POLICY DOCUMENT 63 – APPROVED 12/05/2016

STATEMENT ON THE DUTY TO COMBAT EXTREMISM

We, the staff and governors, aspire to ensure that all our students, irrespective of ability and regardless of anyone's doubts, achieve their potential in full; and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School the best in the country.

Thomas Mills High School Vision Statement

INTRODUCTION

1. This Statement has been agreed in order to make clear the response of Thomas Mills High School to the legal duties described in Part 2 of the Independent School Standards as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. It is a summary of our existing policy and practice rather than a new departure but has the status of a policy of the Governing Body.

2. The Statement will be reviewed annually in accordance with the *Handbook of Governance*.

3. Related documents:

   - Charter of Values.
   - Policy on the Common Curriculum.
   - Headteacher's statement on Citizenship (May 2012).
   - Cultural Education Policy.
   - Policy on Spiritual and Moral Education.
   - Community Cohesion Policy.
   - Performance Management Policies for Teachers and Support Staff.
   - Disciplinary, Capability, Harassment and Grievance Procedures.
   - Behaviour Policy.

DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF STAFF

4. All members of staff are made aware through the process of Performance Management of their fundamental responsibilities in this area. The Performance Management Policy for Teachers requires reviewers to evaluate their reviewees against the *Standards for Teachers*, including these elements in Part 2 of the *Standards*:

   - "showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
   - "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;
   - "ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law."

   The Performance Management Policy for Support Staff contains an equivalent requirement.

5. Teachers must not promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject and are required to ensure that whenever political issues are brought to the attention of pupils a balanced presentation of the opposing views is offered. This requirement applies not only during scheduled lessons but in all other contexts. As indicated in Schedule 1 of the Disciplinary Procedure, any teacher failing to comply with these requirements would be liable to disciplinary action.

6. Staff should be aware of the government's counter-terrorism strategy through the PREVENT programme. Concerns should be passed on in line with Safeguarding procedures.

THE CURRICULUM AND COMBATING EXTREMISM

7. The School's Charter of Values informs the curriculum, as it does all aspects of our work. The values include the following, which help to set the context for our corporate attitude to extremism: vigour and optimism in embracing the future; acceptance of personal responsibility; equal value accorded to all persons; courtesy, self-discipline and respect for others; honesty, moral courage and integrity; and good fellowship.

8. The promotion of both (a) personal responsibility, understanding of the differences between right and wrong and respect for the civil and criminal law and (b) an understanding of how individuals can contribute to the wellbeing of those in the locality and beyond are addressed in many different subjects and contexts, including assemblies (see statement on Citizenship).

9. Thomas Mills High School takes pride in the personal and spiritual development of its young people and seeks to provide every opportunity for pupils to become positive and emotionally resilient adults with the knowledge and confidence to stand by their own convictions. Some of the most valuable work at Thomas Mills High School in combating extremism is carried out in Religious Studies lessons. The department describes its approach in the following way:

   "One of the key aspects of Religious Studies lessons is enabling the students to feel as though they can freely and actively participate in discussions. This focus appears throughout key stages 3 and 4 and also forms a central part of AS and A2 studies. External facilitators and workshop leaders enable pupils to get a direct and honest approach to key ethical and religious issues. Pupils are encouraged to ask and answer questions and not be afraid to touch on controversial issues. A key example of this is with the 'Multicultural Day' in Year 7 when facilitators from a wide variety of cultures and religions come into school to share their knowledge and experiences as well as enabling the students to take part in a wide range of activities.

   "The department is also keen to trial new approaches to teaching and learning. Over recent years we have trialed with success 'tasc' based learning. This enables pupils to take ownership of a project throughout the entire process but also encourages the inclusion and development of prior knowledge as well as the evaluation and consolidation of each other's work. This method helps to sustain their involvement over time and gives clear tangible goals for each level of their work.

   "Assessment for learning is also central to methodology of the Religious Studies Department. When dealing with sensitive ethical issues such as abortion or euthanasia or religious and philosophical concepts like life after death it is significant to empower the young people in their learning. This is done through the use of peer educators who become 'experts' during a task or discussion and sharing activities that allow students as individuals to help the whole class to complete pieces of work.

   "Religious Studies lessons aim to be a 'safe place' for students to share their views. The specialist teachers in the department have up to date and relevant knowledge that enables them to give the students the material to help them formulate their own ideas, but also to counter stereotyping and prejudiced views. Student preconceptions are always respected. Many lessons begin with students putting across their ideas and then the plenary provides an opportunity to voice their views again and assess whether they have changed and why.

   "Role plays, hot seating, real life case studies, images and newspaper articles are used regularly as a discussion stimulator and as a focus for 'philosophy for children' lessons. This method is very significant as it is totally focused on the students' questions and ideas and the direction of the discussion is left to them to decide. This approach encourages critical thinking, fosters an awareness of experiences of others in the world (for example the experiences of someone who is homeless) while still allowing them to impart and develop their own attitudes and values and as a result nurturing their personal identity."