaluation systems of the school.

Appendix: SMSC Provision Map

Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural aspects of education are seen throughout all aspects of the school's work, in interactions between students and teachers, in the ethos. It is hard to separate out one strand from another; the categories are therefore blurred (hence the dotted gridlines). Our provision for this was noted as Outstanding in May 2012, and is embedded across the work of the school, The following are some highlights:

Spiritual	Moral	Social	Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosh Chodesh • IJE Y7 SoL on identity • Social Action programme • Jewish Education curriculum passim • Self-reflection built in to marking procedures • World Faiths half-term modules in KS3 • Y7 Interfaith drop-down event in Interfaith Week • Y8 Interfaith trip • Assemblies inc Black History Month, Interfaith • Israel Trip • Teaching of Evolution includes reference to other perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust behaviour policy • Frequent use of ethical debate as strategy for teaching/learning • PSHCE Citizenship module for each Year group 7-11 • Regular visits from Police • Student Parliament: based on Westminster model to teach British institutions • Prefects system encourages leadership and respect for institutions. • Social Action Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and Discussion (Machloket) in Etz Limmud • Pluralism at heart of school ethos builds this notion • Y7 Avanti House Twinning • Alan Sennit Leadership Programme • Yoni Jesner, Manna from Heaven, D of E, Prefects system, GIFT • Israel trip includes interaction with Muslim and Arab students • Opportunities for buddying/mentoring • Autism Awareness Programme • Interfaith modules are a response to students' requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family History Project (JE, Y7) • Israel Trip Y9 • MFL Assembly and activities • Student Parliament • "Is Britain Great" Drop-down day 2013 • Big range of schools trips to cultural activities • Full range of sports teams fully supported • Students with cultural achievements out of school affirmed • 3 Faiths Forum involved in Interfaith Week • Fairtrade Fortnight • Local, National, Israel Charities chosen by students • Art, Humanities, Drama curriculum draws on wide cultural influences