



Ethos and Aims

The Education Committee is responsible for this policy.

Last Reviewed: September 2025

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Equal Opportunities Policy

Physical Activities (Healthy Schools) Policy

Subject Policies

Ethos

Highfield Priory School encourages and inspires its children to aim high in all that they do, not only with regard to academic success but also with regard to behaviour, self-respect, self-discipline and good manners. We are committed to helping our children to prepare for their future.

Aims

- To encourage all pupils to develop their full potential by stimulating their intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm and imagination
- To promote excellence in academic, creative and sporting endeavours
- To teach the value of integrity and a concern for others
- To enhance pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures
- To develop self-confidence and independence so that they are well equipped to play an active role in society

Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Dimensions of School (SMSC)

Aims

Our overall aims in SMSC provision are to actively;

- enable our pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, distinguish right from wrong, respect the laws of England and develop into self-assured confident and happy young people;
- encourage our 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 the wider society;
- assist pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services in England at levels appropriate to their ages;
- further tolerance, respect and harmony between different cultural, racial or religious traditions amongst pupils and in the wider society by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;

- understand that the freedom to choose and hold different faiths and beliefs is protected in law and that those having different faiths or beliefs to oneself should be accepted and respected
- assist pupils to understand and have respect for what democracy means and how democracy works in England; supporting participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England
- promote an appreciation amongst pupils that the rule of law protects individuals and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;
- ensure pupils are offered a balanced presentation of views if any discussion of political issues takes place.

(Other school policies linked to SMSC are PSHE, RE, Music, Drama, extra-curricular provision)

Whilst the school may have aims for each section of the SMSC policy, the school recognises that various aspects of SMSC are multi-disciplinary, relating to many subjects, from RE and Citizenship through to personal relationships. Subjects such as history, geography, general knowledge and personal, social and health education may reflect the nature of the world we live in. These vital dimensions of life and growth permeate all teaching and may therefore touch upon principles and political issues relevant to everyday life. Teachers present such material in an unbiased, objective and detached manner, ensuring all aspects and views concerning the matter being discussed are explored. Irrespective of the subject being studied, whether in the classroom, during extra-curricular activities or school visits staff will never promote partisan views of any sort.

The school community is a place where pupils can find acceptance for themselves as unique individuals, and where mutual respect, understanding and the opportunity to start again are fundamental to the ethos of the school.

The school actively promotes fundamental British values within PSHE programmes, assemblies, schemes of work in relevant curriculum subjects, class/circle time, extra-curricular activities and the work of the school council. The school introduces pupils to the advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law work in Britain in contrast to other forms of government in other countries. The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are promoted positively by the school. It is expected that pupils should understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law. The school's ethos and teaching, which the school makes parents aware of, supports the rule of English civil and criminal law and we ensure we do not teach anything that undermines it. Pupils, where and when appropriate, are made aware of the difference between the law of the land and religious law. In doing so the school will meet the requirements of Education Act 2002 (section 78) and the Education (Independent school standards) **(England)** Regulations in ways appropriate to the age of the pupils.

Teaching about potentially controversial or difficult subjects is likely to use some material which presents opinions that are not compatible with the principles referred to in school policy but are useful to illustrate the full range of opinion on a matter. Teachers will use their discretion in these matters and remain in line with school policy at all times. When teaching touches on matters such as forms of government or political ideologies, staff will ensure a balance of views is represented. As in all areas, SMSC provision will utilise classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range effectively.

The school advises staff on guidelines for the choice of visiting speakers, ensuring a balance of views. Speakers may include representatives of political parties or campaigning organisations. We do not aim to prevent pupils from being exposed to political views or from discussing political issues in school whether during lessons, extra-curricular activities, debates or through the use of external speakers. Staff will not actively encourage pupils to support particular

political viewpoints. Staff will ensure that when political issues are discussed or arise, pupils understand views differ and normally a balance is struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed.

Spiritual Development

The word spiritual is often defined as something fundamental in the human condition, which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses or through everyday language. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life, the values by which to live and our uniqueness as an individual. We do not measure pupils' spiritual development; we offer them opportunities to expand their experiences.

All areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development. It is the view of the school that pupils' spiritual development is about the growth of knowledge and insight into personal values and beliefs and relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life. Spiritual development involves *relationships to other people, the universal search for individual identity, our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering and beauty.*

The school aims, in the area of spiritual development, to;

- Provide pupils with a variety of experiences which give potential for the development of an awareness of self, others and the natural world
- Raise pupils' awareness of and respect for a range of local, national and world religious beliefs and practices.
- Promote acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself should be accepted, appreciated and respected and not the subject of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour
- Value each pupil as an individual for the contribution they make in all situations. Develop their capacity for critical and independent thought.
- Enable pupils to experience moments of stillness and reflection and reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life.
- Encourage each pupil to explore their feelings in reactions to different stimuli.
- Address each pupil with respect
- Actively encourage pupils to express views in a positive and polite manner.

Staff are aware that situations occur in their teaching which have the potential to offer pupils wider and deeper experiences of their world and they will, through such situations, help pupils to;

- Enter into experiences fully and focus upon them at considerable depth
- Discover new facets of things which they take for granted
- Raise awareness of the natural world.
- Experience the intensity of becoming aware of things at a deeper level.
- Ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- Develop personal values
- Appreciate, respect and reflect upon the beliefs and values of others and understand that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law

- Use teaching resources from a wide variety of sources to help pupils understand a range of faiths
- Work in harmony and with tolerance towards other cultures and value the ideas and contribution of others.

Such experiences are not confined to the Religious Education (RE) or Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship (PSHE) lessons. They can be found in art, music, drama, science, environmental geography and the study of past civilisations in history. It is the individual teacher's responsibility to make opportunities available to pupils which allow such experiences to occur. Teachers will receive and value the ideas pupils contribute within lessons.

All pupils, irrespective of ability, culture or age will be able to access such experiences in the classroom, in extra-curricular activities and in social activities and visits to various places of interest.

The collective act of worship will offer an opportunity for reflection and the consideration of issues of meaning and purpose. A definition of 'worship' is 'something of worth', therefore the collective act can be led by pupils, staff or visitors and be concerned with something considered of worth to pupils, to humanity as a whole or to the school. It may;

- be of a Christian nature
- reflect a range of religions, which touch on the concepts of mystery, depth of feeling, relationships with others, reflection and contemplation
- be an act of celebration of special festivals in a range of religions

The school has a themed 'values and disposition' throughout the school year. These are linked to social and moral behaviour e.g. respect, determination, bravery, responsibility etc. Weekly assemblies organised by pupils are often based on these values and dispositions.

While culture is different to faith the two can be interlinked and influence each other. The school will actively encourage pupils to regard all faiths, races and cultures with respect. Through positive and sensitive teaching pupils will gain the skills to interact easily with people of different cultures and faiths. Using resources and artefacts from a wide variety of sources teachers will help pupils understand a range of faiths, and beliefs together with their lifestyles and practices.

Moral Development

Moral development is concerned with a pupil's ability to make informed judgements about how to behave and act, to identify the reasons for such behaviour and to understand the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Moral development includes the development of a personal code of behaviour and involves the need to show sensitivity and respect toward other people, truth, justice, property and the law of the land.

The environment in which they learn and the expectations of those in that environment, influence pupils' moral development. Every pupil in the school receives, discusses and understands the schools code of behaviour and anti- bullying policy and expectations. Teachers may discuss issues appertaining to personal and group attitudes in all lessons; particularly PSHE. Teachers will discuss with pupils the reasons for their actions and help pupils make decisions which are acceptable to the community of the school and society as a whole.

All adults model and promote expected behaviour, treating all pupils as unique and valuable individuals and showing respect for them and their families.

In developing the moral dimension in the school, the school aims to actively promote;

- Pupils' development and growth into self-assured, confident, happy, positive youngsters with growing self-confidence.
- A sense of healthy self-esteem and personal worth for individuals and within groups of pupils.
- Pupils' ability to reflect upon personal values, attitudes and beliefs as they affect the self and others
- A range of formal and informal settings which enable pupils to express, their feelings and justify them justify, consider and evaluate their attitudes and innermost feelings
- Pupils understanding of how they can contribute to the local and wider community.
- A recognition of what constitutes 'right' and 'wrong', the understanding pupils have of the impact of their actions on others and the development and implementation of personal and institutional codes of behaviour
- The development of tolerance and respect for cultural traditions different to their own.

In addition, since November 2013, in response to requirements concerning citizenship the school aims to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills that enable them to demonstrate;

- A knowledge of and respect for public institutions in England
- An understanding, at age appropriate levels, of what constitutes English civil and criminal law and that they are subject to such laws
- The ability to compare and contrast English law with the different requirements of various religious laws
- A recognition that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;
- An understanding that bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account to the people, through the democratic organs of government;
- A grasp of how the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law, and an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;
- Their comprehension of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- Why participation in elections by all, including those opposed to democracy, should be allowed by law, but the success of such candidates is undesirable for the well-being of society if it would lead to the end of democracy;
- Some understanding of the problems of identifying and combat discrimination (based on protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010).

There are many ways in which the school covers the above requirements, at levels appropriate for the age of the pupils. Within history, PSHE, geography and citizenship, discussions are introduced in a variety of contexts on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy. Across the school visits to local places such as Town Halls, police and fire headquarters, local council buildings and the Houses of Parliament take place. This ensures pupils knowledge and understanding of citizenship in the wider context is broadened. The

school welcomes visits by local councillors, Members of Parliament, and representatives from a range of service providers to meet pupils and discuss their roles. This increase pupils understanding of how public institutions operate, why democracy is considered a fair format for political organisation, how democracy works in Britain in contrast to other forms of government in other countries. Such visits also promote pupils respect for the work public bodies contribute to society

The school ensures that all pupils have a voice that is heard, through the provision of classroom discussion times, Golden time, the buddy system and a school council. The school maximises the potential of general and local elections. Pupils present their portfolios to their peers, hold mock elections and develop the ability to argue and defend points of view;

The school ensures that pupils are not victims of political indoctrination or partisan views by teachers and that pupils are not influenced by views intended to;

- further the interests of a particular political party
- secure changes to the laws of this or another country
- secure the reversal of government policy or of particular decisions of governmental authorities in this or another country.

If pupils are presented with political views or information during their studies or while participating in extra-curricular activities provided by or organised on behalf of the school, the school ensures they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. The school demonstrates to pupils that there can be differing views and a balance is often struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed.

The school has set down the following guidelines/ rules for pupils to assist them to live and work with others in a spirit of co-operation and friendship, develop their own self-discipline and self-confidence, raise their awareness of roles within the community. These guidelines cross spiritual, moral, social and cultural areas.

Social Development

Social development concerns the ability to encourage pupils to relate effectively to others, to take responsibility, to participate fully in the school community and the community at large and to develop an understanding of citizenship. The school places a strong focus upon introducing pupils to the surrounding community and the world community in order to develop their social responsibility.

In order to actively promote pupils' social development the school will;

- Offer the opportunity for pupils to work in pairs, in groups and on collaborative projects which require cooperation and initiative
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- Assist pupils to understand each other, listen to each other and contribute to lessons and school life generally.
- Encourage pupils to become self-assured individuals who undertake tasks confidently and questions whatever concerns them.
- Organise events that enable pupils of differing ages to meet and work together and assist older pupils to be positive role models for younger pupils

- Encourage pupils to organise events for charity which involve working as a group, organising, planning and executing ideas successfully
- Enable groups to work together to plan and lead acts of collective departmental worship.
- Ensure team games in PE and discussion in PSHE will also assist the development of interpersonal skills
- Organise social events and sports events with other schools
- Provide opportunities for pupils to take part in residential workshops and visits.

The school encourages the work of a School Council as an organisation which represents the school community as a whole. Members of each year are represented on the council and are responsible for ensuring the pupil's body has a voice in the running of the school.

Pupils enjoy and carry out various buddy systems for different ages and playgrounds responsibly. Class monitors, prefects, sports captains have a good range of tasks which they enjoy performing. They represent the school at different public functions and assist staff and support pupils on a daily basis.

Pupils' high-level knowledge and understanding of social systems different to their own is enhanced through the involvement with a range of school communities in other countries visited by pupils. The many sporting and cultural visits to other countries significantly expand pupils' ability to appreciate social systems different to their own. Pupils participate in a significant number of community events such as fundraising for charity, visiting the elderly in residential homes and singing in shopping centres. These activities develop pupils' ability to refine their social skills and increase their understanding of different local communities.

Pupils enhance their social interactions in a wide-ranging programme of extra curricular activities, some of which include competitive activities with other schools in local, national and on occasion international arenas.

Pupils confidently discuss problems within the agreed rules, support each other and praise the actions and deeds of fellow pupils during the social tutor time. They are enabled to highlight areas of concern relating to relationships and behaviour in a safe and non-judgmental environment. During their discussions pupils talk about personal experiences and feelings, expressing and clarifying their own ideas and beliefs. In the safe environment of the tutor group they speak about difficult events such as bullying, and share thoughts and feelings with other people.

Pupils sharpen their ability to socialise with all age groups and develop a sense of shared belonging through an effective House System. Within the house system pupils show empathy to and consideration for the needs of others.

Cultural Development

The school is strongly supportive of each pupil's cultural tradition and encourages each to be proud of his or her heritage. The school encourages pupils to respect and appreciate the diversity and richness of cultures and values different to their own.

In many curricular, as well as extracurricular, activities opportunities are used to develop this aspect of school life. The common factors shared by different communities—such as customs, traditions, dress, food will be examined from both historical and present day perspectives. Staff will nurture in pupils skills that enable them interact confidently with those from cultures different to their own.

Our aims in nurturing the cultural development of pupils include;

- raising pupils' awareness of the value and richness of cultural diversity in Britain, and how such differences have influenced individuals and society
- assisting pupils to enlarge their understanding of their social and cultural environment.
- enabling pupils to expand their knowledge of Britain's local, national, European, and global dimensions

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest as an introduction and stimulation to discussion of the cultural aspects of a subject.

Pupils wide understanding of the impact of present and past cultures on their lives is supported by visits to different places of religious worship, museums and working heritage villages. Pupils' extensive performance skills are further advanced through participation in creative workshops of a variety of styles and content.

Pupils musical skills and techniques are expanded through attendances at concerts and dance productions, for relaxation as well as study. Musicians visit the school and organise workshops for pupils, which usually culminate in shared performances. The school enables the choir to perform on a range of local stages.

The love of art is cultivated through the curriculum, workshops arranged by the school during which visiting artists share their expertise with pupils and visits to art exhibitions and galleries.

Monitoring and Evaluation OF SMSC

- Senior leaders monitor schemes of work, teaching and learning,
- SMSC is included on agendas at staff meetings.

Good Manners

It is expected that to be a pupil at Highfield you will always act with courtesy, care and consideration towards others.

Do not be shy about using good manners

Most good manners involve common sense:

- Always show care and consideration for others
- Enjoy a laugh, but *with* others not at them.
- Do not be unkind to anyone
- If you cannot say something positive or helpful, then don't say anything at all.
- Look after your own possessions and leave other people's possessions alone.
- Always aim to be tidy, polite and helpful.
- Always behave in a quiet and orderly manner, both in and out of school.
- Wear your school uniform with pride, look smart at all times.
- Do not interrupt when adults are talking to each other or when a member of staff is talking to another pupil.

A breach of common sense is a breach of school rules

Remember:

- Children and staff greet each other by name.
- Visitors are greeted and welcomed to the school.
- Doors are held open for adults.
- No one barges between two people who are talking.
- Children stand to one side rather than block a corridor when an adult passes.
- Please and thank you accompany any request.
- Thank you is said when you are helped.
- No one shouts
- No one pushes or shoves.
- Walk on the left when inside school.

Also:

- Enter and leave classrooms quietly and be on time for all lessons.
- Bags are placed, tidily, on the floor.
- At the end of the lesson stand behind your chair until dismissed.

EYFS

Mission Statement

Our children come first. A Highfield education embraces the whole child in a nurturing, challenging yet engaging, academic environment. We prepare our children and ultimately, empower them, not only for the next academic step, but for life.

Aims and Ethos

We encourage our children to learn through hands on practical play based experiences, enhanced with trips, outings and visiting speakers, extending their knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

- We provide a quality learning environment for all our children
- Our children are valued and respected
- We display real, honest and purposeful enthusiasm and have clear expectations
- Planning is relevant to the children and supports a sense of collaboration and mutual trust
- We offer continuous play provision within a positive 'can do' climate, supported by adult-led activities

- Adults ask open-ended questions – What do you think? How do you think we should sort that? What will happen if/when? Why do you think that happened? Can you think of a way?
- Adults interact with a positive outcome – sensitively, supportive, extending, enhancing. “That’s an interesting idea? How did you think of that?”
- “I wondered why you had...”
- “I really like what you are doing...”
- “I have never thought about that before... “What a super idea!”
- “Have you thought about?”

Our nursery ethos is focused on:

- communication
- collaboration
- creativity
- problem solving
- children ‘learning to learn’

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Safeguarding Committee, Education Committee and Marketing Committee.