

## **Statement on British Values**

Bentley Wood High School is committed to serving its community and surrounding areas. It recognizes the multicultural, multi faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom, and therefore those it serves.

The school, as a 'Community School', accepts admissions from all those entitled to an education under British law, including pupils of all faiths or none. It follows the policies outlined by its governing body regarding equal opportunities, which guarantee that there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status, or similar. It seeks to serve all.

The Government emphasizes that schools are required to ensure that key 'British Values' are taught in all UK schools. The government set out its definition of British values in the 'Prevent Strategy' - values of:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

*'Prevent Strategy' p.107*

The school holds that the 'British values' in question are a subset of, or continuous with, broader liberal democratic values shared by many globally. The school promotes a wide range of activities within the National Curriculum and beyond to secure such outcomes for children. The list below outlines samples of when and where such British Values are shared. The list is not exhaustive, and represents only some of what we do.

### **Democracy**

The school promotes democratic processes, fostering the concept and application of freedom of speech and group action to address needs and concerns. Many changes to policies and strategies affecting staff are put to Middle Leaders first for discussion and feedback, and often to whole staff gatherings in CPD/training sessions. Key to this is the concept of holding others to account, including those in positions of authority and influence.

Through the election of School Council members to represent each class, children have many opportunities for their voices to be heard. The school council meets regularly to discuss issues raised in class. The school council is able to genuinely effect change within the school. The council members for each year

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group are voted in by their class. Such practices “encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes.”\*

We promote the concept of ‘fair play’, the following and developing of rules, inclusion, celebrating and rewarding success, being magnanimous in defeat, and encourage participation in activities that promote kinship and affiliation with others. Senior Leaders share and examine research on fairness in the classroom, for example in data about internal exclusions and ‘behaviour points’ broken down by ethnic background.

Pupils have the opportunity to examine democracy itself in various parts of the Curriculum. For example, in History students study dictatorships, such as those of Hitler and Stalin, as well as what can happen when democracy is undermined. In Philosophy, students study “material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy”\* such as arguments from Plato’s ‘Republic’, and examine it as a value and as a political system.

### **The Rule of Law**

The school rules apply to all pupils equally, and all pupils are equally subject to the rules. Staff take great care to be scrupulous and fair in their application of the rules, and to avoid any kind of favouritism. The school has high expectations of pupil conduct and this is reflected in our Behaviour Policy. The pupils are also encouraged to go beyond what the rules set as a minimum standard, and are rewarded for supererogatory actions using the schools’ rewards system.

In the Curriculum, younger pupils have the chance to reflect on why rules exist, and how they are a way to achieve fairness, both in the classroom and across the whole school. They also study rational, secular approaches to deciding on moral issues. For example, Year 8 students study an Ethics unit where they are introduced, simply, to different theories for deciding what is right, such as Utilitarianism and Kantian deontology. Older students learn about these issues in greater detail, such as when studying Ethics in Year 12, or a unit on ‘Conflict, War and Terrorism’ in Year 10 Philosophy/R.S.. Through this, students are taught “to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law”\*. In History lessons, students learn about the rule of law in Britain and the significance of Magna Carta and other milestones in UK history. In PE, students learn the importance of applying rules fairly, for example, when deciding an outcome between conflicting viewpoints.

The importance of laws, whether they be those that govern the class, the school, or the country, are consistently reinforced throughout regular school days, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the



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responsibilities that this involves, and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service help reinforce this message, when students learn about the reasoning and purpose behind particular sets of rules such as fire and road safety.

### Individual Liberty

Within school, pupils are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Older pupils are given the opportunity to explore and consider the balance between rights, responsibilities, diversity, and belonging that make up daily life in a diverse country like Great Britain. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand, and exercise their rights and personal freedoms, and are advised how to exercise these safely, for example through E-safety and PSHCEE lessons. Liberty is examined in many areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 9 Philosophy & R.S., students study the role choice plays in the creation and perpetuation of wealth and poverty, how liberty can be taken away from those who commit crimes, and the role society and culture plays in shaping individual freedom. Older Philosophy students study some of the debate between free will and determinism, and balance between individual freedom and the authority of the state. In History, students are taught the importance of individual liberty through study of the French Revolution, the slave trade, and the Suffragette movement.

The school is working towards UNICEF's 'Rights Respecting Schools Award' which makes all students aware of their rights and responsibilities. The practice of 'Restorative Justice' is practised by the school. This fosters the students' awareness of their own freedom and autonomy, and encourages them to take ownership of their behavioural choices, as well as requiring them to take responsibility for making better choices going forward.

In the Humanities – Philosophy & R.S., History, and Geography - students gain a broad and balanced understanding of the society in which they live. Across the curriculum, students develop the cognitive and linguistic skills required to empower them by enabling them to express and act upon their liberty, both in school and in the wider world. Philosophy lessons further "provide pupils with the opportunity to learn how to argue and defend points of view".\*

Pupils are encouraged to make choices based on their interests by joining a broad range of Enrichment clubs and activities. Many students practice and develop their autonomy by taking on leadership roles. A sample of such opportunities available to them are Prefects, an Equality Team, Digital Leaders, Debate Club (Symposium), Form Captains, and School Council Representatives.



## Mutual Respect

All staff model respectful behaviour towards each other, parents, and pupils. They also model respectful behaviour towards the shared school environment. Staff and pupils are expected to take litter seriously. The Geography Department's Eco-Club promotes awareness of, and respect for, our beautiful shared environment.

Displays celebrate student achievement, and the environment is warm and welcoming, a source of pride for members of the school community. Expectations are extremely high for all pupils when it comes to respect – they are expected to behave respectfully towards each other and staff at all times. Rewards and sanctions are developed partly with a view to creating and sustaining a respectful environment.

## Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Religions

Whole-school Assemblies and many lessons across the curriculum promote the importance of tolerance. As a 'comprehensive' school, 'collective worship' is non-denominational and recognizes that those attending may have a wide range of faiths, or none. It is however, in line with regulation and is "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

Lessons in subjects like Philosophy & R.S., History, and English "further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures."\* This is achieved through enhancing pupils understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity. There are many Assemblies and discussions in PSHCEE involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying.

Younger students will learn about the notion of tolerance first in terms of interpersonal behaviour in the classroom, which is part of learning to live together. Younger pupils reflect on how they function harmoniously as a group, thinking about cooperation, sharing, and being kind and generous to each other. Older pupils learn about the history in Europe of the value of tolerance through studying the wars of religion and religious intolerance.

Students study the concept of rights, including such rights as freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression. Curriculum areas which offer the opportunity to learn about and explore the value of tolerance, especially Philosophy & R.S., History, PE, and PHSCEE, are supported and celebrated around the school.

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Planning for R.S. is informed by the 'Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education'.

For more information about how the school seeks to represent key British Values, contact the school office and a member of the School Leadership Team will be happy to provide further information.

*\* All quotations are taken from: "Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools: Departmental advice for maintained schools." November 2014*

