



OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Reviewed and updated September 2026



Policy	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
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Coordinators	Mrs M Brown, Mrs D York, Mrs V Price, Mrs L Vippond
Approved by	The Proprietor
Supersedes	SMSC Policy, August 2025

1. Status and Scope

This policy sets out how Overstone Park School promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. It applies across the whole curriculum and the whole school day, and to the wider life of the school including assemblies, extra-curricular activities, trips, the pastoral system and the way members of the school community treat one another.

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 requires schools, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy relates to the following legislation:

- Education Act 2002, section 78
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 2
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, section 26 (the Prevent duty)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

The following guidance is also relevant:

- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools (Department for Education, November 2014)
- Political impartiality in schools (Department for Education)
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (Home Office)
- Keeping children safe in education (Department for Education, September 2026)
- Relationships education, relationships and sex education, and health education: statutory guidance (Department for Education, current version)
- The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools (Department for Education)

Two corrections to the previous list. It cited a "Children Act 2011", which does not exist; the intended reference appears to have been either the Education Act 2011 or the Children and Families Act 2014, and the latter has been used. It also attributed two documents to "DES", a department that ceased to exist in 1992; these are Department for Education publications. Two items that were listed have been removed because they are long out of date and no longer inform practice: *Citizenship and Belonging: What is Britishness?* published by the Commission for Racial Equality, a body abolished in 2007, and *Diversity and Citizenship*, the 2007 Ajegbo review. The Prevent Strategy 2011 has been replaced by current Prevent duty guidance.

3. Regulatory Context

For an independent school, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not only an educational aim; it is a registration requirement. Part 2 of the Independent School Standards requires the proprietor to actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. In doing so the proprietor must:

- enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely
- enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England

The standards also require the proprietor to preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school, and to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. This applies while pupils are in attendance at the school, while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities provided or organised by the school, and in the promotion at the school of extra-curricular activities by staff or others.

This section is new. It is the most substantial gap in the previous version, which set out the school's aspirations for SMSC at length but never connected them to the standards against which the school is actually inspected. An inspector examining SMSC will work from Part 2 of the Independent School Standards, and the school's policy should be written to the same framework. The requirements on partisan political views and balanced presentation were absent entirely.

4. Principles

The school considers the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children to be at the centre of its ethos and the responsibility of the whole curriculum and the whole staff.

The school strives to provide an education that offers pupils opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive and caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions, and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the school ethos and climate, collective worship, all curriculum areas, the behaviour code, extra-curricular activities and circle time.

The school acknowledges the requirement to actively promote fundamental British values, defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different

faiths and beliefs. The school notes that these values are not unique to Britain. It has a duty to promote and embed these values and to challenge pupils, school personnel or parents who express views contrary to them.

The previous version stated that the school aims “to be judged at least good in all school inspections by ensuring that standards for all pupils are higher than schools of a similar size and that standards continue to improve faster than the national trend”. This sentence, which also appeared in the Code of Conduct, has been removed from both. Ofsted withdrew the single-word overall grades and the four-point scale under the renewed education inspection framework introduced in November 2025, with further changes to inspection materials taking effect from September 2026. There is no longer a judgement called “good” to aim for in the sense the sentence intended, and a policy that refers to one signals to an inspector that it has not been reviewed.

5. Aims

- To encourage pupils to develop their own beliefs and values about life and religion.
- To promote an appreciation of alternative individual and shared beliefs.
- To develop appropriate personal and social behaviour in response to other cultures and environments.
- To develop an awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences, and the development of self-respect.
- To recognise and value the worth of individuals, developing a sense of community and the ability to build relationships with others.
- To promote curiosity in order to make sense of the world.
- To prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- To protect children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- To ensure the school meets Part 2 of the Independent School Standards.
- To share good practice with other schools and professional networks in order to improve this policy.

6. Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The Proprietor

- ensure the school actively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils as required by Part 2 of the Independent School Standards
- ensure the school precludes the promotion of partisan political views and secures the balanced presentation of opposing views on political issues
- ensure funding and resources are in place to support this policy
- receive an annual report on the success and development of this policy
- ensure the school complies with all equalities legislation

The Principal

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy
- work closely with the coordinators
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality

- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by observing lessons, monitoring planning and assessment, and speaking with pupils, school personnel and parents
- report annually to the Proprietor on the success and development of this policy

The Coordinators

- lead the development of this policy throughout the school
- work closely with the Principal
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- provide guidance and support to all staff
- provide training for staff on induction and when the need arises
- map SMSC provision across the curriculum and identify gaps
- keep up to date with new developments and resources
- undertake risk assessments when required
- review and monitor provision, and report annually on the success and development of this policy

School Personnel

- comply with all aspects of this policy
- maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour within and outside school, and not undermine fundamental British values
- model the values the school seeks to develop in its pupils
- take responsibility for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within their own subject and pastoral work

present political issues in a balanced way and avoid promoting personal partisan views implement the school's equality policy and report and deal with all incidents of discrimination attend appropriate training

report any concerns about any aspect of the school community

The School Council

- contribute to the development of this policy
- discuss improvements to this policy during the school year
- organise surveys to gauge the views of all pupils
- review the effectiveness of this policy

Pupils

be aware of and comply with this policy

listen carefully to instructions given by staff and ask for help if they do not understand treat others, their work and equipment with respect

- support the school's code of conduct
- liaise with the School Council and take part in questionnaires and surveys

Parents and Carers

- be aware of and comply with this policy
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school
- support the school's promotion of the values set out in this policy

7. Spiritual Development

The school sees spiritual development as the way children acquire personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and basic personal and social behaviour. The school helps children explore these questions through the curriculum, collective worship, and the school ethos and climate. Spiritual development is an important element of a child's education and is fundamental to other areas of learning.

The school defines spiritual development as encompassing:

- Beliefs: the development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs; an appreciation that people hold individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives; a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity.
- A sense of awe, wonder and mystery, inspired by the natural world, by mystery, or by human achievement.
- Experiencing feelings of transcendence: feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being, or to the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experience.
- The search for meaning and purpose: reflecting on the origins and purpose of life, and responding to challenging experiences such as beauty, suffering and death.
- Self-knowledge: an awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; a growing understanding and acceptance of individual identity.
- Relationships: recognising and valuing the worth of each individual, developing a sense of community, and the ability to build relationships with others.
- Creativity: expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through art, music, literature, crafts and drama; exercising imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight.
- Feelings and emotions: the sense of being moved by beauty or kindness and hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions, and how to use such feelings as a source of growth.

The following values are central to the school's philosophy: compassion, concern, consideration, conviction, co-operation, corporate responsibility, empathy, forgiveness, honesty, humility, integrity, mercy, perseverance, respect, self-discipline, self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, tolerance and trust.

The school aims to provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to:

- sustain their self-esteem in their learning experience
- develop their capacity for critical and independent thought
- foster their emotional life and express their feelings
- experience moments of stillness and reflection
- discuss their beliefs, feelings, values and responses to personal experience

- form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships
- reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life

The positive promotion of pupils' spiritual development is the entitlement of all pupils and the responsibility of all staff. The Religious Education curriculum has much to contribute, and the school's approach is informed by its values, ethos and culture, the curriculum, and the quality of behaviour and relationships.

8. Moral Development

The school defines moral development as the building by pupils of a framework of moral values which regulates their personal behaviour. It is also about developing pupils' understanding of society's shared and agreed values, recognising that there are issues on which people disagree and that society's values change over time. Moral development helps pupils understand the range of views held and the reasons for them, and to articulate an opinion about different views.

Pupils' moral development involves:

acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and of moral conflict a concern for others and the will to do what is right

- reflecting on the consequences of their actions
- learning how to forgive themselves and others
- developing the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes needed to make responsible moral decisions and act on them
- understanding and respecting the civil and criminal law of England

The school aims to provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to tell the truth, keep promises, respect the rights and property of others, act with consideration towards others, help those less fortunate than themselves, take personal responsibility for their actions, and exercise self-discipline.

9. Social Development

Social development is concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society. The school defines it as young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole.

It involves functioning effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society, and growth in knowledge and understanding of people, of society's institutions, structures and characteristics, of economic and political principles and organisations, and of roles and responsibilities as a citizen, parent or worker. It also involves developing the interpersonal skills necessary for successful relationships.

The school is itself a social community that offers a model for living and working together. Pupils learn and experiment with the challenges and opportunities of belonging to a larger group, and experience the tension between their own aspirations and those of the wider community. The quality of relationships in school is significant in forming pupils' attitudes to acceptable behaviour and self-discipline. Pupils are given the opportunity to exercise responsibility and to face the consequences of their actions.

The school aims to provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to develop an understanding of their individual and group identity, learn about service in the school and the wider community, acquire a broad

general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England, and begin to understand social justice and concern for the disadvantaged.

10. Cultural Development

Cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and an ability to respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. The school defines it as pupils' understanding of their own culture and of other cultures in the wider community, in Northampton and Northamptonshire and in the country as a whole, and of cultures represented in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The previous version referred to "both within Wellingborough and in the country as a whole". The school is at Overstone, Northampton, and this appears to be a residue from a template. The reference has been changed to Northampton and Northamptonshire, but should be confirmed as reflecting the community the school actually serves.

Pupils need to develop an understanding of, and to feel comfortable in, a variety of cultures, and to be able to operate in a world of shared experience provided by media, travel and the internet. Pupils need to understand that cultures are always changing, and learn to cope with change. Promoting cultural development is closely linked to the school's commitment to valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism and other prejudice-based harm.

- Pupils need to understand their own culture, which gives them a sense of identity and a language with which to communicate, receive and modify shared values.
- Culture embraces customs, history, geography, icons and images, artefacts, music, painting, sculpture, dance and technology, as well as the spoken word and written literature. Opportunities to participate are provided within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities and events.

The school wants pupils to acquire respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and a curiosity about difference, and the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes needed to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture. The school aims to provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to recognise the value and richness of cultural diversity in Britain and how it influences individuals and society, to develop an understanding of their social and cultural environment, and to develop an understanding of Britain's local, national, European, Commonwealth and global dimensions.

11. Fundamental British Values

The school actively promotes fundamental British values and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Provision is mapped across the curriculum and the wider life of the school as follows.

Value	How it is promoted
Democracy	School Council elections and meetings; pupil voice surveys; curriculum study of Parliament and the democratic process; opportunities to debate and to accept the outcome of a vote.
The rule of law	School rules and behaviour code, explained rather than imposed; discussion of why laws exist; visits from police and other public services; assemblies on fairness, consequence and justice.

Value	How it is promoted
Individual liberty	Choice within the curriculum and extra-curricular programme; e-safety and personal safety teaching; support for pupils to make informed choices; a culture in which pupils can express views and disagree respectfully.
Mutual respect	The school's values and behaviour expectations; anti-bullying work; collaborative learning; charitable and community activity; the way adults in school speak to and about one another.
Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs	Religious education; assemblies and collective worship covering a range of faiths and none; celebration of festivals; visits to places of worship; curriculum content addressing prejudice and stereotyping.

12. Political Impartiality and the Balanced Presentation of Views

The school does not promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. Where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, whether in lessons, extra-curricular activities or the promotion of activities in school, staff take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

This does not mean avoiding contested subjects. Pupils benefit from encountering difficult questions, and a school that avoids them does not prepare pupils for life in a democracy. It does mean that staff:

- distinguish between the school's promotion of shared values, which is required, and the promotion of partisan political positions, which is not permitted
- present opposing views fairly and in a form pupils can engage with, appropriate to their age and understanding
- do not present their own political views as fact or use their position to influence pupils' political opinions
- exercise care when using external speakers or resources, and check materials in advance for partisan content
- apply the same care to material promoted through displays, assemblies, clubs and charitable activity as to classroom teaching

13. Prevent and Safeguarding

The school has a duty to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism, and is aware that there are groups who seek to radicalise vulnerable children and involve them in terrorism or in support of terrorism. Periodic risk assessments are undertaken to assess the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism.

School personnel must be alert to the increased risk of online radicalisation and to changes in pupils' behaviour. Any concern is reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and handled under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 the school has a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The school works to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation and extremism by promoting fundamental British values and creating a safe environment in

which pupils can discuss difficult issues and develop the knowledge and skills to challenge extremist views.

14. Organisation

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development takes place across all curriculum areas and within activities that give pupils opportunities to:

- talk about personal experiences and feelings
- express and clarify their own ideas and beliefs
- speak about difficult events
- share thoughts and feelings with other people
- explore relationships with friends, family and others
- consider the needs and behaviour of others and show empathy
- develop self-esteem and respect for others
- develop a sense of belonging
- develop the skills and attributes that enable them to develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally

15. Monitoring and Self-Evaluation

Evidence of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development should be visible in:

- the values projected by staff and pupils
- the relationships between pupils and staff, and between pupils
- the way staff address pupils and pupils address staff
- the way pupils address and care for each other
- the way disputes and dissent are addressed
- the quality of the physical environment and wall displays
- the range of opportunities provided outside the formal curriculum
- the relationships developed by the school with the wider community
- the tone and content of material published by the school

The coordinators maintain a map of SMSC provision across the curriculum and the wider life of the school, review it annually, and identify any gaps against Part 2 of the Independent School Standards. Monitoring includes lesson observation, work scrutiny, review of assembly and collective worship planning, pupil voice surveys and School Council feedback. The Principal reports annually to the Proprietor.

16. Raising Awareness of this Policy

The school raises awareness of this policy through the school handbook and prospectus, the school website, the staff handbook, meetings with parents, school events, meetings with school personnel, written communications home, the annual report to parents, reports to the Proprietor, information displays in the main entrance, email, text message and the school's social media channels.

17. Training

All school personnel receive training on induction covering this policy, the promotion of fundamental British values, political impartiality, equal opportunities and inclusion. Periodic training keeps staff up to date. All staff have equal access to training, career development and promotion. Training on the Equality Act 2010 and its implications is provided on induction.

18. Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 the school has a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed. It is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil, and it actively promotes respect for others with particular regard to the protected characteristics.

19. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the coordinators and the Principal, and approved by the Proprietor.

Signed (Principal):	Mrs M F Brown	Date:	September 2026
Signed (Proprietor):		Date:	
Next review due:	September 2027	Reviewed by:	Principal and Proprietor