

Last review: March 2023

Next review: April 2025

Committee: Teaching & Learning

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 is a pluralist Jewish learning community that provides young people with an excellent Jewish Education. We encourage debate and dialogue in a respectful and meaningful way. The words אלו ואלו (*Elu v'elu divrei Elohim chayim*) – 'These and these are the words of the Living God' reflect our commitment to teaching the students from a variety of opinions and perspectives. We embrace diverse approaches to Jewish belief and practice that coexist comfortably within our school. We celebrate the ideological diversity that exists within our community, and create an atmosphere that is welcoming, open and tolerant. Our students reflect diverse ideological viewpoints and are expected to participate in dialogue, think carefully about how these interactions might enrich their own views, and yet remain confident enough in their own individual identities to resist the forces of assimilation or homogenisation. We use מחלוקת (*machloket/debate for the sake of heaven*) as a tool for discussion. We are wholeheartedly committed to educating students as literate Jewish and British citizens, well-grounded in the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to contribute to community life and to make a significant contribution to the Jewish and wider community. Our unique pluralist approach builds and informs students' sense of Jewish identity and aims to inspire the students and to nourish their commitment to a life-long Jewish journey. Our diverse Jewish environment fosters an atmosphere of mutual respect and our students learn about and from the whole spectrum of Jewish beliefs and practices.

We enthuse our students to acquire the textual skills necessary for a serious engagement with and inspiration from a full range of Jewish sources, and a rich variety of Jewish texts in both Hebrew and English. We encourage an appreciation of shared tradition, strong and robust ethical convictions and a commitment to תיקון עולם (*tikun olam/social action*). Our students use texts and the arts to explore and reflect upon their own relationship to God, to Jewish history, to Israel and to the Jewish community, with the aim of deepening their commitment to and love of קלל ישראל (*clal yisrael/the Jewish people*).

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 kamocha*” (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 teach Islam as the second faith according to exam specifications. At A level the study of Jewish belief and history is complemented by philosophical and ethical study which draws on various traditions.
- **World Religions:** JCoSS is committed to the study of World Religions, as we are all citizens of the world. Studying World Religions provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. At JCoSS we are dedicated to developing students’ knowledge and understanding of other principal religions, other religious traditions, and different world views that offer answers to challenging questions. Engaging in the study of World Religion enables students to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society and global community. It also enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity towards others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. We are able to use these lessons to promote discernment and equip pupils to combat prejudice.
- In year 7 students focus on the concept of Christianity and Justice, engaging in discussions about what Biblical figures as well as modern leaders have done to promote justice. They have an

opportunity to develop their own ideas about how they could promote justice in their own communities and the world as a whole. In year 8 students are introduced to different ways of practicing Faith, issues surrounding having faith, and some of the arguments put forward by those who oppose the existence of God. In year 9, students discover the different ways religions respond to ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia and cosmetic surgery and considering their own ideas about these topics. Allowing students to develop their own thoughts and reasoned ideas will enhance their awareness of those around them, ensuring that we are meeting the promise that we make in our ethos that JCoSS students will become 'well-rounded' individuals.

- **PSHCE** (we call this Kvutzah, related to the Hebrew word for community): the curriculum includes education about equality and diversity, identity, rights and responsibilities, media literacy, bullying (including homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and cyber bullying), British democratic institutions and processes, the rule of law, active citizenship, social action, prejudice and discrimination. This is delivered across all key stages for one lesson per fortnight.
- **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 which includes the Prevent agenda (**SMSC**).

The Informal Curriculum

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

- The Interfaith Tent; a faith schools' linking programme visits to different places of worship, work with other British schools on the Alan Senitt Upstanders Leadership Programme as well as the Parallel Histories interfaith school debating programme.
- Our 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. 6th Form students take leadership roles in projects to improve the social awareness of the school community e.g. climate change, issues pertaining to women and girls and BAME experiences.
- The JCoSS Leadership Academy provides opportunities for leadership training and community engagement for the 6th Form.
- There is a broad Citizenship programme with opportunities for democratic engagement such as mock elections being held to coincide with national and local elections in the UK and Israel. Opportunities for engagement in the justice system form part of Citizenship.
- An active Social Action programme, for which we employ dedicated members 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.
- Our charities programme 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 as well as our links with the pluralist Primary schools.
- 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:

- age
- disability and Health
- ethnicity
- gender identity and gender reassignment
- Jewish Status as a result of descent or conversion
- marriage and civil partnership
- maternity and pregnancy
- neurodiversity
- physical appearance
- Religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation and identity
- socio-economic status (class)
- trade union activity
- race, as defined by a person's race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins

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 Relationships and Sex Education Policy:

Our approach to RSE will take account of:

- Gender identity: All students will be taught together for RSE, if deemed appropriate by the leadership of the school. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism, sexist bullying, gender stereotyping and transphobic bullying.
- Sexual Orientation: Our approach to RSE will be fully inclusive and refer to all types of relationships. We shall also be proactive in combatting homophobic and biphobic 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 • World Faiths half-term modules in KS3 • Assemblies inc Black History Month, Interfaith • Year 9 Israel Journey • Year 12 Poland Journey • Impressive library of Jewish texts in LRC • Study of Job and suffering in Jewish Ed • Chanukah Candle Lighting • Marking of Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron • Holocaust Memorial Day • Kabbalat Shabbat • Year 7 Shabbaton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust behaviour policy • Kvutzah (PSHCE) units • Regular visits from Police • Social Action Programme • Discussions of morality emerging from texts studied in JE • DT: '6Rs' – reduce, reuse, recycle, rethink, refuse and repair • DT: Sustainability in design • Humanities and Jewish Education: The Holocaust/WWII: What makes a good leader; Dilemmas of leadership. • Jewish Ed: Kashrut and ethical eating; circumcision and contraception, respect for parents; numerous other ethical dilemmas • School charity programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and Discussion (Machloket) in Jewish Education and across the Jewish Ethos • Alan Sennit Leadership Programme • 6th form JCoSS Leadership Academy • Yoni Jesner Award • Duke of Edinburgh Award • Israel trip includes interaction with Muslim and Arab students • Opportunities for buddying/mentoring • Autism Awareness Programme • Interfaith modules are a response to students' requests • Books on other faiths in LRC • Humanities: The agricultural year: How this links with religious and Social calendars. • Black History Month Assembly and displays, • Study of Zionism throughout Jewish Ed • Kvutzah (PSHCE) units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 9 Israel Journey • MFL Assembly and activities • Range of schools trips to cultural activities e.g. theatre trips, literary events, museum and gallery trips and projects • Promotion of reading in/out of lessons e.g. JCoSS Book Award, Carnegie Shadowing, weRead • Full range of sports teams • Students with cultural achievements out of school affirmed • Students nominate and vote for school charities • Art, Humanities, Drama and Food curriculum draws on wide cultural influences • English draws on literacy heritage as well as exploring texts from other cultures • Wide range of books in LRC • Kvutzah (PSHCE) units • Remembrance Day / AJEX Parade |