



Holmer Green Senior School

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

April 2026

# Holmer Green Senior School

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

### Introduction and Statutory Requirements

At Holmer Green Senior School, we are committed to providing a high-quality education that promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

This is a statutory requirement set out in the Education Act 2005 and is assessed by Ofsted through the 'personal development' judgement in the School Inspection Handbook.

Our SMSC provision is delivered through:

- Specific lessons, particularly through our PSHCE curriculum
- The wider curriculum across all subject areas
- Whole-school activities, assemblies and enrichment opportunities
- Our school ethos, culture and environment
- Careers programme
- Being part of the HGSS school community

### School Aims

- To ensure that all teachers become teachers of SMSC
- To ensure that SMSC is embedded and identified effectively across the curriculum
- To create an SMSC policy which is truly cross curricular and innovative, embracing the Ofsted framework and DfE guidance
- To ensure the systems for developing, monitoring and reviewing SMSC are fully embedded
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of our values and principles
- To ensure that a student's education is set within a context that is meaningful and appropriate to their age, aptitude and background
- To ensure that students know what is expected of them and why
- To give each student a range of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and responses to personal experience
- To enable students to develop an understanding of their individual and group identity
- To enable students to begin to develop an understanding of their social and cultural environment, and an appreciation of the many cultures that now enrich our society
- To give each student the opportunity to explore social and moral issues, and develop a sense of social and moral responsibility
- To promote pupils' mental health and wellbeing, developing their confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy
- To support pupils' physical development through opportunities to be active, understand healthy lifestyles, and maintain their physical health
- To prepare all pupils effectively for life in modern Britain and for their next steps in education, training or employment

### Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is about a student developing a sense of identity and self-worth. It is about growing personal insight and experience, exploring the meaning and purpose of life and reflecting on the awe and wonder of our shared human existence. It looks to explore and develop a student's spirit, soul, personality or character.

It is demonstrated by a student's:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise and perspective on life
- Knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning and willingness to reflect on their experiences

### **Moral Development**

Moral development is about the development of a framework of moral values. It is also about a student's understanding of society's shared and agreed values and ethics. It asks students to understand that there are issues where there is disagreement in society and to understand why. It is also about developing an opinion about these different views and accepting other people's points of view as valid.

It is demonstrated by a student's:

- Ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, and to recognise legal boundaries and, in doing so, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- Interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues
- Willingness to accept and understand ideas and attitudes different to their own
- Britishness is taught in such a way that promotes the values of this country whilst remaining mindful of the views of others.

### **Social Development**

Social development is about young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together in a multi-racial, multicultural society. This includes understanding how British society works but also involves the development of interpersonal skills necessary for successful relationships.

It is demonstrated by a student's:

- Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- Willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, co-operating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- Acceptance of, and engagement with, the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They will develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain
- Involvement in peer mentoring (including inclusion mentoring), and student leadership
- Ability to manage their own emotions and resolve conflict with others

### **Cultural Development**

Cultural development is about students understanding their own culture and other cultures that exist in their town, region, country and global community. It is about understanding and feeling comfortable in a variety of cultures and being able to operate in the emerging and ever-changing world culture of shared experiences provided by new technologies. It is about welcoming and accepting diversity.

It is demonstrated by a student's:

- Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- Understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- Ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities
- Knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- Willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- Interest in exploring, improving understanding of, and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

### **British Values**

At Holmer Green Senior School, we actively promote the fundamental British values of:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

These values are embedded throughout our curriculum and school life through:

Democracy:

- Student voice opportunities, including school council and student leadership roles
- Opportunities to vote and participate in democratic processes
- Learning about the UK's democratic parliamentary system in subjects such as History, Citizenship and PSHCE
- Class discussions where students can express their views

The Rule of Law:

- Clear school rules and behaviour expectations that students understand and follow
- Understanding the difference between school rules, civil law and criminal law
- Discussions about consequences of breaking laws and rules
- Teaching about the British legal system through the curriculum

Individual Liberty:

- Encouraging students to make informed choices about their learning and development
- Supporting students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Providing a safe environment where students can express their views
- Teaching about rights and responsibilities
- Careers education that helps students understand their options and make informed decisions

Mutual Respect and Tolerance:

- Promoting respect for all individuals regardless of background, beliefs or characteristics
- Celebrating diversity through assemblies, cultural events and curriculum content
- Teaching about different faiths, cultures and beliefs through RE, PSHCE and other subjects
- Challenging discriminatory language and behaviour immediately
- Promoting understanding of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010

## **Equality and Inclusion**

We promote equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique. This includes developing an age-appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Through our SMSC provision, we ensure that:

- All students learn about and respect these protected characteristics
  - Students understand that discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping are unacceptable
  - We celebrate diversity and promote inclusion across all aspects of school life
  - We challenge prejudice-based language and behaviour
  - We provide positive role models from diverse backgrounds
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## **Character Development**

We develop pupils' character so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. Our approach to character development is based on the University of Birmingham's, Jubilee Centre character programme and includes:

- Peer mentoring programmes, including inclusion mentoring
- Leadership opportunities through the Sixth Form Leadership Team, Prefects, student council, SUSU, sports teams, and peer mentoring
- Opportunities for volunteering and community service

Key Character Traits We Develop:

- Resilience and perseverance – linked to our school value of 'Working Hard'
- Integrity and honesty
- Empathy and compassion – linked to our school Value of 'Being Kind'
- Responsibility and accountability
- Curiosity and eagerness to learn
- Respect and tolerance
- Cooperation and teamwork

How We Develop Character:

- Through curriculum content that explores moral dilemmas and ethical issues
- Assemblies that highlight positive character traits and role models
- Extra-curricular activities that challenge students and build confidence
- Recognition systems that celebrate character development
- Opportunities to take on responsibilities within school

## **Teaching and Organisation**

Development in SMSC will take place across all curriculum areas, within activities that encourage students to recognise the spiritual dimension of their learning, reflect on the significance of what they are learning, and to recognise any challenges that there may be to their own attitude and lifestyle.

All curriculum areas should seek illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible. Assemblies and cultural celebrations will provide additional opportunities to make these objectives explicit.

### **SMSC Across the Curriculum**

Each subject area contributes to SMSC development in specific ways, for instance:

English:

- Exploring diverse literature and perspectives
- Developing empathy through character study
- Discussing moral and ethical themes
- Understanding cultural contexts of texts

Mathematics:

- Appreciating the beauty and wonder of mathematical patterns
- Understanding the moral implications of data interpretation
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Recognising contributions of mathematicians from diverse cultures

Science:

- Exploring the wonder of the natural world
- Discussing ethical issues in science (e.g., genetic engineering, climate change)
- Understanding scientific contributions from different cultures
- Collaborative practical work

Humanities (History, Geography, RE):

- Understanding different cultures, beliefs and values
- Exploring moral and ethical issues from the past and present
- Developing respect for diversity
- Understanding democracy and governance

Arts (Art, Drama, Music):

- Expressing creativity and imagination
- Appreciating cultural diversity in the arts
- Collaborative performances and projects
- Reflecting on personal responses to artistic works

Physical Education:

- Teamwork and cooperation
- Fair play and sportsmanship
- Understanding the importance of physical health
- Respecting rules and officials

Modern Foreign Languages:

- Understanding and appreciating different cultures
- Developing communication skills
- Respecting linguistic diversity

Design & Technology and Computing:

- Considering the moral implications of technology
- Understanding online safety and digital citizenship
- Collaborative project work
- Appreciating innovation from diverse cultures

PSHCE and Citizenship:

- Explicit teaching of SMSC themes
- Developing understanding of British values
- Exploring moral and ethical dilemmas
- Learning about rights, responsibilities and democracy

Class discussions will give students opportunities to:

- Talk about personal experiences and feelings
- Express and clarify their own ideas and beliefs
- Speak about difficult events, e.g. bullying, death, etc.
- Share thoughts and feelings with other people
- Explore relationships with friends/family/others
- Consider others' needs and behaviour
- Show empathy
- Develop self-esteem and a respect for others
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Develop the skills and attitudes that enable students to develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally – e.g. empathy, respect, open mindedness, sensitivity, critical awareness, etc.
- Many curriculum areas provide opportunities to:
- Listen and talk to each other
- Learn an awareness of treating all as equals, and accepting people who are physically or mentally different
- Agree and disagree
- Take turns and share equipment
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively
- Engage in reasoned debate and discussion
- Develop critical thinking skills

Curriculum leaders will audit SMSC links bi-annually. The audit will be managed by the Head of PSHCE – this includes any follow-up actions as required.

### **Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing**

Our SMSC provision includes teaching pupils to recognise risks to their wellbeing and how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Online and Offline Safety - We enable pupils to recognise online and offline risks including:

- Criminal and sexual exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Substance misuse
- Gang activity
- Radicalisation and extremism
- The dangers of sharing personal information online
- The impact of viewing harmful content online
- Cyberbullying and online harassment
- The inappropriate use of technology and social media

Students are made aware of the support available to them, including:

- Trusted adults in school (pastoral team, safeguarding leads)
- External agencies and helplines
- How to report concerns

Physical Health - We develop pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy through:

- Teaching about healthy eating and nutrition

- Opportunities to be active during the school day (PE lessons, break times, extra-curricular clubs)
- Understanding the importance of sleep and rest
- Learning about the risks of smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs
- Understanding personal hygiene

Mental Health and Wellbeing - We develop pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy by:

- Teaching about emotions and how to manage them
- Providing strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety
- Promoting positive self-esteem and body image
- Teaching about the importance of sleep, exercise and healthy relationships for mental health
- Ensuring students know where to access support
- Reducing stigma around mental health issues

Healthy Relationships - Through our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision, pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of:

- What constitutes a healthy relationship
- Consent and boundaries
- Respect in relationships
- Different types of relationships (friendships, family, romantic)
- Recognising unhealthy or abusive relationships
- How to seek help if they have concerns

We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexist language or behaviour. This means:

- We will not tolerate such behaviour
- All incidents will be taken seriously and acted upon
- Responses will be proportionate, considered, supportive and decided on a case-by-case basis
- We will support both victims and alleged perpetrators appropriately
- We will not demonise anyone, but will help students understand why their behaviour is unacceptable and support them to change

### **Careers Education and Preparation for Adulthood**

We support pupils' readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment so that they are equipped to make the transition successfully.

Our careers education programme:

- Meets the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Provides impartial advice and guidance from a qualified careers adviser
- Includes opportunities for workplace experiences
- Involves engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities
- Helps students understand trends in local and national employment
- Supports students to make informed decisions about their future
- Ensures all students understand the academic, technical and work-related opportunities open to them

We prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by:

- Teaching them about their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- Developing their understanding of democracy and how they can participate
- Providing opportunities to develop life skills (financial literacy, time management, etc.)
- Ensuring they understand how to access services and support as adults
- Developing their independence and decision-making skills

We ensure disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and those who may face other barriers receive:

- Tailored careers advice that addresses their specific needs
- Additional support to access opportunities, including for example, through support at College Open Days and interviews
- Guidance on suitable pathways and options
- Support to develop independence and life skills appropriate to their needs

### **Supporting All Pupils**

We are committed to ensuring that our SMSC provision meets the needs of all pupils, particularly:

- Disadvantaged pupils
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care
- Pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing

We achieve this by:

Curriculum Design:

- Ensuring the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils
- Making reasonable adjustments and adaptations where needed
- Focusing on long-term success rather than short-term fixes
- Considering and mitigating any possible downsides of adaptations

Teaching and Support:

- Deploying staff effectively so all pupils can access high-quality teaching
- Using additional adults to enable access to teaching and develop independence
- Providing targeted support where needed
- Ensuring all staff understand how to identify and remove barriers to achievement

Personal Development:

- Ensuring all pupils can access enrichment opportunities
- Adapting activities to meet individual needs while maintaining high expectations
- Providing age-appropriate (rather than just developmentally appropriate) content on keeping safe
- Ensuring careers education is tailored to individual needs and aspirations

Monitoring Impact:

- Regularly reviewing the progress and wellbeing of these groups
- Evaluating the effectiveness of support and adaptations
- Taking swift action where gaps are identified
- Reviewing the progress of students through Rank Order and monitoring resultant set movements

### **Political Bias**

In the teaching of SMSC 'Schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that, where political issues are brought to pupils' attention at school or school extra-curricular activities, there is a balanced presentation of opposing views'. (DfE Feb 2022)

We ensure political balance by:

- Presenting multiple perspectives on political issues
- Encouraging critical thinking and reasoned debate
- Not promoting partisan political views
- Ensuring resources and teaching materials are balanced

- Training staff on their duty to maintain political impartiality

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Governing Body

- Ensure the school meets its statutory duties regarding SMSC
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of SMSC provision
- Approve the SMSC policy
- Receive regular reports on SMSC provision and impact

### Headteacher

- Ensure SMSC is embedded across the curriculum and school life
- Ensure staff have the training and resources needed to deliver effective SMSC provision
- Monitor the quality and impact of SMSC provision
- Report to governors on SMSC

### Head of PSHCE

- Coordinate the bi-annual SMSC audit
- Support curriculum leaders to identify and develop SMSC opportunities
- Monitor and evaluate SMSC provision across the school
- Provide training and support to staff

### Curriculum Leaders

- Identify SMSC opportunities within their subject area
- Ensure SMSC is planned and delivered effectively in their subject
- Complete the bi-annual SMSC audit for their subject
- Monitor the quality of SMSC provision in their subject

### All Staff

- Deliver SMSC opportunities through their teaching
- Model the values and behaviours we expect from students
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- Contribute to the school's ethos of respect and inclusion
- Participate in SMSC training and development

### Students

- Engage positively with SMSC opportunities
- Demonstrate the values and behaviours promoted through SMSC
- Respect diversity and difference
- Contribute to the school community

### Parents/Carers

- Support the school's approach to SMSC
- Reinforce the values promoted at school
- Engage with the school regarding their child's personal development

## **Links with the Wider Community**

- Visitors are welcomed into school
- 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 student
- Students will be taught to appreciate their local environment and to develop a sense of responsibility to it
- Students will be taught to respect their community both inside and outside of school

- We work with local employers, colleges, universities and training providers to support careers education
- We engage with local faith communities and cultural organisations to enrich students' understanding
- We provide opportunities for students to contribute to the local community through volunteering and charity work
- We work with external agencies to support safeguarding and student wellbeing

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Provision for SMSC will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in line with current school policy.

This is achieved by:

- Audit of all SMSC activities using the SMSC Grid tool

### **Quality Assurance Processes**

We evaluate the effectiveness of our SMSC provision through:

Curriculum Audits:

- Regular review of subject curriculum plans and schemes of work

Student Voice:

- Regular surveys and questionnaires about students' experiences
- Focus groups with different year groups
- School council feedback

Student Outcomes:

- Analysis of student participation in enrichment activities
- Monitoring of behaviour and attitudes
- Tracking of student leadership and volunteering
- Review of careers destinations

Staff Feedback:

- CPD evaluation

Parent/Carer Feedback:

- Parent surveys
- Feedback from parents' evenings

External Validation:

- Ofsted inspection feedback

### **Success Criteria**

We know our SMSC provision is effective when:

- Students demonstrate the values and behaviours we promote
- Students can articulate their understanding of SMSC concepts
- Students participate enthusiastically in SMSC opportunities
- Students show respect for diversity and difference
- Students feel safe, supported and able to thrive
- Students are well-prepared for their next steps and adult life
- The school has an inclusive culture where all feel they belong
- Ofsted recognises the quality of personal development
- There are no significant gaps in outcomes between different groups of students

## **Reporting**

The Head of PSHCE will provide:

- An annual report to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body on the quality and impact of SMSC provision

Governors will:

- Receive and discuss SMSC reports
- Monitor the implementation of the SMSC policy
- Challenge and support school leaders to improve SMSC provision
- Include SMSC in their monitoring visits

## **Conclusion**

High standards in the area of SMSC development will be sought and maintained by establishing clear principles and making explicit the school's values.

At Holmer Green Senior School, we believe that excellent SMSC provision is fundamental to our students' education and wellbeing. Through our comprehensive and carefully planned approach, we aim to develop well-rounded, confident, and compassionate young people who are prepared to make a positive contribution to society and to thrive in modern Britain.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our students and reflects current statutory requirements and best practice.

Governor approval: April 2026

To be reviewed: April 2028