SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

September 2026

The Saints Academies

1. Introduction

As Church of England schools, we seek to develop an ethos in which the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all members of our communities is supported. The manner and style of relationships in school are part of this response, and we seek always to practise what we preach. SMSC education helps pupils develop the personal qualities valued in a flourishing, democratic and inclusive society, including thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral awareness, independence, self-respect, compassion and responsibility.

SMSC is not a single subject. It is developed through the curriculum, collective worship, relationships, behaviour, pastoral provision, pupil leadership, enrichment, community engagement and the wider life of the school. It is closely linked to our Christian vision, core values, aims and philosophy. The school recognises that spiritual development is broader than religious development and that pupils should have opportunities to reflect on meaning, purpose, values, beauty, relationships and the wider world.

This policy should be read alongside the school's policies and curriculum documents for safeguarding, behaviour, equality, religious education, collective worship, Relationships Education/RSHE, personal development, online safety, Prevent and educational visits.

2. Aims

We aim to enable every pupil to flourish as a confident, compassionate, reflective and responsible member of the school, local and wider community. Pupils will be supported to:

- take responsibility for themselves and understand the responsibilities that come with membership of a community;
- develop confidence, resilience, independence and a positive sense of self-worth;
- distinguish between right and wrong and understand the consequences of choices and actions;
- articulate and reflect upon their own beliefs, values and attitudes while listening respectfully to others;
- understand and respect the beliefs, values, identities and ways of life of others, responding appropriately to prejudice, discrimination and injustice;
- develop curiosity, imagination, creativity and a sense of awe and wonder;

- develop an appreciation of diversity, including differences relating to protected characteristics, religion or belief, culture and background;
- understand and appreciate the range of cultures represented within the school, local community, nation and wider world;
- develop caring, considerate, compassionate and respectful relationships;
- work collaboratively and independently and resolve disagreements constructively;
- participate positively in artistic, musical, sporting, scientific, technological and cultural opportunities;
- reflect on learning and experience, recognise strengths and areas for development, and respond positively to challenge;
- understand opportunities and challenges as they move through school and towards their next stage of education and training;
- participate positively in democratic life and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to modern Britain; and
- develop the confidence and critical thinking needed to make safe, informed and responsible choices, including in digital environments.

3. Shared responsibility

All staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral staff, office staff, lunchtime staff and leaders, contribute to SMSC. Pupils should experience SMSC not only through planned teaching but through the way adults model respect, fairness, forgiveness, responsibility, compassion and service.

Leaders ensure that SMSC is reflected across the curriculum and wider school life. The Executive Headteacher, relevant curriculum leaders and Foundation Governors/LAC Members have overall responsibility for oversight, monitoring and evaluation, within the school's wider governance arrangements.

4. Spiritual development

Spiritual development concerns what it means to flourish as a human being. It includes the development of beliefs and values, a sense of meaning and purpose, self-understanding, reflection, imagination, creativity, awe and wonder, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with questions that may not have simple answers.

As Church of England schools, we seek to support pupils in developing their spiritual lives through encounter with the Christian faith, prayer, Scripture, worship, service and reflection. At the same time, pupils are encouraged to understand and respect the beliefs and non-religious perspectives of others. We recognise that the spiritual is broader than the religious.

- personal and community prayer and opportunities for stillness and reflection;
- a sense of God's presence throughout school life and opportunities to encounter the Christian story and Scripture;

- collective worship that invites reflection on beliefs, values, character, relationships and the needs of the community;
- opportunities to express personal views and insights and to search for truth together;
- developing self-knowledge, self-worth, self-respect and an understanding of strengths and limitations;
- exploring fundamental questions about meaning, purpose, relationships, humanity and the world;
- developing imagination and creativity and experiencing awe, wonder, beauty and curiosity;
- reflecting on the lives, beliefs and values of others through RE, history, geography, literature and other subjects; and
- creating a trusting classroom ethos in which pupils feel secure to ask questions, share ideas and listen respectfully to others.

Teachers use discussion, questioning, reflection, creative activity, collaboration and sustained investigation to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Opportunities arising from school life, current events and pupils' experiences may also provide appropriate moments for reflection, provided that these are age-appropriate and handled sensitively.

5. Moral development

Moral development is the ability to recognise and reason about right and wrong, understand consequences, make responsible choices and develop a principled approach to relationships and conduct.

Our Christian understanding of morality is rooted in love of God and love of neighbour. We seek to model and teach forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion, honesty, responsibility and respect. Pupils are encouraged to understand that choices have consequences and that people should be treated with dignity even when behaviour needs to be challenged.

- exploring moral and ethical questions through the curriculum, literature, RE, history, science and current affairs;
- understanding rules and why they exist, including the importance of fairness and the rule of law;
- developing empathy and considering the impact of choices on others;
- learning to challenge prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harmful behaviour;
- developing the confidence to make safe and responsible choices;
- reflecting on mistakes, taking responsibility and understanding forgiveness and restoration;
- considering environmental, scientific, technological and social responsibilities; and
- developing critical thinking so that pupils can question information, recognise manipulation and avoid harmful or extremist narratives.

6. Social development

Social development is the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to form healthy relationships, cooperate with others and participate responsibly in communities.

- learning about the rights, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints associated with membership of groups and communities;
- developing a secure sense of identity while taking account of the feelings and perspectives of others;
- working cooperatively in pairs and groups and learning to resolve conflict respectfully;
- participating in school activities, pupil leadership and community projects;
- developing respectful relationships with people from different religious, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds;
- learning about healthy relationships, boundaries, kindness, respect and seeking help through the school's Relationships Education/RSHE provision;
- developing responsible citizenship and understanding how individuals can contribute to their communities; and
- developing safe and respectful behaviour online as well as offline.

7. Cultural development

Cultural development involves understanding and appreciating the beliefs, values, customs, achievements and creative expression that have shaped different communities and societies. Pupils should understand that cultures develop and change and that people may have multiple identities and cultural influences.

- learning about the values, customs and heritage of our own local and national culture;
- learning about the cultures, faiths, traditions and perspectives of others;
- understanding how historical events have shaped communities and societies;
- recognising and valuing pupils' cultural achievements and experiences outside school;
- engaging with literature, art, music, drama, dance, sport, science, mathematics, technology and other forms of cultural achievement;
- exploring the contribution of people from a wide range of backgrounds to British and global society; and
- developing respect for diversity and rejecting prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

8. Fundamental British Values and democratic participation

The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is undertaken in a way that is consistent with the school's Christian character and with its legal duties.

Democracy

- pupil voice, school council and pupil leadership;
- understanding how decisions are made in school and in wider society;
- opportunities to express views, listen to others and participate in discussion;
- age-appropriate learning about elections, representation and democratic institutions.

The rule of law

- understanding why laws, rules and boundaries are necessary;
- exploring rights, responsibilities and consequences;
- recognising that everyone is subject to the law and that laws are intended to protect people and communities.

Individual liberty

- developing confidence to make informed and responsible choices;
- understanding rights and responsibilities and the limits that protect others;
- developing resilience and the ability to seek help when choices or circumstances place pupils at risk.

Mutual respect and tolerance

- learning about different faiths, beliefs, cultures and perspectives;
- challenging prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes;
- developing respectful dialogue and the ability to disagree without hostility;
- valuing difference while recognising the shared dignity and worth of every person.

9. Equality, diversity and protected characteristics

The school is committed to equality, inclusion and the dignity of every pupil and adult. SMSC contributes to the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and supports pupils to understand and respect people who are different from themselves.

Age-appropriate teaching and the wider life of the school will help pupils develop understanding of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The school will ensure that teaching is appropriate to pupils' age and stage and consistent with its legal duties and Christian character.

Pupils are encouraged to recognise and challenge prejudice, bullying and discrimination and to understand that difference should not be a reason for exclusion or disrespect. Any concerns about discriminatory behaviour are addressed through the school's safeguarding, behaviour and equality procedures.

10. Safeguarding, online safety and Prevent

SMSC forms part of the school's wider safeguarding culture. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and pupils are taught, in age-appropriate ways, how to recognise risk, make safe choices, maintain healthy boundaries, seek help and contribute to a safe community.

- recognising safe and unsafe behaviour and knowing trusted adults and routes for help;
- developing respectful relationships and understanding personal boundaries;

- understanding online risks, including harmful content, contact, conduct and commerce;
- developing digital responsibility, including safe and ethical use of technology, social media and generative AI;
- developing critical thinking and media literacy so pupils can question sources, recognise misinformation and avoid manipulation;
- learning how prejudice, hatred and extremist narratives can harm individuals and communities; and
- supporting pupils to develop resilience and the confidence to report concerns.

The school has regard to the Prevent duty. SMSC contributes to preventing radicalisation by promoting belonging, respectful dialogue, critical thinking, democratic participation, the rule of law and respect for people with different faiths and beliefs. Any safeguarding concern relating to radicalisation or extremist influence is dealt with under the school's safeguarding and Prevent procedures and is not managed through this policy alone.

11. Relationships Education and personal development

SMSC is closely connected to the school's statutory Relationships Education and Health Education provision. Pupils are supported to develop respectful friendships and relationships, understand boundaries, recognise inappropriate or harmful behaviour, manage emotions, communicate respectfully, seek help and understand how their choices affect their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

The school follows the Department for Education's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance in force from 1 September 2026. This policy should therefore be read alongside the school's RSHE policy and curriculum.

12. Political impartiality and controversial issues

The school may teach pupils about political, social, moral, ethical and controversial issues where this supports a broad and balanced education and is appropriate to pupils' age and stage. Teaching will not promote partisan political views. Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, the school will take reasonable and proportionate steps to provide a balanced presentation of opposing views, enabling pupils to develop their own reasoned understanding.

Staff will use professional judgement, age-appropriate resources and the school's safeguarding procedures when dealing with sensitive issues. Pupils will be encouraged to listen respectfully, ask questions, consider evidence and disagree appropriately. The school's Christian character and the teaching of its faith foundation are respected within the legal framework for schools with a religious character.

13. SMSC across the curriculum

English

- developing confidence and expertise in language as an aspect of individual and social identity;
- engaging with feelings, values and perspectives in high-quality literature, poetry, drama and other texts;
- exploring moral and social issues and how language reflects changing attitudes and society.

Mathematics

- experiencing curiosity, pattern, order and the power of mathematical reasoning;
- developing perseverance and logical thinking;
- working collaboratively on challenging problems and appreciating the contribution of mathematicians from different cultures.

Science

- developing wonder about the natural world;
- considering how science and technology affect society and the environment;
- exploring ethical questions arising from scientific developments;
- respecting evidence and differing views where appropriate, including views concerning origins and creation.

Computing

- preparing pupils for life in a technologically enriched and interconnected world;
- teaching ethical and safe use of digital technology;
- developing awareness of online risk through content, contact, conduct and commerce;
- promoting responsible use of social media and generative AI and linking digital learning to safeguarding.

History

- understanding the development of British society and communities;
- exploring events such as slavery, the Holocaust and other significant historical injustices sensitively and accurately;
- considering the moral choices and consequences associated with historical events and individuals.

Geography

- encouraging reflection on the Earth, its diversity and our responsibilities towards it;
- considering the distribution of resources, sustainability and climate change;
- understanding the social and cultural characteristics of places and communities.

Languages

- gaining insight into the lives, traditions and perspectives of people in other countries and cultures;
- developing communication, listening and collaboration skills.

Religious Education

- exploring beliefs, values and spirituality;
- reflecting on the significance of religious teaching and belief;
- developing respect for the right of others to hold beliefs different from their own;
- understanding the influence of religion on individuals, communities and society.

The arts

- developing aesthetic appreciation, creativity and self-expression;
- experiencing awe, wonder and emotional response;
- exploring artistic expression from different cultures and periods;
- using creative and cultural experiences to develop confidence, belonging and community.

Design and Technology

- considering how design and invention can improve lives;
- exploring ethical questions associated with technological change;
- recognising contributions from different cultures and working collaboratively.

Music

- listening to and performing music from a range of cultures and traditions;
- reflecting on how music can express identity, emotion and experience;
- developing confidence through performance and participation.

Physical Education

- developing cooperation, teamwork, competition, rules, self-discipline and fair play;
- exploring sports and traditions from different cultures;
- developing resilience, self-awareness and respect through challenge and participation.

14. Collective worship and the wider life of the school

Collective worship provides significant opportunities for SMSC development. Through worship, prayer, reflection, Scripture, music, stories and consideration of the needs of others, pupils can explore beliefs, values, character, relationships, service and community.

- pupil-led worship and worship teams;
- school council and other pupil leadership opportunities;

- play leaders and peer support;
- charity and community projects;
- school productions and performances;
- educational visits and visitors;
- clubs, sport and other enrichment opportunities;
- quiet reflection, prayer stations and class reflection; and
- opportunities to contribute positively to local, national and global communities.

15. Teaching and learning approaches

SMSC is most effective when it is lived as well as taught. Staff model respectful relationships and create classrooms in which pupils feel safe to ask questions, share ideas and listen to others.

- discussion and structured dialogue;
- questioning and philosophical enquiry;
- reflection and periods of stillness;
- collaborative learning and problem-solving;
- creative and imaginative activity;
- debate and consideration of different perspectives;
- pupil leadership and service;
- real-life and current contexts where appropriate;
- opportunities for pupils to make choices and take responsibility; and
- explicit teaching alongside opportunities that arise naturally from school life.

16. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

The provision for SMSC is monitored and evaluated through the school's curriculum and personal development monitoring cycle. Leaders and governors/LAC Members consider both provision and impact.

- curriculum planning, work and learning experiences;
- pupil voice and pupil leadership;
- observations and professional dialogue;
- behaviour, relationships and attendance information where relevant;
- participation in enrichment, worship and community activity;
- evidence of pupils' understanding of British Values, equality, diversity and respectful relationships;
- feedback from parents, staff, pupils and visitors;
- evidence of safeguarding, online safety and Prevent education being embedded appropriately;
- evaluation of the accessibility and inclusivity of provision; and
- identification of priorities for improvement and professional development.

Monitoring will focus on what pupils know, understand and can demonstrate, not simply on whether activities have taken place. Leaders will use findings to refine provision and ensure that SMSC contributes meaningfully to pupils' personal development, wellbeing and preparation for life in a diverse and democratic society.

17. Roles and responsibilities

- Executive Headteacher and senior leaders: ensure that the policy is implemented, reviewed and aligned with the school's Christian vision and statutory responsibilities.
- Curriculum and relevant subject leaders: ensure that SMSC opportunities are planned and coherent across subjects.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: ensure that safeguarding, online safety and Prevent links are appropriately reflected and that concerns are managed through safeguarding procedures.
- All staff: model the values and relationships expected of pupils and identify and use opportunities for SMSC development.
- Foundation Governors/LAC Members: provide appropriate oversight and challenge through monitoring and evaluation.
- Pupils: participate positively, listen respectfully, take responsibility and contribute to the school community.
- Parents and carers: support the school's values and work in partnership with the school to promote pupils' personal development.

18. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, inspection arrangements or the school's provision. The review will take account of pupil, staff and parent feedback and evidence from monitoring and evaluation.

19. Key statutory and guidance references

This policy has been updated with reference to the following current England guidance and legislation:

- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026.
- Home Office, Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023), statutory guidance in force from 31 December 2023.
- Ofsted, School inspection toolkit and related inspection guidance for inspections from September 2026.
- Department for Education, Political impartiality in schools (updated March 2025).
- Equality Act 2010 and Department for Education advice for schools.

- National Curriculum in England and associated statutory requirements.
- Relevant Church of England guidance, diocesan expectations and the school's Christian vision, collective worship and RE arrangements.

Key online sources: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2 ; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education ; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance ; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information ; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools ; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools

20. Approval

Policy approved by	_____
Date approved	_____
Review date	_____
Signed	_____