

The promotion of British values

A model school policy statement (draft)

Introductory notes

There is no statutory requirement for a school to formulate a policy statement on the development of values. It is good practice, however, to make a statement about the principles according to which a school reviews the impact of its practices and policies. Further, it is prudent to ensure in this way that, amongst other things, it is ready for an Ofsted inspection.

In its overall framework the draft model policy in this paper is based on an equalities policy that was developed in various local authorities in the period 2003–2012, and that can be read at <http://www.insted.co.uk/model-school-policy.pdf>

As with the model policy on equalities, this policy on values is provided in two versions. First, there is a summary containing the essential points. Second, there is the full statement.

Both these statements are drafts. Schools are of course welcome to modify and customise them for their own purposes and circumstances.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Principles

Our school is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum and within this to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. In fulfilling this commitment we are guided by the following principles.

- Values underlying public life are broadly the same in all democratic countries.
- Each country, however, has its own history and context, and therefore certain distinctive ways of recognising and implementing universal values.
- In addition to values underlying public life there are essential values in the everyday life of the school and in close personal relationships, and these too must be promoted and practised.
- Everyone has a range of different loyalties and backgrounds, and therefore values can sometimes be in tension or conflict with each other.
- Understandings of Britishness should be as inclusive as possible, and care must therefore be taken to challenge and remove negative and demeaning stereotypes of certain groups and communities.

- How universal values are implemented in practice is frequently controversial.

Legislation

- We welcome our duties under the Education Reform Act 1988 to support pupils' SMSC development and in this way to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of society as a whole.
 - We recognise that SMSC development includes, but is by no means limited to, promoting the values which underlie public life in the United Kingdom, as also in very many other countries, and which were outlined in documents issued by the Department for Education in autumn 2014 about fundamental British values.
-

FULL STATEMENT

Legal framework

1. We welcome our duties under the Education Reform Act 1988 to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and in this way to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of society as a whole.
2. We recognise that SMSC includes, but is by no means limited to, promoting the values which underlie public life in the United Kingdom, as also in very many other countries, as outlined in documents issued by the Department for Education in autumn 2014 about fundamental British values.
3. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, and under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.
4. We recognise that these duties reflect the international human rights standards expressed in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Guiding principles

5. In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by the following considerations.

Values underlying public life are broadly the same in all democratic countries

Values underlying public life in the United Kingdom have been summarised as 'including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'.¹ It is important that pupils should appreciate that such values are not unique to the UK but on the contrary are at the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are respected in a very wide range of countries throughout the world.

Each country has its own history and context

Although values underlying public life are broadly the same in all democratic countries, each country has its own traditions, customs, symbols, narratives, achievements and history. It is important that children and young people should learn about how universal values are implemented within their own country, and about how their own country has developed in its understandings and priorities over time.

In UK schools, for example, it is important that pupils should learn about the distinctive traditions of their nation, as also of the UK as a whole.

No one is just one thing

Although it is important that young people in the UK should feel they belong here, all have other loyalties and affiliations as well. They not only belong to the UK, for example, but also to a family, a neighbourhood, various interest and friendship groups, and various worldviews and traditions which transcend national boundaries.

Our task as educators is to help young people to hold their various loyalties and affiliations in balance, and to critique and appreciate them accordingly.

Everyone needs a sense of belonging

It is essential to help all pupils feel that belong to their school, to their neighbourhood and to the country as a whole. This means recognising important aspects of their identity, experience and personal stories, and the identity, experience and personal stories of their family and community.

It follows that assumptions about what constitutes or does not constitute Britishness or national identity must be subjected to ongoing critical examination.

We aim to foster exploration and discussion of Britishness in an inclusive way which embraces diversity, and which recognises a range of different ways of connecting with British society.

¹ Department for Education, Teachers' Standards in England from September 2012, p.10

Values in everyday life

In addition to values underlying public life there are essential values in the everyday life of the school and in close personal relationships. These include truthfulness, consideration, perseverance, resilience and reliability.

Negative and demeaning stereotypes must be challenged

In UK society as a whole there are negative stereotypes of certain communities and groups, and these can harm relationships and trust in our school and its neighbourhood. We need to be alert to, and to take a critical attitude towards, negative views in the media, including social media, towards minorities in UK society.

Values are frequently controversial

In the UK as in all countries there are differences of opinion about what universal human values should entail in practice. For example, there are differences between political parties and between the views expressed by national newspapers.

It follows that our task is to develop attitudes of open-mindedness and skills in critical thinking rather than to promote a specific opinion on an issue about which society is currently divided.

It follows also that the school needs to provide safe spaces where pupils can clarify their thoughts through reflective conversation, without fear of being harshly judged.

Examples of our work on promoting positive values

6. In the light of the principles outlined in paragraph 5 above, we undertake the following activities and projects, amongst others:

(Add information here)

Roles and responsibilities

7. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
8. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
9. The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy, and for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support.
10. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.
11. All staff are expected to:
 - o promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom

- o deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- o plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 5 above
- o keep up-to-date with legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

12. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.
13. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Staff development and training

14. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

15. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and review

16. We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

Date approved by the Governing Body:

This draft policy statement was compiled in June 2015 by the Insted consultancy in partnership with Bill Bolloten, and subsequently revised slightly in January 2016.