



**“Let your light shine brightly.”**

Matthew 5:16

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSCD) Policy**

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| <b>Policy accepted by SLT on:</b>      | <i>20/9/2021</i>                        |
| <b>Next review:</b>                    | <i>Autumn 2024</i>                      |
| <b>Signed (Headteacher):</b>           | <i>R. Kaye</i>                          |
| <b>Statutory policy:</b> <i>Yes/No</i> | <b>On school website:</b> <i>Yes/No</i> |

# **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSCD) POLICY**

## **1. Our school vision**

At Christ Church, we aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment and a rich variety of experiences so that all pupils are able to flourish and discover their unique strengths and talents. Our mission is to enable every child to enjoy a life filled with meaning and purpose, underpinned by Christian values, a love of learning and an eagerness to make the world a better place. Our culture of inclusion is summed up by our school vision:

**We want Christ Church to be a shining example of Jesus' love and kindness. We are an inclusive Christian learning community where everyone is welcome and valued, and all are inspired to be the best they can be. We want all children to thrive and flourish in every way, developing a love of learning, discovering their unique strengths and talents, and growing in character and confidence so that their light shines brightly for all to see.**

Christ Church's school vision is consistent with the *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* (2016), which says: "[The Church of England's] vision for education can still be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that can inspire what the school is and does. The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart" (p.3).

"Human flourishing" is the Christian idea that all people should be encouraged and supported to fully develop their identity, character, gifts and talents within a moral framework in order to promote their own health and happiness by engendering a sense of purpose and fulfilment; serve their fellow human beings and contribute to society, thus enhancing the health and happiness of others (being a "good neighbour"); and bring honour and glory to God by making good moral choices.

## **2. Our enthusiastic commitment to inclusion**

At Christ Church we are fully committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils regardless of age, ethnicity, nationality or national origin, language, religion or belief, culture, gender identity, sexuality, socio-economic background, (dis)advantage, (dis)ability or special educational needs (SEN).

For example, Christ Church welcomes children with SEN and our staff offer an unrivalled skill-set of practical experience of supporting children with a wide arrange of abilities and needs. We aim to ensure that every child has access to a mainstream curriculum and is able to be a full member of the school community despite any barriers. As a result of this commitment, families out of catchment choose Christ Church for their children.

At Christ Church, we recognise that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSCD) plays an important part in fulfilling this aspiration.

### 3. Rationale

Christ Church's six core Christian values (Kindness, Courage, Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance and Forgiveness) were selected because they are pertinent to the mission of our school as it serves the local community and wider Frome in a spirit of love and warmth, sensitivity and compassion, ambition and aspiration, hope and peace.

The distinctively Christian ethos and values of our school are such that all people who come into our school, whether staff, children, parent or visitor, are valued as individuals in their own right. They should set, and be entitled to expect from others, good standards of behaviour, marked by respect and responsibility. (See Christ Church's *Relationship and Behaviour Policy*.)

At Christ Church we recognise that children's development will be affected by many factors other than those which the school itself provides. These include maturity, personality, gender, family, peer group, ethnicity, cultural background and, more generally, the moral, spiritual and cultural climate of our society, and of the communities to which they belong.

It is important, therefore, that children are given clear guidance as to what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. For this reason, all staff are expected to live out and model the school's values in order to set an effective example for the children.

At Christ Church we encourage children to develop their own "moral compass", enabling them to make decisions based on their understanding of what is morally right, aligned with school rules and values, appropriate to a given context and is socially acceptable.

### 4. SMSCD definitions

#### ***A. Spiritual development***

Our "windows, mirrors, doors" approach (see Appendix A) to spiritual development is designed to help children wonder, meditate and respond:

- 1) **Windows** represent times to look out at the world and pause in wonder and awe.
- 2) **Mirrors** are times to reflect and meditate on questions/thoughts/beliefs/experiences.
- 3) **Doors** are times to respond by putting beliefs and values into action.

This may include, but is not limited to, providing opportunities for children to:

- learn about Jesus and his teachings;
- learn about and from the beliefs, customs and traditions of other world faiths;
- learn about and from role models from faith and history, e.g. Saint Patrick, Harriet Tubman, Catherine Booth, Corrie ten Boom and Ghilleen Prance;
- listen, reflect and problem-solve;
- consider their own feelings, likes and dislikes;
- develop personal beliefs and values;
- show insights into deep questions about life, change and death;
- engage in activities which involve questioning, valuing, creating, envisioning, empathising and imagining;

- develop an understanding of their relationships with others;
- enjoy exploring diversity and difference;
- ask “**big questions**” about the purpose and meaning of life;
- experience “**Wow! moments**” of awe and wonder;
- acknowledge and respond to “**Ow! moments**”, e.g. pain, suffering, death, injustice.

### ***B. Moral development***

In order to develop the moral aspects of a child’s life, the school will provide opportunities for children to:

- develop a sense of right and wrong;
- examine motives for action and explore links between beliefs, values and behaviour;
- be aware of the needs of others;
- formulate and review their own values;
- reflect on moral principles.

### ***C. Social development***

In order to develop the social aspects of a child’s life, the school will provide opportunities for children to:

- show concern for one another;
- work in a range of groups;
- come to terms with their own experiences;
- explore aspects of citizenship;
- recognise the need to live harmoniously in a plural society;
- communicate with others with increased confidence;
- engage in activities which benefit others;
- consider issues from others’ points of view;
- use language in a range of groups and contexts;
- write for a range of purposes and audiences;
- reflect on, and respond to, personal and social issues.

### ***D. Cultural development***

School links with a school in Australia and a school in Zambia help children to learn from, and about, other cultures and – equally importantly – to reflect on what is distinctive about living in Frome/Somerset/England/UK/Europe. We provide opportunities for children to:

- engage in respectful discussions about different cultural practices and lifestyles;
- be aware of issues locally, nationally and globally;
- feel filled with hope and aspiration, and empowered to make the world a better place.

## **5. Links to PSHCE and FBVs**

In line with Fundamental British Values (FBVs) and the school’s *Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) Policy*, we provide opportunities for children to:

- relate the teaching of Jesus and the school’s core Christian values to one’s own life, choices and priorities;
- respect others, share ideas and make choices (FBV: **democracy**);

- follow rules and accept consequences (FBV: **the rule of law**);
- be themselves and develop their own identity, interests, gifts and talents (FBV: **individual liberty**);
- meet, welcome and learn about and from people with different faiths and beliefs (FBV: **mutual respect for and tolerance** of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith).

At Christ Church we encourage children to:

- follow our four school Golden Rules: Be honest; Be kind; Be helpful; Try hard.
- take personal responsibility for their own thoughts, words and actions;
- be good role models, especially to younger pupils;
- be kind, considerate and compassionate towards other people;
- care for animals, plants and the environment;
- respect the rights and property of others;
- demonstrate focus, resilience and perseverance;
- take pride in their own achievements and celebrate the achievements of others;
- speak out when something is unfair or wrong – at school or in the wider world;
- see themselves as global neighbours and courageous advocates (see Appendix B).

We help the children to identify their feelings and think these through so that they are expressed in behaviour that is socially acceptable. This is done through the school's *Relationship and Behaviour Policy*, acts of Collective Worship and class Circle Times.

When children first come into school, a lot of time is spent in learning to cooperate and work together. This continues through the whole school, learning through play activities, a variety of groupings, structured activities and by observing the way that staff work together. We have an “open door” policy to parents/carers and the wider family to encourage working in partnership.

We want all children to flourish. We endeavour to build children's confidence and raise their self-esteem through positive relationships, praise and encouragement. We also use stickers, badges, “Values Awards” and “Headteacher Commendations” to highlight both academic and social achievements, and draw attention to our core Christian values.

Children will develop their cultural understanding through developing an awareness of their own culture and traditions, and being introduced to other cultures and beliefs.

## 6. **SMSCD in the Early Years**

For children in Nursery and Reception, spiritual development is also taught through our eight Achievosaurus (see Appendix C).

## 7. **Courageous advocacy**

We promote courageous advocacy (“being brave”, “speaking up” and “making good choices”) within PSHCE lessons, Circle Times and acts of Collective Worship.

Courageous advocacy is at the heart of school life, running like a “golden thread” through all that we do. As such, it is evidenced in this and the following school policies:

- *Collective Worship Policy*
- *Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) Policy*
- *Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy*
- *Religious Education (RE) Policy.*

**8. Planning, teaching and learning**

Schemes of work and lesson plans will include opportunities for SMSCD and, where relevant, will make reference to specific Christian values and/or FBVs.

**9. Collective Worship**

Class and whole-school Collective Worship include opportunities for SMSCD and, where relevant, will make reference to specific Christian values and/or FBVs.

**10. Displays**

Class, corridor and hall displays reflect the school’s Christian vision and values, and celebrate all children’s efforts, promoting equal opportunity. (See the *Display Policy*.)

**11. The role of the SMSCD Leader**

It is the responsibility of the SMSCD Leader to ensure all teachers are aware of this policy and are able to plan and teach lessons accordingly.

**12. Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the SMSCD Leader.

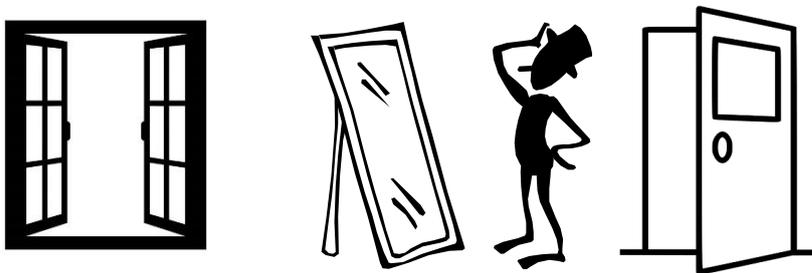
## APPENDIX A: WINDOWS, MIRRORS AND DOORS

### Creating space to wonder, to meditate and to respond

At Christ Church we recognise that for some, spiritual development is about the development of a relationship with God, while for others it is about the development of the human spirit, and for others, a continual quest after truth.

For all, it is vital to spiritual development that children and adults alike are allowed space to develop their own faith, beliefs and values.

At Christ Church CofE First School we follow the approach to developing children's spirituality recommended by the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Called "Windows, Mirrors, Doors", this methodology aims to create space for children to wonder, meditate and respond.



**"Windows of Wonder"** help children to look out at the world and think carefully about what they see. This includes noticing life's **"Wows"** (things that are amazing) as well as acknowledging life's **"Ows"** (painful or unfair things that are worrying or upsetting). On the one hand, children may be awestruck by the sight of a rainbow or a butterfly's wings. On the other, they may be deeply moved by finding a dead squirrel in the park or seeing a person rough sleeping in a doorway.

**"Mirrors of Reflection"** encourage children to look inward and reflect upon their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Children are able to explore their own insights, attitudes and beliefs, and those of others. This gives children a chance to meditate on the "big questions" about the purpose and meaning of life.

**"Doors of Change"** allow children to respond to the needs they see around them with hope and aspiration. The aim is to nurture self-confidence and a spirit of agency so that all children believe they can say or do something to help make things better. This, in turn, inspires courageous advocacy and social action. (See Appendix B, below.)

## **APPENDIX B: BEING “GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS”/“COURAGEOUS ADVOCATES”**

### **A “golden thread” that runs through all we do**

The SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection framework explores how Church schools can encourage and model “courageous advocacy”. At Christ Church, we promote responsible citizenship, global neighbourliness and courageous advocacy in the following ways.

#### ***For children, this means identifying and challenging unfairness.***

At Christ Church, children are expected to respond when they see another child being left out of games or treated unfairly. They are encouraged to speak out about bullying and discrimination; like the Good Samaritan, they will want to take action to deal with a local, national or global issue. (This is consistent with our “**windows, mirrors, doors**” approach. See Appendix A, above.)

#### ***For adults (parents and school staff), this will involve supporting the children in their courageous advocacy.***

At Christ Church, we educate children about issues they might otherwise be unaware of. Adults model how we respond to issues within a free, democratic society. This may involve raising awareness within school, changing priorities or policies within school, writing letters to people in authority and fundraising to support the work of a campaigning organisation.

#### ***For school leaders and governors, this includes taking brave strategic decisions based on what is right and in line with the school’s Christian vision, mission and values, rather than what is easiest or most beneficial for the school in the short term.***

At Christ Church, governors and school leaders welcome children with special educational needs and build strong links with Gypsy and Traveller (GRT) communities.

**Our context is truly unique.** No other first or primary school in the South West of England has as many pupils of Gypsy and Traveller heritage. At Christ Church, 25% of our pupils are GRT. Contrary to national data, the GRT pupils at Christ Church have higher attendance (96.2% in 2018–2019, the last full year before Covid) than their non-GRT peers. We are the school of choice for Gypsy and Traveller families in Frome.

We also openly and enthusiastically welcome “vulnerable” children and “hard to reach” families, *especially* when they have not succeeded at and/or feel rejected by other schools. (We do this even when we believe it may impact on our school’s key data for attendance and/or pupil outcomes in the wrong direction!) As one member of staff put it: “Christ Church rolls out the red carpet for families who feel misunderstood, mistreated and marginalised elsewhere. That’s one of the reasons I feel proud to work at Christ Church.”

As a matter of both policy and principle, we aim to keep children with behavioural needs in school rather than excluding them. We “go the extra mile” with calmness and kindness.

Christ Church has been certified by the equality charity Stonewall ([www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)) as a “School Champion” in recognition of the school’s ongoing, proactive work to reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, and promote dignity, diversity, respect and tolerance instead.

## APPENDIX C: SMSCD IN THE EARLY YEARS

### Helping younger pupils wonder, meditate and respond

In our two Reception classes and in our Nursery, everyone is encouraged to see themselves as an **Achievosaur** (a learning dinosaur). Our eight Achievosaurus encourage two-, three- and four-year-olds to be effective and motivated learners by giving them appropriate language to talk about their thoughts, feelings, ideas, beliefs and questions. We want our youngest pupils to explore the world around them; to wonder and question; to become increasingly resilient, yet to ask for help; to play well with others; and to share and take turns.



#### Think-odocus

- I think carefully about what I learn.
- I work hard to solve problems.
- I can ask a grown-up or a friend, when I think I need help.



#### Try-atops

- I have a go at new things.
- I keep doing things so that I get better and better at them.
- I try my best.



#### Explore-osaurus Rex

- I explore everything around me.
- I am good at looking and listening carefully.
- I can ask questions to find things out.

**Think-odocus, Try-atops and Explore-osaurus Rex** are linked to an aspect of the Early Years “Characteristics of Effective Learning”.

**Stick-osaurus and Share-adactyl** refer to positive learning attitudes and behaviours.

#### Stick-osaurus

- I persist when challenges occur and never give up.
- I bounce back after difficulties.
- I feel proud when I accomplish things.



#### Share-adactyl



- I can play nicely with other children and can take turns.
- I like to share toys and resources with others.
- I can share my thoughts and talk about my ideas.

#### Read-raptor

- I love listening to stories, rhymes and songs.
- I can hold a book the right way round and turn the pages.
- I can share a book with another person.

#### Write-raptor

- I enjoy mark-making, painting and drawing.
- I can make a straight line, a curve, a circle and a zig-zag.
- I can write letters (a, b, c) and numbers (1, 2, 3).

#### Maths-raptor

- I love using numbers to count things.
- I know the names of 2D shapes.
- I can sort objects into different groups.



**Read-raptor, Write-raptor and Maths-raptor** – the cuddly raptor triplets – reinforce the importance of literacy and numeracy skills.