



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

# **SMSC Policy**

## **Hilltop Junior School**



**Adopted:** January 2021  
**To be reviewed:** January 2024

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a value led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



*Children at the HEART*

## **Aims and Ethos:**

SMSC stands for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. At Hilltop Junior School we recognise that the personal development of all children plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve and we therefore aim to provide an education that provides opportunities to explore and deepen values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behavior, a positive, caring attitude towards other people and an understanding of social and cultural traditions; we believe in instilling an appreciation for the diversity and richness of culture and the world around us.

At Hilltop Junior School we promote and encourage a caring and inclusive environment, with equal opportunity and access for all, where there are opportunities and stimuli to develop each student's potential and equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding to succeed in their future lives. We recognise the importance of children developing into thoughtful, reflective and active citizens not only within our own school but across the wider community. We facilitate our vision and aims by fostering values that underpin our entire school curriculum: Happiness, Self-Esteem, Achievement, Respect & Responsibility, Truth, Service & Spirituality. These values are integral to our school and its role in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of all pupils. SMSC is not taught as a discreet subject – it is woven throughout and across our whole school curriculum, is a cornerstone of our community and ethos and permeates the life and work of all stakeholders.

## **Spiritual Development:**

(As defined by Ofsted 2019) The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- *Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life*
- *Knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values*
- *Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them*
- *Use of imagination and creativity in their learning*
- *Willingness to reflect on their experiences*

At Hilltop Junior School children regularly reflect upon the meaning of spiritual experiences. We endeavor to ensure that all children acquire an awareness of the beauty of the world around them, are curious, grasp the ideas of awe and wonder and develop a heightened sense of self.

## **In practice this is delivered through:**

- Our PSHE and RE curriculums which develop self-esteem, promote tolerance, respecting of difference and appreciation for others (and their cultures) while providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on and develop their own spiritual values
- Our wider whole school curriculum that encourages students to be inquisitive, curious and express feelings of delight and wonder (science investigations, art and D&T projects, etc...)
- A comprehensive, themed assembly programme, delivered both in class and in wider whole school settings, which encourage discussion and then endorse stillness and reflection
- Votes for Schools, which provide children an opportunity for a voice on issues that affect them most and allows pupils to consider the viewpoints of others

- Curriculum enrichment through educational visits, creative partnerships and visiting speakers who provide our pupils with a range of experiences and promote a sense of awe and wonder about the world
- A reflective approach to teaching and learning whereby students are encouraged to reflect on their accomplishments, demonstrating ownership and identifying strengths and areas for development
- A positive behavior management system that promotes self-esteem, rewards resilience and celebrates achievement through Dojo's, stickers, postcards and phone calls home, medals and certificates
- The learning environment, including school displays, which while highlighting the successes of pupils also promote a sense of awe and amazement
- A Life Skills Programme, which is tailored for specific pupils, and encourages them to interact positively, creatively and explore the world around them
- Additional opportunities that arise throughout the school day/year, such as listening to and appreciating music, discussing how we care for others or animals, how we should live our day-to-day lives, reflecting on current events (in the news/media), listening to a teacher read a class story or contemplating the future

### **Moral Development:**

The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- *Ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England*
- *Understanding of the consequences of their behavior and actions*
- *Interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues*

At Hilltop Junior School we believe in the importance of developing a strong set of ethics and morals in all pupils. We help children distinguish right from wrong and teach them to make the right choices; we explain repercussions and consequences for actions; we encourage responsibility and provide opportunity for pupils to make reasoned judgements while respecting others views.

### **In practice this is delivered through:**

- A clear behavior system that is understood and adhered to by all stakeholders
- HEARTS Values which are consistently displayed and promoted throughout the school, including within each classroom, and underpin our whole school curriculum
- Giving all children opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values, for example personal rights and responsibilities, stereotypes, equality of opportunity, challenging racism, homophobia and anti-bullying
- Encouraging discussion and debate which focus on morals and values (through class and whole school assemblies, including Votes for Schools)
- Developing an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practice moral decision making
- Rewarding pupils who make morally and ethically positive decisions through our weekly Celebration Certificates and assemblies

- An RE and PSHE curriculum which recognises and respects the codes and morals of different cultures from across the school, community and the wider world
- Providing models of moral virtue throughout the curriculum (ie. specifically chosen texts in English from a wide variety of authors which address key moral/ethical issues, specifically chosen artists or other persons from history which encourage debate, discussion and reinforce moral education). Books chosen for the children to encounter are driven by themes that support SMSC development
- Opportunities for debate which allow pupils to listen and respond appropriately to the views of others
- A strong sense of respect for the environment and a whole school commitment to maintaining this (through our ECO Squad and School Council)

### **Social Development:**

The social development of pupils is shown by their:

- *Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds*
- *Willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively*
- *Acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain*

At Hilltop Junior School we fully appreciate the role that our school plays in building strong social and relationship skills in and amongst pupils and families. All stakeholders have a responsibility to model and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills and we endeavor to exude high expectations in social settings at all times. As an inclusive school, we build tolerance and respect of others through discussion and debate, providing opportunities throughout the curriculum and school day for pupils to engage, communicate and to exercise social skills across classes and/or phases. We fully recognise the importance of fundamental British values which underpin life in our school. We develop pupils understanding of the individual and how this translates into a responsibility for the collective and we teach pupils the social and moral responsibilities of supporting those who are disadvantaged.

### **In practice this is delivered through:**

- A strong sense of community with common, inclusive values and a clear curriculum intent
- A culture of high expectations that works to actively overcome social and emotional barriers to learning and sets the highest aspirations for all pupils
- Building tolerance and respect through discussion, assemblies and specific interventions (ie. Life Skills, Zones of Regulation, SMART Thinking)
- Consistent reinforcement of the HEARTS values, which helps pupils to develop key personal qualities needed in a civilised society – service, respect, responsibility and an awareness of others' needs
- A coherent knowledge of the protected characteristics from all stakeholders; this is then shared in our curriculum and in our lessons with pupils. We actively promote racial, religious and other forms of equality across the SMSC, PSHE, RE and wider school curriculum

- Encouraging conversation at lunchtime in the dinner hall, allowing pupils to exercise social skills across year groups and phases
- Our strong ethos for volunteering and a desire to 'give back' to the world and community around us; we work regularly with charities and strongly believe in teaching pupils the importance and significance of these
- Encouraging cooperation and collaboration between pupils in lessons and when working outdoors (ie. Forest Schools and educational visits, including residential experiences (Liddington))
- Exercising British values throughout and across the curriculum and within student bodies. The intent and design of the curriculum, from texts chosen to artists studied, is well-chosen and specific, promotes British values, and allows pupils to explore them through their collaborative work. We engage in the democratic process and exercise pupil leadership through our Eco Squad, School Council, Digital Leaders, House Captains and Prefects – to name a few. These bodies are representative of all students and include those with SEND, SEMH and disadvantaged pupils
- Teaching pupils how to cooperate and resolve conflict with increasing confidence. Our Play Leaders (a group of pupil volunteers) are a great example of this, and our tailored intervention and support programmes for those pupils with SEND and/or SEMH support those children who struggle with conflict and resolution
- A humanities and English curriculum that encourages pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities across local, wider and international communities
- Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) training, led by senior leaders and delivered to all staff, demonstrates a long term commitment which encourages and promotes an ethos of better social, cultural and pupil understanding; TPP harbours connection and belonging, enables stakeholders to have (and model) healthy and helpful conversation and creates an underlying culture of respect and support for all
- Encouraging healthy debate, teaching pupils how to argue constructively and defend points of view. Our Debate Mate club and Votes for Schools curriculum actively promote this

### **Cultural Development:**

The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:

- *Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others*
- *Understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain*
- *Ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities*
- *Knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain*
- *Willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities*
- *Interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept and respect diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities*

At Hilltop Junior School we aim to promote and celebrate opportunities that enable pupils to identify and value the richness of cultural diversity in Britain and the wider world. We believe it is vital that all stakeholders (staff, pupils and families) recognise, have a grounded understanding in and value the views held by world-wide faiths, traditions and cultures and how these contribute to not only our society but the international community. Tolerance and empathy are virtues that are integral to life in our school and we embrace diversity as a strength, knowing that it should not be the cause of any prejudice or discrimination. We want all pupils to leave Hilltop as responsible, global, culturally-aware citizens ready to make a change and impact on the world around them.

**In practice this is delivered through:**

- Delivering a robust, logically sequenced and coherent whole school curriculum that places cultural capital and recognition of diversity at its core
- Enriching the curriculum with links to our own heritage and local area (Ernest Shackleton, William Morris, Braintree Victorian Museum, Colchester Castle, Wickford Memorial Park, etc...)
- Extending pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language
- Books chosen to populate the library are deliberately diverse and reflect a global community
- Encouraging pupils to reflect on events of significance and why they are important and/or celebrated. This is done throughout and across the curriculum and ranges from texts chosen in English to assemblies to lessons and foundation topics that the children engage with
- An ever-growing awareness of the importance and significance of major national and international events and how these relate to us all both locally and in the UK (Black Lives Matter movement, Brexit, etc...)
- Celebrating significant moments and individuals in history and understanding both why they are significant and how they relate to us today (Black History Month, Guy Fawkes, 'artists of the week/month,' etc...)
- Recognising and nurturing the individual and uniqueness of every pupil and providing opportunities for all to participate in a wide range of opportunities (literature, choral poetry, drama, music, art, etc...). These opportunities do not discriminate and all pupils are given equal access to embark upon them
- Reinforcing the schools cultural links with the wider world as well as developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness and access to cultural capital, as well as providing opportunities for pupils that parents cannot. For example, educational visits to London, residential stays, visits abroad, trips to theatres, museums, Young Voices, Shakespeare in Schools, etc...
- Regularly auditing the quality and capacity for improving opportunities which extend pupils cultural development across the curriculum (SMSC quality mark, Unicef Rights Respecting Schools, Inclusion Quality Mark, Artsmark, Eco Green Flag, Mental Health First Aid Champions, etc...)
- Encouraging pupils to be curious and inquisitive learners, fostering an urge, impulse and desire to want to learn and know more ("Where do I come from? Where do I belong? How does this relate to my community/country/the world around me?")
- Regularly engaging in teaching children about democracy and the parliamentary system. This is done in part through our use of Votes for Schools and other assemblies, our School Council as well as educational visits to London and other areas of significance

- Delivering a strong RE curriculum that is centered around a multi-faith approach. All pupils learn about all of the six main faiths, learn to respect their differences and similarities, and how they shape the world and people around us
- A strong and comprehensive Modern Foreign Language (MFL) curriculum that not only teaches pupils a European language (French) but also promotes and celebrates (French) culture and heritage
- Actively delivering a robust Forest Schools curriculum
- Promoting inter-generational activities that enrich pupils knowledge and experiences (Community Christmas lunch, Futures Day, our work with charities, etc...)
- Providing enriching and unique life experiences through the HEARTS Promise

### **Monitoring and Review:**

The planning and coordination of SMSC at Hilltop Junior School are the responsibility of the SMSC and PSHE subject leader, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in the subject and by providing a strategic lead and direction for SMSC
- Completes an annual action plan that is reviewed and evaluated termly (three times per year) which is also overseen by the Head of School
- Reports to the Local Advisory Board (LAB) at least once per year (but more if possible), sharing the current strengths and areas for development in the subject
- Speaks to pupils about the different elements of SMSC and uses this to inform future short, medium and long term planning
- Contributes to Trust-wide resourcing and planning, sharing best practice and up-to-date pedagogy
- Uses allocated time (PPA or leadership time) to review the planning and impact of SMSC (and to a wider extent PSHE) lessons, evaluate the evidence of children's work and monitor learning environments and school displays
- Holistically review the schools work, ensuring it is regularly reflected externally and is of prominence (on newsletters, websites and/or any school-used social media platforms)

The quality of teaching and learning in SMSC is monitored and evaluated by the subject leader, senior leadership team, Directors of Learning and Lead Practitioners (who work across the Trust) as well as the Head of School.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated at least every three years.

### **Additional (Link) Documentation:**

For further guidance on SMSC at Hilltop Junior School the following documents exist to provide additional information:

- Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct
- Votes for Schools curriculum (additional information about Votes for Schools can be viewed here <https://www.votesforschools.com/>)
- SMSC and PSHE action plan (Hilltop Junior School specific)



- Assembly rota (termly) with themes identified
- SEF (School Evaluation Form) and SIP (School Improvement Plan)
- PSHE progression map and other related medium/long term planning
- HEARTS curriculum overviews and related long term planning, including subject policies (ie. English, Humanities, etc...)
- RSE policy
- Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Exclusion policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education policy
- Equality Statement and Objectives
- Community Cohesion policy
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy
- Wellbeing Charter