



British Values Policy

Reviewed by:	Henrietta Jordan, Schools Director
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Approved by:	Tracey Storey, CEO

Statement of Intent

Melrose Education and its schools are committed to preparing every learner for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. We actively and separately promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The proprietor will ensure that the written curriculum policy, plans, schemes of work, teaching, resources, wider curriculum and school ethos take account of learners' ages, aptitudes and needs, including the needs identified in an Education, Health and Care plan, and do not undermine any of the fundamental British values.

Active promotion requires more than general teaching about respect or occasional events. Each value will be made explicit, taught in an appropriate context, modelled in daily practice and evaluated through evidence of learners' developing knowledge, understanding and behaviour.

Scope

This group policy applies to every Melrose Education school.

The policy applies to the curriculum, teaching, assemblies, tutor time, enrichment, educational visits, work-related learning, learner leadership, extra-curricular activities, visiting speakers, external providers, school displays, resources, publications, websites and school-branded communications.

This is a group policy. Each principal must ensure that implementation is suitable for the school's registered age range, specialism, learner profile, local context and curriculum, and that school-specific evidence is maintained

Legal Framework

a) This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule: Part 1, including paragraphs 2(1)(b)(i) to 2(1)(b)(iii), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(i), 3(i) and 3(j), and Part 2, paragraphs 5(a) to 5(d).
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools, Department for Education, April 2026.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, including the section 26 Prevent duty.
- Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026, as it applies to independent schools.
- Political impartiality in schools, Department for Education, updated March 2025.
- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools, Department for Education, used as non-statutory supporting guidance.

b) This policy operates in conjunction with the following:

- Curriculum Policy and school-specific curriculum plans and schemes of work.
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development framework or tracker.
- PSHE Policy and curriculum.
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy and curriculum.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Prevent Duty Policy and risk assessment.

- Non-Partisan and Political Impartiality Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan.
- Online Safety, Mobile Phone and Artificial Intelligence policies.
- Educational Visits and Trips Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy.

Definitions

- **Fundamental British values:** democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- **Active promotion:** planned and effective teaching, modelling and experiences that enable learners to understand the value, its purpose and how it operates in practice.
- **Political issue:** an issue on which there are differing political views, or which is intended to further a political party, change a law, or change government policy or a governmental decision.
- **Partisan political view:** a one-sided political view that is promoted to learners, rather than presented for balanced and critical consideration.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for the overall implementation of this policy and for ensuring that the British values are upheld throughout the company and its schools.

The principal and senior leadership team in each school will ensure that all teachers and staff, including supply staff and volunteers are aware of the requirement to uphold British values through the methods outlined in this policy and will ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to carry out these methods.

The principal is responsible for disciplining staff who do not uphold British values, in line with the disciplinary policy.

Teachers and support staff will ensure that their lessons are inclusive of, and sensitive to, the fundamental British values.

Learners are expected to treat each other and staff with respect, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Aims and Objectives

Through our policy and procedures, we aim to ensure that our learners have:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process.
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies, such as the police and the army, can be held to account through Parliament, others, such as the courts, maintain independence.
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law.
- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Democracy

Democracy is promoted at our schools in the following ways:

- Learner questionnaires/surveys.
- Suggestions box.
- Learner Voice tutor times – we have a specific British Values topic.
- Learners are encouraged to have an input into what and how they learn to instil an understanding of democracy for their future.
- Election of representatives to share learners' views.
- Informal voting on issues within tutor times and lessons.
- Learners attend their person-centred EHCP review meeting, and their opinions are shared in the most appropriate and meaningful way as possible.
- There is explicit consideration of democracy within PSHE lessons.
- The principles of democracy are explored in the whole curriculum e.g., turn taking, sharing and collaboration, as well as during enrichment and special projects.
- Our schools' development plans include a Learner Voice process through which suggestions resulting from our consultations are implemented.
- Achievements are celebrated both in lessons and in our weekly celebration time and rewards are embedded into our schools' culture and ethos.
- We promote an environment in our schools where questions are valued and encouraged.
- We highlight key moments in the democracy of the nation by holding mock Elections.
- We recognise and mark national events such as Remembrance Day through the school's cultural calendar.

The Rule of Law

The rule of law is promoted in our schools in the following ways:

- Our schools have a high regard for the laws that govern and protect them, the responsibilities that this involves, and the consequences when laws are broken.
- The importance of laws, whether they be those that govern the class, our schools, or the country, are consistently reinforced throughout the school day, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school-specific times e.g., enrichment, tutor times and 1:1's.
- Our schools organise visits from authorities throughout the academic year to reinforce the reality and importance of this message e.g., knife crime, fire safety.
- Our schools understand the importance of promoting British Values through a comprehensive and unprejudiced curriculum.
- Our schools' ethos promotes and encourages respect and help learners to distinguish right from wrong.
- Our behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out a zero-tolerance baseline for any form of aggression, abuse, or violence, which extends to learners, staff and parent and carers. We raise awareness of bullying by being part of the National Anti-Bullying Week and Online/Internet Safety Day.

Individual Liberty

Individual liberty is promoted at our schools in the following ways:

- A safe and supportive environment is fostered throughout our schools, where learners are actively encouraged to make choices. Whether it is choosing a challenging task or an extra-curricular club, learners have the freedom to base their choices on their interests.
- Learners are taught about their rights and personal freedoms and are encouraged and advised on how to exercise these safely, for instance through teaching on online safety and PSHE lessons.
- We pride ourselves on a school culture and ethos that builds respect, tolerance, and resilience.
- We have a robust anti-bullying culture (refer to anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy).
- Our schools' environments promote independence and individual communication. Our aim is to work towards learners having full independence.
- Staff work to promote learners' self-esteem and positive sense of self throughout the school day and in the wider community.

- Throughout all year groups, learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and are supported to learn to make safe choices that enable them to grow as individuals and reach their own potential in all aspects of their learning.
- As learners move up through the school, they are supported to understand their rights and personal freedoms and are given appropriate advice to enable them to make independent decisions.
- Vulnerable learners are supported to make appropriate decisions and staff ensure that adults supporting them are doing so with the learner's best interests.

Mutual Respect

Individual liberty is promoted in our schools in the following ways:

- Learners are treated with respect and are taught to try to treat each other and all members of staff with respect. Our learners know and understand that it is expected that respect is shown to everyone.
- This is reinforced through our schools' behaviour policy.
- Throughout the year, various sessions are held focusing on bullying, with reference to prejudice-based bullying, and discussion is encouraged.
- Enrichment times address what respect means and how it is shown.
- Displays around our schools promote respect for others and this is reiterated through our class and school rules, as well as our behaviour policy.
- Both in and out of the classroom learners are helped to acquire an understanding of, and respect for, their own and other opinions, cultures, and ways of life.
- Staff and learners are encouraged to challenge prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour. All such incidents are recorded.

Protected Characteristics, Cultural Harmony and Public Institutions

The school will actively encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Learners will be made aware of the characteristics to an age-appropriate extent:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The curriculum will not rely only on a general statement that everyone should be respected. Planning will show how protected characteristics are addressed appropriately across the learners' time at school and how the school responds when a relevant issue arises.

Learners will also acquire broad, age-appropriate knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England. This may include Parliament, local government, the courts and judiciary, the police, the National Health Service, emergency services, welfare services, education, the civil service and other services that affect learners and their families.

Political Impartiality and Balanced Presentation

The Directors precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. Political issues may be taught and discussed, but learners must not be encouraged to support a particular political party, candidate, campaign or one-sided political position.

- When political issues are brought to learners' attention in school, in school-organised extra-curricular activities, or through promotional material, the school will take reasonably practicable steps to provide a balanced presentation of opposing views.
- A balanced presentation means a fair and dispassionate approach. It does not require mechanically equal time for every possible view, but learners should understand that legitimate alternative views exist.
- Staff will distinguish fact from opinion and will not present a contested political claim as an uncontested fact.
- Staff may facilitate debate, role play, mock elections and reasoned argument, provided the activity is planned and managed impartially.
- Staff should avoid sharing personal political opinions with learners unless they are confident that doing so will not promote the view. Any personal view shared must be identified as a personal view and placed in the context of other legitimate perspectives.
- Political activity and discussion by learners may be supported where it is lawful, age-appropriate, respectful, non-intimidating and consistent with the Behaviour Policy. School resources and branding must not be used to promote a partisan political cause.
- Where an imbalance is identified, the school will take proportionate corrective action, which may include clarification, further teaching or the presentation of alternative perspectives.

Visiting Speakers, External Organisations, Resources and Communications

- The school remains responsible for content delivered to learners by visitors, external organisations and online or purchased resources.
- Appropriate due diligence and risk assessment will be completed before engagement. This will consider safeguarding, Prevent, suitability, political impartiality, accuracy, protected characteristics and the age and needs of learners.
- The purpose, content and supervision arrangements for a visit or presentation will be agreed in advance where reasonably practicable.
- Where a speaker or resource expresses a partisan political view, learners will be helped to understand that the view is contested and will receive a fair and dispassionate account of relevant opposing views over an appropriate period.
- Organisations or speakers that encourage terrorism, serious criminal conduct, hatred, intimidation or the undermining of fundamental British values will not be given a platform.
- Displays, newsletters, social media, websites and promotional materials will be reviewed where they concern political issues or external campaigns so that they do not create an avoidable imbalance or imply school endorsement of a partisan view.

Challenging Views Contrary to British Values and Prevent

The school will challenge opinions and behaviours that are contrary to British values, including discrimination, hatred, intimidation, support for terrorism, unlawful violence and attempts to deny others their lawful rights. This does not mean that difficult, sensitive or controversial issues should be avoided.

- Staff will create safe, age-appropriate opportunities for learners to ask questions, test ideas and debate controversial issues respectfully.
- Lawful disagreement, criticism of government policy, religious belief, non-religious belief or political opinion will not, by itself, be treated as extremism or a safeguarding concern.
- Where staff are concerned that a learner may be susceptible to radicalisation, is being exploited by extremist influences, or presents a risk to themselves or others, the concern will be reported to the DSPL and managed under the Safeguarding and Prevent policies.
- Responses will be proportionate, recorded and focused on safeguarding, education and support as well as appropriate behaviour consequences.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments for Learners with SEND

The school will adjust teaching, participation and evaluation so that all learners can access and demonstrate understanding of fundamental British values. A learner will not be excluded from learner voice or democratic participation because they do not use speech, read conventional text or manage a conventional voting process.

- using accessible and concrete language, symbols, photographs, objects of reference, social stories, Easy Read material and visual timelines;
- using the learner's established communication methods, including augmentative and alternative communication, signing or assistive technology where used;
- providing repetition, pre-teaching, extra processing time, individual or small-group teaching and opportunities to revisit learning;
- making sensory, environmental and regulation adjustments and choosing suitable times and settings for discussion;
- providing trusted-adult, advocacy or interpreter support while preserving the learner's own views;
- allowing alternative ways to vote, express a preference, give feedback or provide evidence of understanding;
- linking abstract concepts to the learner's everyday life, community, EHC outcomes and preparation for adulthood; and
- recording and reviewing reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation

A policy alone does not demonstrate compliance. Each school will maintain proportionate evidence that the four values are taught, actively promoted and understood by learners at an appropriate level. This evidence will be recorded on Gridmaker.

The school-specific evidence base will show, for each of the four fundamental British values:

- where it is taught;
- how it is actively promoted; and
- what evidence demonstrates learners' developing knowledge and understanding.

Evidence may include:

- curriculum, PSHE/RSE and SMSC mapping (Gridmaker), schemes of work and lesson resources;
- direct evidence of learning, such as written work, photographs, recordings, practical outcomes or accessible digital portfolios, where appropriate;
- learner voice gathered through accessible communication methods;
- observations of lessons, assemblies, enrichment, visits and learner leadership;
- records of elections, consultation, school council activity and how learner views influenced decisions;
- records of visitors, due diligence and any action taken to provide political balance;
- staff training, supervision and professional discussion;
- behaviour, bullying, discrimination, safeguarding and Prevent information, analysed for themes while maintaining confidentiality; and
- school improvement actions and evidence that identified gaps have been addressed.

The principal will review implementation through the school's regular curriculum and safeguarding monitoring cycle and will complete a formal evaluation at least annually. The evaluation will be reported to the proprietor, and relevant actions will be included in the school development plan.

Staff Training

All staff, including supply staff and volunteers where relevant, will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities during induction. Staff will receive regular updates appropriate to their role, including on:

- the four fundamental British values and the requirement to promote each value separately;
- political impartiality, balanced presentation and the use of external organisations and resources;
- Prevent and the distinction between safeguarding concerns and lawful disagreement;
- protected characteristics, discrimination and respectful challenge;
- SEND accessibility, reasonable adjustments and accessible learner voice; and
- how to record evidence and report concerns.

Training and policy acknowledgement will be recorded. Alleged staff breaches will be considered under the Staff Code of Conduct, disciplinary, low-level concerns or safeguarding procedures, as appropriate to the circumstances.

Concerns and Complaints

Concerns about the teaching or promotion of fundamental British values, political impartiality, discrimination or the suitability of a visitor or resource should be raised promptly with the principal. Wherever possible, the school will seek to clarify and resolve concerns informally and take proportionate corrective action.

Where a parent or carer remains dissatisfied, the concern may be raised through the school's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding or Prevent concerns will be managed immediately through the relevant safeguarding procedures and will not wait for the complaints process.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following a change in law or guidance, an inspection finding, a relevant incident or complaint, or evidence that implementation is ineffective. Substantive amendments require proprietor approval before issue.