

Whipman Woods Flying High Academy



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC Policy)

2026-2027

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

1. Purpose and scope

At Whipman Woods Flying High Academy, the **spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)** development of every child is central to school life. SMSC supports our ambition to provide an ambitious, high-quality education in which children develop as knowledgeable, compassionate and responsible people with a genuine love of learning.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors and visitors. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for implementation. The named SMSC lead is **Mrs Megan Leivars**, supported by curriculum and subject leaders, the SENDCo and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). All adults contribute to SMSC through the curriculum, relationships, routines, language, expectations and example they set.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where statutory guidance, inspection expectations, school context or practice developments make this necessary.

2. What is SMSC and why is it important?

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is concerned with the development of the whole child. It helps pupils understand themselves, other people and the world around them; develop values and principles; build positive relationships; appreciate diversity; and become thoughtful, respectful and responsible members of their communities.

SMSC is not a standalone subject and is not confined to assemblies, PSHE or RE. It is developed through the whole experience of school: the curriculum pupils study, the questions they explore, the relationships they form, the choices they make, the responsibilities they are given, the enrichment they experience and the way they learn to engage respectfully with people whose experiences, beliefs and perspectives may differ from their own.

This is particularly significant at Whipman Woods Flying High Academy because we recognise that childhood is a formative period in which pupils are developing their identity, sense of belonging, understanding of right and wrong, relationships and view of the wider world. High-quality SMSC provision helps pupils progressively to:

- develop confidence, self-awareness, curiosity, imagination and the capacity for reflection;
- recognise right and wrong, consider moral and ethical questions and understand that actions have consequences;
- develop empathy, cooperation and the skills needed to build healthy relationships and resolve disagreement respectfully;
- understand and appreciate their own heritage, culture and identity while learning about and respecting the diversity of others;
- encounter different beliefs, cultures, perspectives and ways of life in an age-appropriate way;
- understand their rights alongside their responsibilities towards others;
- participate positively in school, local community and wider society; and
- understand and live out the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths **and beliefs**.

At Whipman Woods, SMSC connects closely with our curriculum principles of **Belonging, Excellence and Empowerment**. It supports children not simply to achieve academically, but to develop the

character, knowledge, understanding and confidence they need for the next stage of education and for life in modern Britain and the wider world.

3. Statutory and guidance framework

This policy reflects the school's duties and current national guidance. In particular, it has regard to:

- section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the requirement for a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for later life;
- the Academies Act 2010 and the academy's funding and curriculum responsibilities;
- Department for Education advice, Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools (2014), which remains current unless amended or withdrawn;
- the Equality Act 2010, including the school's duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations;
- the Children Act 2004 and the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities;
- the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years;
- the Prevent duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023);
- the statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance, including the revised guidance that applies from 1 September 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026; and
- Ofsted's state-funded schools inspection toolkit and operating guidance for use from September 2026.

The school will update this policy where relevant statutory requirements or national guidance change.

4. Our aims

Through a coherent whole-school approach to SMSC, we aim to ensure that pupils:

- develop self-knowledge, self-esteem, confidence, curiosity and a sense of belonging;
- develop an understanding of right and wrong and learn to make thoughtful, responsible choices;
- understand how their behaviour affects other people and accept responsibility for their actions;
- develop respect, empathy and the ability to listen to, discuss and disagree with others appropriately;
- appreciate their own culture and heritage and develop informed respect for the cultures, faiths, beliefs and experiences of others;
- understand diversity and equality, including respect for people with protected characteristics;
- develop the social skills and confidence to participate and contribute positively in different groups and communities;
- understand the fundamental British values and how these are reflected in everyday life;
- are equipped to recognise prejudice, discrimination, harmful influence and unsafe or extremist ideas; and
- are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

5. The four dimensions of SMSC

5.1 Spiritual development

Spiritual development is about pupils' ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, and perspective on life; their knowledge of and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values; their sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world; their use of imagination and creativity; and their willingness to reflect on experiences.

At Whipman Woods this is developed through RE, literature, art, music, science, the natural world, philosophical enquiry questions, assemblies, moments of reflection and opportunities to consider questions of meaning, identity, awe and wonder.

5.2 Moral development

Moral development is about pupils' ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, apply this understanding to their own lives, understand the consequences of behaviour, and investigate and offer reasoned views about moral and ethical issues.

Pupils are taught that thoughtful moral reasoning includes considering evidence, consequences, rights, responsibilities and the impact of choices on others. Our behaviour culture supports pupils to repair harm, learn from mistakes and make increasingly responsible choices.

5.3 Social development

Social development is about pupils using a range of social skills in different contexts; working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds; participating in different communities and social settings; cooperating well with others; resolving conflict; and contributing positively to life in modern Britain.

Pupil leadership, collaborative learning, play, clubs, visits, community activity and democratic processes all provide opportunities to practise these skills.

5.4 Cultural development

Cultural development is about pupils understanding and appreciating the cultural influences that shape their own heritage and that of others; participating in and responding to artistic, musical, sporting, scientific, technological and cultural opportunities; and developing informed interest in and respect for cultural diversity at local, national and global levels.

We seek to broaden pupils' horizons so that their knowledge of the world is not limited by their immediate experience. Diversity is explored through authentic curriculum content rather than isolated or tokenistic events.

6. School ethos and the lived experience of SMSC

The promotion of SMSC is fundamental to our wider aims of education: supporting children not only to achieve academically, but to develop the values, character, understanding and skills they need to thrive as individuals and contribute positively to society. Our school values are communicated explicitly through teaching and implicitly through the culture pupils experience each day. The way adults speak to

children, respond to mistakes, resolve disagreement, model curiosity and treat one another communicates what the school values.

Everyone who attends or visits Whipman Woods - children, staff, parents, carers and visitors - should be treated as an individual with dignity. We expect relationships to be characterised by kindness, respect, responsibility and safety. Children are supported to understand that belonging to a community brings both rights and responsibilities.

7. SMSC through the curriculum

SMSC is woven through the curriculum so that it is an authentic feature of the fabric of the school's educational offer. Curriculum planning identifies meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter ideas, perspectives, people, places and experiences that broaden understanding and develop reflection, reasoning and respectful discussion.

Our curriculum is structured around enquiry questions that naturally create opportunities for philosophical discussion, critical thinking and authentic outcomes. For example, an enquiry such as **'How can we be influenced?'** enables pupils to consider historical, religious, family, peer and community influence. An enquiry such as **'Do our differences define us?'** can connect geography, history, civil rights, PSHE, diversity and inclusion.

PSHE/Relationships and Health Education, RE, English, history, geography, science, art, music, PE and computing all make distinctive contributions to SMSC. Subject leaders consider SMSC where it arises naturally within their discipline; the school does not require artificial SMSC links to be added to every lesson.

The curriculum map showing SMSC coverage and progression across year groups is maintained by the curriculum/SMSC lead and reviewed annually. The SMSC calendar and assembly themes timetable provide additional structure but do not represent the totality of the school's SMSC provision.

8. Teaching, learning and reflection

Teachers create safe, inclusive classrooms in which pupils can ask questions, explore ideas and develop reasoned views. Staff use age-appropriate language and resources, teach relevant vocabulary explicitly, model respectful disagreement and ensure that discussion does not legitimise prejudice or discriminatory attitudes.

Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and to make connections with their own experiences, values and responsibilities. Evidence of SMSC may be seen in pupils' discussion, written work, creative outcomes, behaviour, participation and decision-making.

SMSC is not a separate marking requirement. Feedback should focus on the intended curriculum learning. Where reflection, ethical reasoning, respectful argument or evaluation forms part of that intended learning, teachers may respond to it through the school's normal feedback approach.

9. Assemblies and collective reflection

Assemblies contribute to, but do not constitute, the whole of SMSC provision. They follow the school's planned themes and SMSC calendar and are designed to be inclusive, age-appropriate and relevant to our school's context and demographic.

Staff and visitors delivering assemblies should use respectful language, represent people and communities accurately, avoid stereotypes and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to think, question and reflect. Assemblies may respond to current events where this is suitable for primary-aged pupils and can be handled in a balanced, sensitive and impartial way.

10. Inclusion, SEND, EAL and disadvantage

SMSC is an entitlement for every pupil. Provision is adapted so that pupils with SEND, pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), disadvantaged pupils and other pupils who may experience barriers can participate meaningfully.

Reasonable and appropriate adaptations may include visual supports, explicit vocabulary teaching, pre-teaching, alternative methods of communication and recording, additional processing time, careful grouping, sensory or environmental adjustments and adult scaffolding. Adaptation should support access and independence rather than unnecessarily reduce ambition.

The SENDCo works with staff to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the school's wider personal development and SMSC offer. Where an individual pupil's EHCP or support plan contains relevant outcomes, provision will be aligned appropriately; SMSC objectives will not be added to EHCPs simply as a blanket policy requirement.

Leaders monitor whether disadvantaged pupils and other identified groups have equitable access to visits, clubs, pupil leadership and enrichment. Financial barriers should not prevent a pupil from accessing essential curriculum experiences; support will be considered in line with school procedures and available funding.

Pupil voice used to evaluate SMSC should include a range of pupils, including SEND, EAL and disadvantaged pupils, so that leaders understand whether the offer is experienced equitably.

11. Enrichment, community and parental engagement

Personal development is enriched through visits, visitors, clubs, performances, sport, arts, community engagement and other experiences that broaden pupils' horizons. Local and regional opportunities are used to help pupils understand their community and the wider world, including places of worship, natural environments, cultural venues and public services.

The school's SMSC calendar and relevant information about curriculum experiences will be shared with parents and carers through appropriate school communication channels. Where needed and reasonably practicable, the school will support accessibility through translated or interpreted information, accessible formats or individual communication.

Parents and carers are valued as partners. Their knowledge of family culture, language, faith, traditions and experiences can enrich pupils' understanding, while the school retains responsibility for delivering a balanced curriculum in accordance with its statutory duties.

12. Fundamental British values

Fundamental British values form an important part of pupils' SMSC and personal development, but SMSC and British values are not interchangeable. SMSC is broader: it concerns the development of the whole child across spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions. Through this wider provision, the

school actively promotes **democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect** and **tolerance** of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Promotion of British values is age-appropriate and rooted in pupils' lived experience. It includes teaching pupils that these values protect the rights and freedoms of all people and that respect for others includes people whose backgrounds, beliefs, identities or protected characteristics differ from their own.

12.1 Democracy

Pupil voice is a significant part of our ethos. Children have opportunities to contribute through School and Class Councils, pupil leadership and ambassador roles, questionnaires, learning conversations and, where appropriate, involvement in staff recruitment and wider trust pupil-parliament activity. Elections and representative processes help pupils understand that democracy involves participation, listening, representation, accountability and respect for different views.

Impact: As children progress through school, they are increasingly be able to explain how representatives are chosen, how pupil voice can influence decisions, why people may hold different views and why democratic participation carries responsibilities as well as rights.

12.2 The rule of law

The importance of rules and laws is reinforced through the curriculum, behaviour expectations and assemblies. Children learn why rules and laws exist, how they can protect people and communities, and that actions have consequences. Visits or input from public services may strengthen this understanding.

Impact: Children are increasingly able to explain why communities need fair rules and laws, distinguish between a rule and a personal preference, understand consequences, and describe how the school helps people repair harm and learn from poor choices.

12.3 Individual liberty

Within a safe and supportive environment, children are encouraged to make choices and develop independence. They learn about rights, personal freedoms, boundaries, consent, online safety and the responsibility to exercise freedom without harming the rights of others.

Impact: Children are increasingly able to describe choices they can make, explain how to make those choices safely - including online - identify trusted adults and recognise that individual liberty exists alongside responsibility and respect for others.

12.4 Mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Respect runs through the heart of school life at Whipman Woods. Children learn that people may have different faiths, beliefs, cultures, family structures, identities, experiences and viewpoints. The school aims to move beyond passive tolerance towards informed understanding, respectful curiosity, inclusion and recognition of equal dignity.

RE, PSHE, literature, history, geography, assemblies, visits and wider curriculum experiences enable pupils to encounter diversity meaningfully. Prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory language are always challenged.

Impact: Children are increasingly able to listen respectfully to different perspectives, explain why discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable, discuss similarities and differences without stereotyping, and draw on curriculum learning to show informed respect for people whose lives or beliefs differ from their own.

13. Equality, prejudice and safeguarding

SMSC supports the school's equality and safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught, in an age-appropriate way, to recognise prejudice, discrimination, bullying, harmful stereotypes and language that targets people because of identity or difference.

Any prejudice-related incident, discriminatory language, hate-related concern or safeguarding concern linked to radicalisation or extremism will be recorded using the school's agreed recording system and responded to in line with the Behaviour Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Equality duties and Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy as appropriate.

Concerns that a pupil may be susceptible to radicalisation are safeguarding concerns and must be passed to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider the concern in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and the Prevent duty. Restorative work may form part of the response to lower-level incidents, but it does not replace safeguarding action, sanctions or external referral where these are required.

The school will not promote biased political views. Where political or controversial issues arise, staff will take reasonable steps to ensure pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views, in an age-appropriate manner.

14. Staff knowledge and professional development

All staff share responsibility for creating the culture in which SMSC develops. Relevant expectations are addressed through induction, safeguarding training, curriculum and PSHE development, Prevent training and other professional development according to role and need.

The school will ensure staff knowledge is refreshed at appropriate intervals and when guidance or identified need changes. This policy does not require a separate annual standalone SMSC course where the required knowledge is more effectively secured through wider professional development. Training and induction records are maintained through the school's established systems.

Subject and middle leaders are expected to understand the contribution their areas make to pupils' wider development and to support staff in identifying meaningful, progressive opportunities rather than superficial curriculum links.

15. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

Leaders evaluate the impact of SMSC rather than simply counting activities. The SMSC lead, supported by SLT and relevant leaders, will monitor provision across the year using a proportionate range of evidence, which may include:

- curriculum planning, work/sequence sampling and learning walks;
- pupil voice, including the experiences of SEND, EAL, disadvantaged and other relevant groups;
- discussion with staff and subject leaders;

- pupils' participation in leadership, enrichment and community opportunities;
- behaviour, bullying, prejudice-related and safeguarding information where relevant;
- attendance and participation information where it helps leaders understand barriers to inclusion;
- evaluation of assemblies, PSHE/Relationships and Health Education and RE; and
- feedback from parents, governors, visitors or community partners where appropriate.

Success is not defined by a single score or by expecting behaviour incidents automatically to reduce. Leaders look for a coherent body of evidence showing that pupils are engaged, included and increasingly knowledgeable; can reflect and reason; understand rights and responsibilities; demonstrate respectful behaviour; recognise prejudice; understand fundamental British values; and can apply their learning to age-appropriate situations.

Findings are used to identify strengths, gaps in representation or progression, groups experiencing barriers, and priorities for curriculum or staff development. Relevant findings inform personal development reporting to the Local Governing Body and school improvement planning.

16. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher:

- has overall responsibility for the implementation and effectiveness of this policy;
- ensures SMSC is integral to curriculum, culture, safeguarding and personal development;
- ensures leaders have appropriate time, information and professional development to fulfil their responsibilities; and
- reports relevant assurance to governors.

SMSC Lead: coordinates the whole-school approach and maintains oversight of the SMSC calendar and curriculum map;

- supports subject leaders to identify progressive and authentic opportunities for SMSC;
- undertakes monitoring and evaluates impact, including for identified pupil groups;
- identifies development priorities and supports staff knowledge; and
- contributes to reporting to SLT and governors.

Subject/PSHE leaders:

- ensure relevant SMSC opportunities are coherent and age-appropriate within their areas;
- support staff with subject-specific approaches to discussion, vocabulary and inclusion; and
- contribute evidence to monitoring and curriculum review.

SENDCo and DSL

The SENDCo advises on access, reasonable adjustments and inclusion. The DSL ensures safeguarding and Prevent concerns are managed through the school's safeguarding procedures. These roles support SMSC but do not transfer responsibility away from class teachers or other leaders.

All Staff

- model respectful, inclusive and responsible behaviour;

- create safe opportunities for reflection, discussion and respectful disagreement;
- challenge prejudice and discriminatory language;
- make appropriate adaptations so pupils can participate; and
- report safeguarding concerns in accordance with school procedures.

Local Governing Body

- holds leaders to account for the effectiveness and inclusivity of SMSC provision;
- receives appropriate assurance about personal development, British values, equality and safeguarding; and
- reviews and approves the policy in accordance with school arrangements.

17. Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside the school's current:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy;
- Equality / Equality and Diversity Policy and equality objectives;
- PSHE / Relationships and Health Education (and, where applicable, Sex Education) Policy;
- Religious Education Policy or curriculum documentation;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report;
- Educational Visits / Visits and Educational Trips procedures;
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements;
- Anti-Bullying Policy; and
- Prevent risk assessment and associated safeguarding procedures.

The current versions of relevant policies and curriculum documents are made available through the school's established website, intranet or staff systems as appropriate.

18. Version control and review

The SMSC calendar and assembly themes timetable are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the curriculum, school community, significant events and emerging opportunities. The curriculum map showing SMSC coverage and progression is maintained by the curriculum/SMSC lead and reviewed at least annually.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher/SMSC lead and Local Governing Body, or earlier where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, inspection expectations or school practice.

Appendix 1 - Key national references (current at August 2026)

Source	Document / legislation	Status / date
Department for Education	Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools	2014
Department for Education	Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - revised statutory guidance for introduction 1 September 2026	2025/26
Department for Education	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - in force from 1 September 2026	2026
Home Office	Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023)	in force from 31 December 2023
Department for Education / Department of Health	Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years	current guidance
Ofsted	State-funded schools inspection toolkit and operating guidance for use from September 2026	2026
UK Parliament	Equality Act 2010; Education Act 2002; Children Act 2004; Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	legislation

Note: National guidance changes over time. Leaders should use the current published version when applying this policy.