

## St Joseph's College - British Values & Catholic Ethos

The government set out its definition of British Values in its 'Prevent Strategy' (2011). This strategy is designed to prevent the extremism and radicalisation of young people. British values are stated as:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Though it has acquired a greater urgency in recent months, the importance of schools upholding British values is not new:

- *The 2008 National Curriculum states:*  
"The school curriculum should contribute to the development of pupils' sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages of Britain's diverse society and of the local, national, European, Commonwealth and global dimensions of their lives."
- *The 2011 Teachers' Standards state:*  
"Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and the tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs."

Government guidance requires schools to 'actively promote fundamental British values' as part of their provision of SMSC. These values sit alongside the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and ensure schools:

- Enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Enable students to distinguish right for wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely
- Enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- Encourage respect for other people
- Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

St Joseph's College recognises the importance of ensuring young people develop to be well rounded, tolerant individuals alongside achieving academic excellence. We are a Catholic School inspired in our

mission by the vision of life that is found in the teaching of the Gospel, the Church, and in Jesus, who came that we 'may have life and have it to the full.'

In striving to fulfil this mission, we continue the work of the Christian Brothers and its founder Blessed Edmund Rice. This means that we are guided by our mission to 'act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God'. In practice this means that we constantly strive to provide meaning and context for understanding the importance of British values: Gospel values and British values are not separate entities. British values are derived from Christian values: they intrinsically coexist and overlap.

Pope Francis reminds us of this link between Christian and British values as "what we are called to respect in each person is first of all his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices. We are therefore called to think, speak and write respectfully of the other, not only in his presence, but always and everywhere, avoiding unfair criticism or defamation. Families, schools, religious teaching and all forms of media have a role to play in achieving this goal." (2013)

"St Joseph's aims for its students to become responsible, compassionate, tolerant, courageous, non-judgemental citizens concerned about social justice, living their lives with integrity." (*OFSTED 2014*)

## **British Values in Practice at St Joseph's College**

The students of St Joseph's College are exposed to fundamental British values through such activities as:

### **Democracy**

- RE Curriculum – Human rights in the UK and their importance. Equality and justice, racial equality and racial prejudice.
- Our active student councils in Key Stages 3,4,5.
- Visits during local democracy week.
- Election of student leadership roles.
- Citizenship Curriculum.
- Government and Politics is offered as an A Level option at KS5.
- Regular student questionnaires throughout the academic year.

### **The Rule of Law**

- RE Curriculum – The need for law and justice. Justice, racial equality and racial prejudice.
- The school day constantly teaches students the necessity to follow rules
- Regular visits and contact from authorities such as the police, road safety officers, community cohesion officers.
- Code of conduct, created by the student body.
- Home school agreement, agreed by students and parents.
- Clear, robust and consistently enforced behaviour policy.
- Key stage 3,4,5 assemblies

## **Individual liberty**

- RE Curriculum – Religion, human rights and social justice - human dignity and religious freedom, human rights, rights and responsibilities.
- RE Curriculum – Religion, relationships and families – human sexuality and its expression.
- Teaching of rights and responsibilities through such mechanisms as E-Safety and PHSE curriculum.
- Participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Activities of the Chaplaincy team and its sub-groups.
- School retreats in years 7,8,9
- Vocations day for year 10.

## **Mutual respect**

- RE Curriculum – Religion, relationships and families – gender equality, gender prejudice and discrimination, equality of women and men.
- RE Curriculum – Teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation.
- All staff model respectful behaviour, towards each other, students and parents.
- All staff and students have a collective responsibility for the school environment.
- Active role of the school's anti-bullying ambassadors
- Implementation of the school's accessibility plan to ensure a totally inclusive approach.
- Year 8 Decipher programme

## **Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.**

- RE Curriculum – Judaism- beliefs, teachings and practices.
- RE Curriculum – Differences among Christians in their attitudes to other religions.
- Immersion programme in Africa / India.
- Charitable work with local / national asylum seeking projects.
- General RE programme in Key Stage 5.
- Year 8 PSHE day.
- Edmund Rice International Ambassador role.

These activities are not an exhaustive list but indicate some of the vehicles St Joseph's College utilises in order to educate our young people holistically. More comprehensive details can be found in the school's SMSC audit.

"The school's welcoming and inspiring atmosphere supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development...They have a keen awareness of right and wrong." (*OFSTED 2014*)