

Bentley Wood High School Statement on British Values

British Values

Bentley Wood High School is committed to serving its community and surrounding areas. It recognises 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 belief, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, or similar. It seeks to serve all.

We understand the promotion of British values as an element of our SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) education and development at Bentley Wood.

We will encourage and support all our students in their journey:

- To realise their full potential.
- To have the highest expectations for their future.
- To enjoy a fulfilling life.
- To share an ethos of respect for themselves and others

The school embraces the belief that at the heart of a modern ever-changing community is the acceptance of key British values, which it has a responsibility to promote. In doing so, our learners will be able to grow as individuals and citizens within the community and country in which they live. We recognise and respect difference, while also recognising what unites us - our shared country, community, culture, and values.

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

According to the Government, *“actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values. Attempts to promote systems that undermine fundamental British values would be completely at odds with schools’ duty to provide SMSC.”**

Similarly, according to the Government’s recently published Prevent Duty Guidance (2023), *“schools and further education settings support learners to have the knowledge, skills and*

*values that will prepare them to be citizens in modern Britain. As part of this, in England, they are required to actively 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 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 sections below outline samples of when and where such British Values are shared. The list is not exhaustive, and represents only some of what we do.

The Equality Act and Protected Characteristics

Teaching of protected characteristics within the PSHE/RSE curriculum

Inclusivity is at the heart of the curriculum at Bentley Wood High School. We ensure that all students are aware of the Equality Act and the nine protected characteristics and that it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of them, or for any other reason.

Students are taught about British Values, equality, and protected characteristics across the curriculum, as reflected in our ‘Equality in the Curriculum’ document. All staff understand it is our duty to foster equality and fair treatment for all, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, and so on. However, there is a particular focus on these areas in PSHE/RSE and in our weekly ‘Wise Thoughts’ discussions (a key plank of our SMSC education strategy). Teaching about these issues at Bentley Wood is age appropriate.

Our curriculum is powerful. We believe our curriculum helps our students grow into civic-minded, knowledgeable, and respectful people, prepared to be citizens of modern Britain. All our subjects teach about protected characteristics and British values at various points in their curricula as will be shown below.

Freedom of speech and of opinion

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.

Students have the opportunity to guide school conversations and foci through various leadership groups. For example, our Human Rights Ambassadors regularly guide our Wise

Thoughts whole-school discussions, as do our Mental Health Ambassadors on issues of wellbeing, highlighting issues which they want to focus on.

Similarly, our School Council members represent each Form. The Council meets regularly and students have the opportunity for their voices to be heard by raising and discussing issues. We arrive at solutions to any concerns through open and solution-focussed dialogues. The council members for each year group are voted for by their Form. 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 at KS3 study the change in power over time between the monarchy and the people, and in KS4 they study America and the ‘Great Society’, including the social policies of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson relating to poverty, education and health. In Philosophy, all Y11s study a unit on ‘Human Rights and Social Justice’. This includes human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, social justice, and issues to do with exploitation and the responsibilities, if any, that come with wealth and poverty.

To give students an exercise in democracy in action, we run elections for Harrow Youth Parliament. We also run internal ‘mock’ elections at the time of national elections. Our Human Rights Ambassadors help to organise and count votes.

Members of our Debate Club, as well as some of our Year 10s, have attended Model United Nations events where they learn about international politics, how the United Nations works, and how to respectfully debate with others.

School rules apply to all pupils equally

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, all Year 8

students study a unit in Philosophy / RS (*'The 'Iliad' Odyssey'*) where they are introduced to different ethical 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. Through this, students are taught "to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law"*. They study Just War Theory and apply it to international conflicts. In Latin, students read Suetonius' extract on Julius Caesar's death, learn about the unpopularity of dictatorship, and about the political rights of men and women. In History lessons, students learn about the rule of law in Britain over the course of history. In Geography, students at KS4 study development of societies and corruption. 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 and rules, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves, and the consequences when laws and rules are broken. For example, we explain that there are safeguarding consequences when a student breaks a rule and is absent from a lesson without informing staff. 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.

Pupils are actively encouraged to make choices and accept responsibility

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 PSHCE lessons. Liberty is examined in many areas of the curriculum. For example, in GCSE Philosophy & R.S., students study the free will and determinism debate, and think about whether we are in control of our lives, or whether our biology, genes, and background are. They learn in Year 11 how liberty can be taken away from people in human trafficking, and how it can be undermined through exploitative labour practices.

The practice of 'restorative justice' is practised by the school, when appropriate. 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, Form Captains, Human Rights Ambassadors, Mental Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors, History and other subject Ambassadors, and School Council Representatives.

All staff model respectful behaviour towards each other

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. We all value 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.

We encourage mutual respect through our curriculum. For example, in Year 7 and 8 Computing students study e-safety and cyberbullying where they think about different ways to react to content they see online which they do not agree with, particularly in reference to social media posting. In Food students prepare a range of dishes that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity. Students plan and prepare for dietary needs of different groups of people.

We run a Debate Club in which students respectfully debate a variety of issues, many drawn from current affairs. In many lessons, ‘thinking hard’ discussions occur where students learn that we can respectfully disagree and discuss with people who have very different views to our own.

Being kind and generous to each other

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

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 PSHCE, 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.

In Philosophy & R.S. students study the concept of rights, including such rights as freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression, in a unit and Human Rights and Social Justice in Year 11. 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. In Health and Social Care, throughout KS4, a variety of case studies are used to show pupils how to support and help vulnerable people from a variety of different backgrounds. The teaching of the 6Cs and care values, provide pupils with skills needed to interact with others in a kind and thoughtful manner. This also helps the students to learn from people who are different from themselves.

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.

^{*} **‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools’, Department for Education, 2014**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a758c9540f0b6397f35f469/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

^{**} **‘Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>