

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL POLICY

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Aims of the policy

1. To explain how the ethos and education provided by Benenden enables the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
2. To note the contributions that specific aspects of school life make to this development
3. To enable the school to more readily review the SMSC provision.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

At Benenden we believe that the fostering of our pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is intrinsic to their personal development; this approach infuses the ethos and education provided by school life on a daily basis. Our focus on providing a complete education especially affirms the importance of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Living together in a boarding community has a significant role to play in this regard because of how it enables pupils to appreciate diversity and understand compromise while also encouraging pupils to look far beyond the school gates. The SMSC programme and culture help to nurture the students to be confident, courageous, compassionate and courteous whilst at school and when they leave, and to be active, responsible citizens.

As a key part of pupils' SMSC development, Benenden actively promotes the fundamental British values of:

1. Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, including the need to actively challenge and combat discrimination
2. Individual liberty
3. Democracy, including how to influence decision making through the democratic process
4. The rule of law
 - a. Including how living under the rule of law protects citizens and the fact that religious freedom is protected by law
 - b. Including an understanding of the separation of powers, democratic accountability, and judicial independence.

We seek to develop our pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through a wide range of activities which are integral to our academic, curricular, co-curricular and boarding provision. Consequently, our overall strategy to promote these values, as well as to raise awareness of political issues in a balanced and age appropriate way, includes the following planned and structured activities:

- the Personal and Professional Development Programme
- PSHE lessons which fall within the PPD programme
- Prayers (assemblies)
- the Form Order programmes for years 7-9, which include sessions on friendships, peer on peer abuse and digital safety, individual differences, behaviour, understanding different cultures, inclusion, moral and ethical codes, current affairs
- the Global Awareness programme for year 10
- Cultures Week and the celebration of other cultural events such as Chinese New Year
- Student voice activities such as Pupil Forum, the pupil-led Equality and Diversity Committee, Food Committee
- the outreach programme
- the Benenden ACE initiative (similar to TedX which promotes students' talks as well as visiting speakers)
- the lecture and seminar supper programme

- tutor meetings
- the boarding House system and House order and meetings
- selected content of academic programmes of study

In addition to this, Benenden has an Anglican tradition and the fundamental principle of loving our neighbour is at the heart of our shared life as a boarding school. Our religious ethos is to be fully inclusive and welcoming of people from all faiths and none. We encourage an open, honest and friendly dialogue, where all views are respected in a spirit of generous hospitality and mutual learning.

Taken all together, Benenden's SMSC provision aims to enhance the self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence of all pupils as well as reinforcing the principles of respect for others (particularly those from other cultures and religions) and a respect for British democratic institutions and processes. Pupils are encouraged to see the value of contributing both to school and wider society as well as the importance of taking responsibility for their actions, including being able to distinguish right from wrong.

Benenden's Complete Education which encompasses SMSC can be seen through the diagram here:



Taught Curriculum and SMSC Development

Benenden recognises that all subjects directly contribute to the development of SMSC, not just in terms of content but also the skills that are taught, such as thinking critically. The school is fully committed to preventing the political indoctrination of pupils as well as the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. It does this primarily through regular lesson observations as well as the scrutiny of both departmental schemes of work and pupils' work and through student questionnaires. The open and enquiring culture that exists within Benenden is a significant contributory factor in preventing the dissemination of partisan political views, in challenging prejudice and in ensuring a culture where bullying and exclusion, on any grounds, are not tolerated.