



Outcomes
First Group

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

Mountfield Heath School

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Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Policy owner:	MHS SLT	Date reviewed:	June 2026
Next review date:	June 2027	Version:	4.0
ISSR reference:	Part 2, paragraph 5	ISS Guidance:	April 2026, Part 2

Related Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following MHS documents:

- Curriculum Policy (Capabilities Approach)
- PSHE Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Behaviour Policy (Person-Centred, Neurodiversity-Affirming)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Curriculum Experiences Collection

Version	Comments / Amendments	Author	Date
1.0	Version 1	Lyndsey Jeffries	September 2018
2.0	Minor word amendments	Lyndsey Jeffries	June 2019
2.1	Hyperlink updated; minor amendments	Sam Dugan	January 2022
3.0	Update of MHS practice; intent updated to reflect new curriculum; objectives updated to reflect Person-Centred Behaviour Policy	Lucy Chester	October 2022
3.1	Minor amendments for clarity; updated to Person-Centred Behaviour Policy	Sam Dugan	October 2023
3.2	Minor amendments to reflect updated practice	Lucy Chester	December 2024
3.3	Minor amendments to curriculum intent	Sam Dugan	January 2026
4.0	Full rewrite. Aligned to Capabilities Approach curriculum framework, OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025), PSHE Policy, RSHE Policy, Behaviour Policy (Person-Centred, Neurodiversity-Affirming). FBV evidence map added (Appendix A) to comply with ISS Guidance April 2026, paragraph 2.7. References to 1Decision and SOLAR removed. ISI inspection framework references updated. References to Ofsted removed.	Sam Dugan	June 2026

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1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Mountfield Heath School (MHS) promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of its pupils, and how it fulfils its duty to actively promote Fundamental British Values (FBV). It applies to all pupils, all staff, and all aspects of school life.

MHS is an independent specialist primary school within Outcomes First Group (OFG). We provide education for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), all of whom are autistic and many of whom have additional complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The school is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and is registered as an independent school under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

SMSC development is not a discrete subject at MHS. It is a dimension of everything we do: the curriculum, therapeutic relationships, assemblies, community activities, and the daily modelling of values by all staff. This policy describes how SMSC development is embedded across school life, and how MHS demonstrates that it meets the requirements of ISS Part 2 (paragraph 5) and the ISS Guidance April 2026.

2. Statutory Framework

MHS's obligations in respect of SMSC development are set out in:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule, Part 2, paragraph 5, which requires schools 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; to ensure that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong, respect the civil and criminal law of England, and acquire broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England; and to encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, respect other people, show initiative, contribute positively to society, acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, and support participation in the democratic process.
- ISS Guidance April 2026, Part 2 (paragraphs 2.1–2.10 and 2.12–2.22), which sets out the DfE's interpretation of these obligations and, at paragraph 2.7, specifies that the FBV evidence test requires schools to demonstrate, for each of the four values by name, where it is taught, how it is promoted, and what evidence exists that pupils have understood it.
- ISS paragraph 2(2)(d), which requires schools to provide PSHE that reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- The Equality Act 2010, which places duties on schools in relation to all nine protected characteristics.

MHS also has regard to the non-statutory DfE guidance Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools (2014), which, while addressed to maintained schools, provides a useful reference framework for ISI-inspected independent schools.

3. Our Approach: The Capabilities Framework

The Capabilities Approach, drawn from the work of philosopher Martha Nussbaum, is the organising purpose of our curriculum. Our ten capability domains — Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Senses, Imagination and Thought; Emotions; Practical Reason; Affiliation; Other Species and Nature; Play; and Control — describe what it means to flourish as a human being. SMSC development is not a separate strand that runs alongside this framework: it is one of its most essential expressions.

Our pupils often arrive with complex trauma histories, disrupted social learning, and often profoundly limited prior experience of safe and predictable relationships. For many, basic developmental milestones in SMSC — understanding and regulating emotions, learning right from wrong, developing a sense of cultural identity and community — have not yet been reached. Our SMSC provision is calibrated to meet pupils where they are and to build these foundations with care, consistency, and therapeutic awareness.

This approach is underpinned by our commitment to trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming practice, and to the OFG Ask, Accept, Develop (AAD) framework that guides how we work with young people across all aspects of school life.

4. Spiritual Development

Spiritual development at MHS relates to pupils developing a sense of their own identity, worth, and inner life; a curiosity and wonder about the world and their place in it; the capacity for reflection; and an awareness of others' experiences and perspectives. Although not synonymous with religious belief, spiritual development is enriched through encounters with meaning, beauty, and human experience in many forms.

Intent

MHS provides opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual understanding through a curriculum that:

- develops self-esteem, self-knowledge, and a belief in their own worth and potential
- supports pupils to develop a sense of personal values and beliefs, with curiosity and respect towards their own experiences and those of others
- invites exploration of meaning through stories, drama, music, art, the natural world, and relationships
- gives pupils time and space to reflect on their own experiences, emotions, and growth

- develops emotional understanding, expression, and empathy as foundations for all relationships

In practice

Spiritual development is supported through:

- The Capabilities framework, which frames the curriculum around the question of what it means to live well as a human being — inviting pupils and staff to engage with fundamental questions about meaning, identity, and flourishing
- Weekly whole-school assemblies that celebrate pupils' achievements, explore themes connected to values and the wider world, and invite reflection
- Forest School, which provides regular opportunities for pupils to engage with the natural world, develop awe and wonder, and experience the Capabilities domain of Other Species and Nature
- Arts, humanities, and the Curriculum Experiences Collection, which expose pupils to cultural and creative work that prompts reflection and broadens their understanding of human experience
- Zones of Regulation and Bounce approaches, which support pupils to develop self-knowledge, emotional vocabulary, and the metacognitive skills needed for reflection and self-regulation
- Keyworker relationships and therapeutic support, which provide a safe relational context for pupils to develop a sense of identity and self-worth
- Educational visits and enrichment activities, which provide encounters with the wider world and opportunities for pupils to experience a sense of awe, wonder, and connection beyond the school community

5. Moral Development

Moral development refers to pupils' knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right and wrong — and their growing capacity to reason about ethical questions, take responsibility for their actions, and empathise with others.

Intent

MHS supports the moral development of pupils through a person-centred, trauma-informed approach that recognises moral reasoning as a developmental process. We do not use punitive approaches to behaviour. Instead, we use restorative, relational practices that help pupils to develop genuine understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and the skills to make different choices over time.

Our behaviour approach is governed by the Behaviour Policy (Person-Centred, Neurodiversity-Affirming), which should be read alongside this policy. The moral principles underpinning that policy include: empowerment over compliance; reflection over sanction; co-regulation before self-regulation; and the assumption of positive intent. These principles are not alternatives to moral development — they are its foundation.

In practice

Moral development is supported through:

- Consistent adult modelling of ethical behaviour, restorative responses, and honest, respectful communication across all aspects of school life
- A school culture that actively supports pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to repair relationships when things go wrong, through restorative conversations and practices
- PSHE content that develops pupils' understanding of fairness, right and wrong, consent, consequences, and ethical decision-making, planned in reference to the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025) and the PSHE Association SEND Planning Framework
- Social cognition sessions and the WeThinkers programme, which build pupils' understanding of how their behaviour affects others and develop the social and moral reasoning skills needed for ethical participation in relationships and community
- Discussions of moral and ethical questions embedded across the curriculum — in humanities, in reading and English, in PSHE — calibrated to the developmental stage and communication profile of each class
- Assemblies and class discussions that address real moral questions, including events in the wider world, in ways that are accessible and relevant to our pupils
- Fundraising and community activities that develop pupils' sense of responsibility for others beyond themselves
- A consistent approach to the rule of law: pupils understand school rules and the reasons behind them, and are supported to develop respect for the civil and criminal law of England as part of their preparation for adult life

6. Social Development

Social development relates to the skills, knowledge, and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society — developing relationships, working with others, participating in community, and contributing to the lives of those around them.

Intent

Given the need profiles of our pupils, social development is one of the most complex and most important dimensions of our work. Many of our pupils have had limited positive experience of social participation — in school, in family, or in community settings. Social development at MHS is a gradual, supported, and individually calibrated process, delivered through a whole-school culture of relational trust and consistent therapeutic practice.

In practice

Social development is supported through:

- The Social Thinking methodology, implemented by the Speech and Language Therapy team and reinforced by all staff, which builds pupils' understanding of social cognition, perspective-taking, and the link between thought, feeling, and behaviour in social situations
- School Council, through which pupils are elected to represent their class, raise issues, and participate in the democratic life of the school. This is a working example of democracy in action and provides a meaningful context for developing the skills of citizenship
- PSHE provision across all three curriculum pathways, which develops the relational, community, and economic wellbeing knowledge and skills described in the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025) Relationships and Living in the Wider World strands
- Assemblies, which bring the whole school community together regularly and provide a shared context for social learning, celebration of diversity, and encounter with the wider world
- Community visits and the Community Passport, which support pupils to develop the skills and confidence to participate in local amenities, community settings, and public life with increasing independence
- Collaborative activities, group work, and play, which provide authentic opportunities for pupils to practise social participation, negotiation, and relationship-building
- Keyworker systems and therapeutic relationships, which provide secure attachment bases from which pupils can risk social participation with growing confidence
- Managed interactions with external partners, visiting speakers, and the wider community, which extend pupils' social world beyond the school

7. Cultural Development

Cultural development refers to pupils' increasing understanding of and response to the elements that give societies and groups their unique character. It encompasses pupils' appreciation of their own cultural identity and background, their curiosity about and respect for cultural diversity, and their capacity to engage with cultural and creative expression in its many forms.

Intent

MHS promotes cultural development through a curriculum that reflects and celebrates the diversity of human experience, and that actively supports pupils to develop an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. The school is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to all nine protected characteristics, and to ensuring that pupils are introduced to these characteristics in age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate ways.

In practice

Cultural development is supported through:

- Text selection across the English curriculum, which includes authors and characters from diverse backgrounds and cultural traditions
- Humanities and topic work that explores cultures, histories, beliefs, and ways of life from across the world, calibrated to the developmental stage and communication profile of each class
- The Arts curriculum, which exposes pupils to a wide range of cultural forms — music, visual art, drama, dance, digital media — from diverse traditions
- PSHE content addressing protected characteristics, cultural identity, and diversity, planned in reference to the OFG PSHE Curriculum (2025) and ISS paragraph 2(2)(d)
- Celebrations of religious and cultural events and traditions throughout the year, including Remembrance, Diwali, Hanukkah, Eid, Easter, and others, which are explored in age-appropriate and respectful ways
- Educational visits to libraries, museums, galleries, theatres, places of worship, and other cultural settings, which broaden pupils' cultural experience and provide encounter with the wider world
- Forest School and the natural world as cultural and creative contexts, supporting pupils to engage with the tradition of nature-based learning and to develop their sense of connection to their local environment
- Filtered, supervised and purposeful use of the internet to explore cultures, traditions, and perspectives beyond those immediately familiar to pupils

8. Fundamental British Values

MHS actively promotes the fundamental British values (FBV) of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, as required by ISS paragraph 5(a) and the ISS Guidance April 2026.

In compliance with ISS Guidance April 2026, paragraph 2.7, MHS is able to demonstrate, for each of the four FBVs by name: where it is taught, how it is promoted across school life, and what evidence exists that pupils have understood and engaged with it. This evidence is triangulated across curriculum documentation, EFL records, Capabilities achievement statements, and pupil voice. The FBV evidence map is set out in Appendix A.

The promotion of FBV at MHS is not reducible to a specific programme or assembly theme. It is active — embedded in the daily culture, relationships, and practices of the school — and it is adapted to the developmental stages and communication profiles of our pupils. For pupils on the Curiosity pathway, FBV promotion focuses on relational safety, agency, and co-regulation. For pupils on the Discover pathway, it is contextualised in practical and community-based learning. For pupils on the Explore pathway, it is addressed with increasing explicitness, including through PSHE sessions, School Council participation, and discussion of real-world issues.

MHS does not promote partisan political views. Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, a balanced presentation of perspectives is offered, in line with ISS paragraph 5(c) and 5(d).

9. Protected Characteristics and Equality

MHS is committed to ensuring that all pupils, staff, and visitors are treated with respect, and that no one is discriminated against on the grounds of any of the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The PSHE curriculum is designed to encourage respect for other people with particular regard to these protected characteristics, in compliance with ISS paragraph 2(2)(d). Pupils are introduced to protected characteristics in developmentally appropriate ways across their time at MHS. The coverage and sequencing of protected characteristics content is mapped in the PSHE Policy, Appendix A.

The school's Accessibility Plan sets out how MHS plans to increase access to the curriculum, the physical environment, and information for pupils with disabilities. The SMSC Policy and the Accessibility Plan should be read alongside each other as part of MHS's broader equality framework.

RSE content, including content related to gender reassignment as a protected characteristic, is governed by the RSHE Policy and delivered in accordance with the statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (DfE, July 2025, statutory from September 2026). Content is delivered in a balanced, factual, and developmentally appropriate way. Staff do not endorse a particular view on contested matters of gender identity, and teaching on this topic reflects the legal position as clarified by the Supreme Court in *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body

- Receives a termly report from the Headteacher that includes reference to SMSC provision and FBV promotion
- Ensures that this policy is reviewed at least annually and that resources are available to support its implementation
- Satisfies itself, through governor visits and termly reporting, that SMSC provision is effective and that the school's obligations under ISS Part 2 are met

The Headteacher and SLT

- Maintain strategic oversight of SMSC provision and FBV promotion across the school
- Ensure that SMSC development is embedded within curriculum planning, staff training, and school culture
- Maintain the FBV evidence map (Appendix A) and ensure it reflects current practice and current ISS Guidance
- Report to the governing body on SMSC provision and its impact
- Ensure that the SMSC Policy is aligned with the Curriculum Policy, PSHE Policy, RSHE Policy, Behaviour Policy, and Safeguarding Policy

All staff

- Model the values and behaviours that underpin SMSC development in all interactions with pupils and colleagues
- Implement the school's curriculum, therapeutic, and pastoral approaches in ways that actively promote pupils' SMSC development
- Know and be able to articulate the four FBVs by name, and how they are promoted within their own practice
- Record evidence of SMSC engagement through EfL and Capabilities achievement statements, contributing to the school's ongoing evidence base

Pupils

- Are active participants in their own SMSC development, through School Council, community activities, curriculum engagement, and relational life at MHS
- Are supported to develop the skills and confidence to participate in the democratic, social, and cultural life of the school community

11. Monitoring and Impact

The impact of SMSC provision at MHS is monitored through:

- EfL records and Capabilities achievement statements, which provide a narrative evidence base for pupils' SMSC development over time
- Termly ITEP reviews, which include SEMH outcomes that are directly connected to pupils' social, moral, and emotional development
- Boxall Profile assessments completed three times a year for all pupils, which provide a structured assessment of social and emotional developmental stage and inform planning
- Pupil progress meetings, which consider SMSC development as a dimension of the whole-pupil picture
- Learning walks, curriculum audits, and planning scrutiny by SLT and subject/curriculum leads

- Pupil voice, gathered through School Council, therapeutic keywork, and annual review processes
- Governor visits and termly headteacher reporting to the governing body
- ISI inspection, through which compliance with ISS Part 2 is formally assessed

The ISS Guidance April 2026 (paragraph 2.7) requires schools to be able to evidence, for each of the four FBVs by name: where it is taught, how it is promoted, and what pupil work demonstrates that it has been understood. MHS maintains this evidence base through EFL records, curriculum documentation, and the FBV evidence map at Appendix A. Pupil work is the strongest form of evidence; inspectors may ask to see EFL records, exercise books, or other artefacts demonstrating pupils' engagement with FBV-related content.

12. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and SLT and approved by the governing body. It is also reviewed in response to:

- Changes to ISS or ISS Guidance
- Changes to related statutory or non-statutory guidance (including KCSIE, DfE FBV guidance, or RSHE statutory guidance)
- ISI inspection findings or recommendations
- Significant changes to the school's provision, curriculum, or staffing

This policy is published on the school website, in line with ISS paragraph 32.

Appendix A — FBV Evidence Map

This map fulfils the ISS Guidance April 2026, paragraph 2.7 requirement: for each of the four fundamental British values by name, it identifies where the value is taught, how it is promoted across school life, and the evidence available that pupils have understood it. This map should be updated annually as part of the policy review cycle.

FBV	What this means at MHS	Where evidenced
Democracy	Pupils understand that their views matter and can influence decisions. School Council provides a practical, working example of democratic participation. Pupils vote for their representatives, raise issues, and see outcomes. In PSHE, the concept of democracy is introduced in developmentally appropriate ways, including discussion of fairness, voting, and community decisions. Assemblies address democratic themes. On the Explore pathway, pupils engage more explicitly with the concept of democracy and the democratic process in British society.	EfL records showing pupil participation in School Council votes and discussions. School Council minutes and outcomes. PSHE planning documentation showing where democracy is addressed across pathways. Pupil voice (from School Council, keywork, and annual review) evidencing pupil understanding. Assembly records and themes. Curriculum Experiences Collection entries.
The rule of law	Pupils develop understanding of rules, their purpose, and the consequences of breaking them — in school, in the community, and in wider society. The school's person-centred behaviour approach supports pupils to understand school rules and the reasoning behind them, not simply to comply with them. PSHE content on the Discover and Explore pathways includes age-appropriate introduction to the concept of civil and criminal law, including the Online Safety Act and other relevant legislation. Community visits are used to support understanding of laws and rules in public settings.	EfL records evidencing pupils' developing understanding of rules and consequences. ITEP targets related to behaviour, responsibility, and self-regulation. PSHE planning showing rule of law content. Pupil voice from keywork and reviews. Behaviour records showing progress in understanding and regulation. Curriculum Experiences Collection entries.

<p>Individual liberty</p>	<p>Pupils are supported to develop autonomy, self-determination, and agency — core to the Capabilities framework and central to our therapeutic approach. The Ask, Accept, Develop (AAD) framework ensures that pupils' preferences and choices are sought and respected. Pupils are supported to develop the skills to assert their own needs, express their views, and make meaningful choices, including through communication, PSHE, and daily routines. On the Explore pathway, content includes personal rights, consent, and the right to be safe.</p>	<p>EfL records evidencing pupils' increasing agency and self-determination. ITEP targets related to autonomy, choice-making, and self-advocacy. PSHE planning showing content on rights, consent, and personal safety. Pupil voice from keywork, School Council, and reviews. Communication profiles and progress in AAC/speech that evidence increased self-expression.</p>
<p>Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs</p>	<p>Pupils are taught to respect and value people of all faiths, beliefs, and backgrounds, and to recognise that diversity is a strength. This is promoted through PSHE (including protected characteristics content), cultural curriculum content, assemblies, celebrations of religious and cultural events, community visits, and text selection. The school's approach to neurodiversity and disability models respect for difference as a foundational value. Staff model tolerance and respect in all interactions. The ISS Guidance April 2026, paragraph 2.7 requires that tolerance be specifically in relation to those with different faiths and beliefs: this is explicitly addressed in curriculum planning, not assumed within a general 'respect' ethos.</p>	<p>EfL records and Capabilities achievement statements evidencing engagement with content on diversity, faith, belief, and protected characteristics. PSHE planning showing explicitly named coverage of different faiths and beliefs. Assembly records and themes. Curriculum Experiences Collection entries for cultural and religious content. Pupil voice from keywork and reviews. Examples of pupils' work (including communication, creative, or recorded responses) demonstrating understanding.</p>