

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL



POLICY DOCUMENT 32 – APPROVED 21/10/2021

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

(including COLLECTIVE WORSHIP)

POLICY

Vision Statement

*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 is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

SOURCES

1. This Policy provides a consolidated guide to the implementation of the requirements of paragraphs 26 and 27 of the current Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust. It is a synthesis and extension of a number of important School documents, rather than a new policy departure. In particular, reference should be made to:
 - the School Vision Statement and Charter of Values;
 - the Behaviour Policy;
 - the School Prospectus;
 - the Equality of Opportunities Policy;
 - the Sex and Relationship Education Policy;
 - Curriculum Policy.

DEFINITIONS

2. **Spiritual:** 'Spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'. The term 'spiritual' identifies those areas of experience which are at the heart of human motivation and responses to life. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life, to consider what it means to be human and for values by which to live. It incorporates our responses to challenging experiences, such as suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. For those with a religious faith it also incorporates their encounter with the divine.
3. **Moral:** Moral development involves several elements: the will to behave morally as a point of principle; knowledge of the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society; knowledge and understanding of the criteria put forward as a basis for making responsible judgements on moral issues; the ability to make judgements on moral issues. A moral issue is one which involves people in making a decision on the basis of what is right or wrong.
4. **Social:** Social development involves fostering the ability to use a range of social skills. This could include but not exclusively working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds; participating in the local community; appreciating diverse viewpoints; being able to participate, volunteer and cooperate as well as resolve conflict. In addition students should engage with the 'British values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance.
5. **Cultural:** Cultural development fosters a willingness to participate and respond positively to a wide variety of art, music, sport and cultural opportunities. Pupils should also seek to explore, improve understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity. They should celebrate diversity as well as appreciating and understanding a wide range of influences that have shaped their own heritage. This also aspires to give students a knowledge of the parliamentary system and how this has shaped British values.
6. **Religious Education:** Religious Education in schools should seek: to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity, as the predominant religion in Great Britain, and the other principal religions represented in the country; to encourage respect for those holding different beliefs; and to help promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and mental development.

7. **Collective Worship:** A description or definition of worship will to a considerable extent reflect the character of the worshipping community. Therefore, in considering the meaning of collective worship in school we must take into account the character of the school community. [This] description of collective worship . . . reflects the views of the Suffolk SACRE; recognizes the possible diversity of faith and commitment . . .; should lead to a greater awareness of the school's values; reflection on their own beliefs and values; more aware of the purpose of life; opportunities for response; a deepening of the quality of school life.

VALUES

8. The school seeks to 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:**
- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
 - an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens;
 - an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary;
 - an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
 - an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behavior;
 - an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.
9. The School seeks to promote **educational values:**
- commitment to learning;
 - the pursuit of truth;
 - respect for reason;
 - realising potential;
 - the pursuit of opportunities and the broadening of horizons;
 - "education is a lifelong activity";
 - equality of access.

10. The School seeks to promote **moral values**:

- “we should respect each other and treat others in the way we would like to be treated”;
- “everyone is different but equally important”;
- behaviour should not be “aggressive, deliberately annoying or provocative”;
- politeness and the avoidance of language which might offend;
- respect for the truth;
- allowing others “to work without disruption”;
- “care for our environment”;
- “respect for each other’s property”
- “respond helpfully if someone is in difficulty”;
- bullying is deplored by the school and is dealt with seriously;
- giving help to others where possible, whether in the School, the local community or further afield;

11. The School seeks to promote **social values**:

- respect for school rules and for the law;
- respect for the beliefs and opinions of others, as a preparation for adult life in a plural, democratic society;
- pride in School Uniform, and “respect for the traditions and achievements of the school”;
- recognizing and celebrating the successes of School and of its members;
- seeking to take active responsibility for others.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

12. All subjects play a part in developing “the knowledge and understanding essential to both spiritual and moral development, and the ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements.” Spiritual questions about the origins of the universe or the nature of proof or the meaning of truth arise in many different subjects. Similarly, moral questions arise or are implicit in all subjects; for example, Science (e.g. issues of life and death); Geography (e.g.

environmental and development issues); History (growth of freedom and tolerance; and war and peace) and PE (e.g. obeying the rules of the game and developing teamwork).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies Curriculum Intent:

- To engage pupils in the systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and world views address, with the hope to appraise and appreciate a range of religious and worldviews with reasoned arguments, empathetic understanding and personal insight, while showing how their own world view affects their life and vision of the world.
- To enable pupils to explore the meaning of their existence and their purposes in life.
- To enable pupils to flourish as citizens of a plural and global community.

Religious Studies at Thomas Mills high schools aims to nurture a lifelong love of the subject while promoting respect tolerance and mutual understanding.

13. The School recognises the central importance of religious education in promoting spiritual and moral development and offers **Religious Studies** as both a core programme and an academic qualification at both GCSE and A Level.
14. The School conforms to the requirements of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.
15. Parents are informed through an appendix to the Prospectus of this arrangement and of their statutory right to withdraw their children from Religious Studies lessons.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

16. The School complies with the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship in the context of the constraints imposed by its accommodation and facilities. These dictate that children have a mixture each week of school assemblies (in the Main Hall – usually two year groups at a time); Year/House assemblies and Form meetings.
17. All assemblies take place on the school premises.
18. As required by law, most assemblies which take place each term reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.
19. The School has regard also to the Suffolk SACRE's advice in "Towards Realism and Consensus" and, in particular, to the Framework for Assemblies for Collective Worship which it outlines:

"Reflection on a range of personal, social, moral or spiritual issues, which should be considered in a manner which is consistent with the agreed School values.

“Response to affirm and celebrate the agreed school values and to act in accordance with these; to encourage the pupils to aspire to higher values and visions of the good life; to encourage them to commit themselves to positive ways of living. As appropriate, this could be structured around five key responses:

- (i) celebration
- (ii) acknowledging failures and shortcomings
- (iii) expressions of thankfulness
- (iv) commitment
- (v) action”.

20. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the assembly programme, although detailed planning is delegated to the Assistant Head. The Headteacher, members of Senior Management, other staff who agree to do so, pupils and outside speakers (including local clergymen) lead assemblies.

21. Parents are advised in an appendix to the School Prospectus of their right to withdraw their children from collective worship and of the procedures for so doing.

Extract from the School Prospectus relating to R.E. and Collective Worship.

We recognise the central importance of religious education in promoting spiritual and moral development and offer Religious Studies as a core programme to all pupils throughout the school and as an academic qualification at GCSE and A Level.

Parents are reminded that they have the right to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship. Any parent wishing to exercise this right should contact the Headteacher who will comply with DfE advice and procedures concerning alternative arrangements.

REVIEW

22. This policy will be reviewed annually.