



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2026

Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Academy Trust

WORK HARD | BE KIND | AIM HIGH

Section 1 - Our vision for 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development'

Our vision is to provide a personalised education in a safe environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and excellence in learning, through which we will develop together as life-long learners and socially responsible citizens and to 'promote fundamental British values.'

We recognise that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural, ('SMSC') element of students' education is crucial to their development as individuals, allowing them to take their rightful place in their community as local, national and global citizens, including their relationships and interactions online.

'SMSC' is about the values students are encouraged to hold and their attitude towards learning, knowledge and society. Through 'SMSC' we seek to develop attitudes and values that will enable students to become responsible and active members of society, including online citizens.

We are committed to the 'SMSC' development of all students at Hillcrest School. Our aim is to impact on our students':

- **Spiritual** development so that they are creative in the way they approach challenges and are critical and reflective of their outcomes; are inquisitive and enjoy their learning and are accepting of others and embrace the wide range of cultures within the local, national and global communities.
- **Moral** development so that they can recognise the difference between right and wrong; are respectful of each other; are willing to debate and are able to discuss moral and ethical issues openly.
- **Social** development so that they can develop highly effective social skills including collaboration and resilience; are happy to work and socialise with students from different religious, ethnic, and socio-economic background and take an active part in running the school. Student voice is central to the process of self-evaluation and school improvement.
- **Cultural** development so as they are excited to investigate their own and others' heritage; participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities and understand, accept and respect diversity.

The Character Education curriculum plays a key role in SMSC development of all students through its focus on moral, civic, performance and intellectual virtues. This curriculum underpins our themes of the week, form programme activities and assembly programme (see appendix 1).

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff at Hillcrest School. This policy aims to ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of our values and principles and that there is a consistent approach to the delivery of 'SMSC' through the curriculum, teaching and learning and the wider school community. Our core beliefs are underpinned by the fundamental British Values, and we seek to promote them throughout the curriculum, particularly through our Life Skills and Character Education provision in school.

Section 2 - Defining ‘Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural’ development

The **spiritual** development of students is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in 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.

The **moral** development of students is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, including their behaviour online and the appropriate use of generative AI
- recognition of legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions, including their conduct online
- 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.

The **social** development of students 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 religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by 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.

The **cultural** development of students is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- 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, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national, global and online communities.

Section 3 - Promoting ‘Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development’

The promotion of ‘SMSC’ helps children develop personal qualities, which are valued in a civilised society; for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, and self-respect.

We seek to teach these qualities across the curriculum and throughout school life and link them closely to our school values and ethos. These qualities are also embedded and reinforced through our whole school curriculum, Life Skills curriculum, values-based assemblies and the Character Education curriculum delivered during form time programme. (see appendix 1 and 2) This provision is actively supported by the range of external visitors who deliver assemblies, workshops and training courses to our students.

Departments complete an annual curriculum audit to demonstrate the nature, extent and coverage of SMSC provision throughout the school curriculum.

At Hillcrest School ‘SMSC’ is effectively promoted through:

- our whole school ethos
- outstanding pastoral care, guidance and support
- Pastoral Curriculum (incorporating national, international, school events and celebrations);
- our Behaviour for Learning Policy, and Code of Conduct
- online safety is embedded in the pastoral and wider curriculum
- the effective analysis of behaviour, including bullying and discriminatory behaviour
- year group identity to promote a sense of identity and community
- a broad and balanced curriculum
- lessons planned to explicitly promote SMSC
- values-based assemblies linked to the weekly SMSC Theme of the Week
- student Leadership, consultation and volunteering, i.e. – College Prefects, Student Parliament, Sports Champions, Peer Mentors, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- all students attend daily tutor sessions with their form tutor. The sessions allow students to reflect, discuss and explore issues which affect school, community, country as well as world issues
- daily character education form period activities
- reward and recognition events, including achievement assemblies held every term
- involvement in fundraising and support for a variety of charities
- planning of and participation in Culture Week, Christmas Market and Summer Fair
- enrichment activities and school clubs
- careers education programme
- school performing arts productions
- a Personal, Social, Health Education (Life Skills) curriculum
- annual British Values Week
- a programme of social and academic mentoring for all pupils
- established links with community partners, including local churches and mosques
- effective induction and transition arrangements for students
- RE lessons, including those focusing on philosophy and ethics
- effective parental engagement, (e.g. parent forums, regular communication
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- an ethos of 'Growth Mindset' whereby all students should put learning, and developing in learning, at the forefront of all they do. The emphasis is on learning at all costs; confronting mistakes; hard work and effort as keys to success.
- maintaining positive relationships with the wider community, (e.g. LRG, Lighthouse, West Midlands Police)
- local, national and international visits and visitors to school.

'SMSC' is also developed through the school's approach to 'Worship'. Students, of many different faiths, access our Prayer Room daily. It provides a safe space for students to meet in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests, as well as praying.

Section 4 - The leadership and monitoring of 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development'

The provision and impact of 'SMSC' education at Hillcrest School will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- SMSC provision map: opportunities for SMSC education will be mapped across the school, considering the broad nature of these opportunities. Lesson planning, tutorials, assemblies/collective worship, visits, charity, sporting and other whole school events and all other relevant opportunities will be included.
- SMSC training: the whole staff are to receive input into the significance and specifics of SMSC provision, delivery and impact. This will be linked in with whole-school ethos and vision.
- SMSC Documentation: Steven Connor-Hemming, (Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral) will take responsibility for the collation of and regular review of the SMSC policy, map and tracking procedures.

The impact of SMSC provision

Whole school indicators - The following will be monitored with reference to 'SMSC' impact:

- The number of internal and external suspensions
- The number of incidents of reported child-on-child abuse, i.e. - racism, sexism, sexual harassment and violence, homophobia, bullying (including cyber-bullying)
- The number of concerns about radicalisation and extremist behaviour, including online
- The number of Community Awards issued to celebrate contribution to the school community
- The number of pupils participating in extra-curricular activities and events
- The role of college prefects, peer mentors and anti-bullying ambassadors in supporting whole school initiatives and decision-making processes
- The number and SEN/Pupil Premium/EAL status of pupils who have attended visits and who access school clubs
- The number and SEN/Pupil Premium/EAL status of pupils who take positions of responsibility
- Attendance figures
- The number of reported Smoothwall violations (online).

Teaching and Learning:

In planning lessons, teachers are aware of the need to plan opportunities to develop a wide variety of 'SMSC' needs and promote British Values. The observation of lessons will include a comment on the 'SMSC' content. In addition, the development of 'SMSC' through Life Skills, Character Education and the SMSC programme of study will be quality assured by the Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral).

Student voice:

Student voice data, including regular surveys, will continue to be collected and analysed, and linked back to 'SMSC' priorities, taking in to account:

- Attitudes towards school and whole-school experience
- Questions of personal safety
- Barriers impacting on attendance and academic achievement
- Questions on whole-school behaviour, both in and out of lessons, and online, and the impact of this on learning and well-being
- Support and preparation for next stage of education
- Signposting and support accessible in school
- Specific questions on occurrences of child-on-child abuse, i.e. - racism, sexism, sexual harassment and violence, homophobia and bullying (including cyber-bullying).

Internal and External review:

- The impact of 'SMSC' is to be analysed and evaluated annually, in conjunction with SLT and the lead governor for 'SMSC', with input from external assessors where appropriate. 'SMSC' development will be included within the school's strategic development plan and department development plans.
- 'SMSC' has a significant role in our overall school provision to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in line with our statutory duties set out at S157 of the Education Act 2002. As such 'SMSC' contributes significantly to our work to prevent extremism and radicalisation.

Section 5 - Promoting fundamental British Values through 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural' development

In the document "Promoting fundamental British values as part of 'SMSC' in schools": Departmental advice for maintained schools - November 2014" the DfE state:

- "Schools should 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. This can help schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the requirements of section 78 of the Education Act 2002, in their provision of SMSC.
- 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.
- The Teachers' Standards expect teachers to uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school. This includes not undermining fundamental British values.

Through our 'SMSC' Policy, Hillcrest School demonstrates its commitment to ensuring all students:

- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- distinguish right from wrong, including online behaviour, the age of criminal responsibility and to respect the civil and criminal law
- 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
- acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services
- acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- develop an understanding of the laws around protected characteristics
- encourage respect for other people; and 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.

Through our 'SMSC' Policy, Hillcrest School demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that all students know and understand:

- how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law and that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- the importance of identifying and combatting all forms of discrimination and prejudice
- the impact of online behaviours including image and information sharing, deepfakes, AI-generated imagery and online sexual abuse.
- how to identify misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories online, and use reliable sources to make informed choices.

Section 6 - Monitoring

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply. We will review this policy annually.

Policy Reviewed - September 2025

Policy Review - September 2026

Appendix 1 - Hillcrest School form programme and assembly themes (Autumn Term 2025-26)

Moral Virtue		Civic Virtue	Performance Virtue	Intellectual Virtue
Week	Virtue	Characteristic	Theme	
1 Sept	Moral	Respect	Hillcrest Values and Expectations 2025-26	
8 Sept	Moral	Respect	Expectations: How do we respect ourselves and others by working hard, being kind and aiming high?	
15 Sept	Moral	Respect	Second Hand September: How can we respect the environment by recycling/reusing clothing?	
22 Sept	Moral	Respect	International Day of Birmingham: How does the city promote mutual respect between communities?	
29 Sept	Moral	Resilience	Black History Month: How do historical experiences demonstrate and celebrate resilience?	
6 OCT	Moral	Resilience	World Mental Health Day: How can we become more resilient individually and collectively?	
13 OCT	Moral	Resilience	Anti-Slavery Day: How can people become resilient to the risks of human trafficking?	
20 OCT	Moral	Resilience	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: How can we be more resilient next half-term?	
3 Nov	Civic	Responsibility	Social Media Kindness Month: How can we become more responsible online?	
10 Nov	Civic	Responsibility	Remembrance Day: Why do we have a responsibility to protect rights and freedom?	
17 Nov	Civic	Responsibility	Anti-Bullying Week: Why do we have a responsibility to stand up to all forms of bullying?	
24 Nov	Civic	Citizenship	International Volunteer Day: How can we help the local, national and international community?	
1 Dec	Civic	Citizenship	International Day of People with Disabilities: How can we ensure people with disabilities can play an active role in our society?	
8 Dec	Civic	Citizenship	Human Rights Day: What actions can we take to ensure the human rights of all global citizens are respected?	
15 Dec	Civic	Citizenship	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: How can we contribute more to our school community next half-term?	

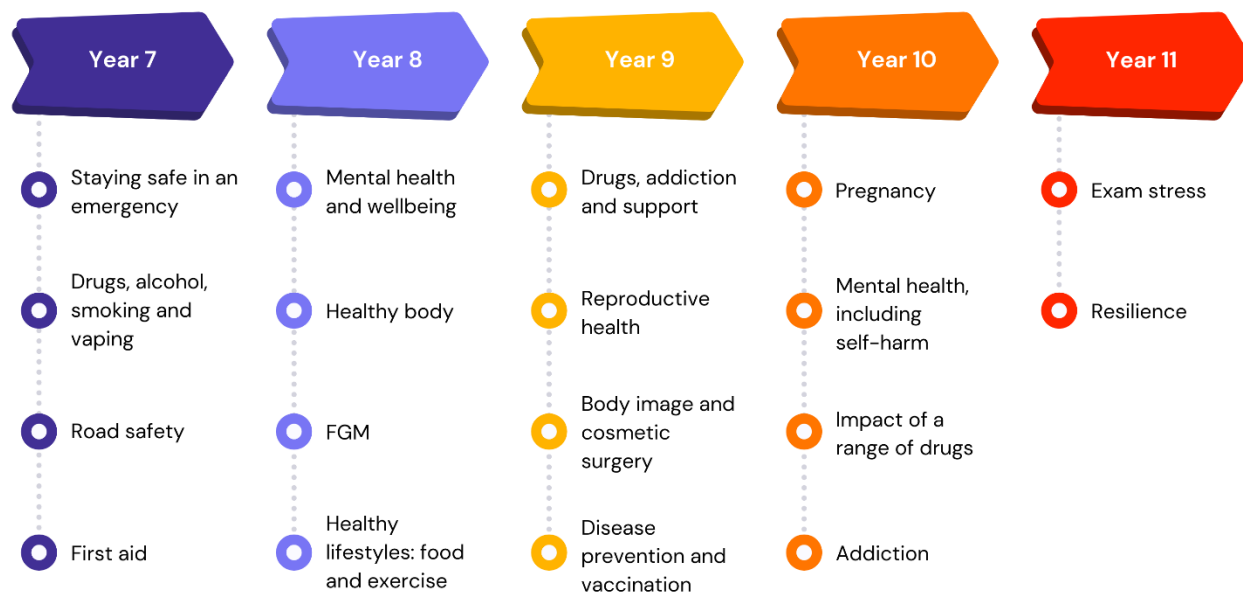
Hillcrest School form programme and assembly themes (Spring Term 2025-26)

Week	Virtue	Characteristic	Theme
5 Jan	Performance	Leadership through self-reflection	Revisit Hillcrest Values and Expectations: How can we become leaders of our own learning?
12 Jan	Performance	Leadership through survival	Malala Yousef: What impact has Malala's leadership continue to have on the rights of girls around the world?
19 Jan	Performance	Leadership through inspiration	Martin Luther King Day: What can we learn about leadership from the story of Martin Luther King?
26 Jan	Performance	Leadership through courage	Holocaust Memorial Day: Who were the key leaders in the fight against antisemitism during the Second World War?
2 Feb	Performance	Leadership through determination	LGBT History Month: 'Claim our past, Celebrate our present and Claim our Future'
9 Feb	Performance	Leadership through technology	Safer Internet Day: How is AI leading the technological revolution? What are the benefits and potential risks?
23 Feb	Intellectual	Curiosity	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: How can we become more curious learners this half-term?
2 Mar	Intellectual	Curiosity	National Careers Week / International Women's Day: How can we find out more about local labour markets and challenge stereotypes?
9 Mar	Intellectual	Curiosity	British Science Week: How do we become more curious about the world we live in?
16 Mar	Intellectual	Curiosity	World Poetry Day: Focus on poems about female empowerment – How do we develop our curiosity of the power of language?
23 Mar	Intellectual	Curiosity	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: Recap – what is it important to be curious about every aspect of the world we live in?

Hillcrest School form programme and assembly themes (Summer Term 2025-26)

Week	Virtue	Characteristic	Theme
13 Apr	Performance	Motivation	Revisit Hillcrest Values and Expectations: How does hard work ensure we succeed?
20 Apr	Performance	Motivation	World Creativity Day: How can we strive to be more active and creative thinkers?
27 Apr	Performance	Motivation	International Dance Day: How can the story of Alice Sheppard motivate us to challenge ourselves every day?
4 May	Performance	Motivation	World Press Freedom Day: How do journalists risk their lives to ensure we have free and independent news?
11 May	Performance	Motivation	World Day of Cultural Diversity: How can we challenge all forms of discrimination and show moral leadership?
18 May	Performance	Motivation	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: Recap – How have our achievements demonstrated high levels of motivation?
1 June	Moral	Courage	Pride Month: How have the LGBTQ+ community shown the courage to gain recognition for their rights?
8 June	Moral	Courage	Healthy Eating Week: How can we show a more positive attitude towards about body image?
15 June	Moral	Courage	World Refugee Day: How can we better understand the challenges faced by refugees and offer support?
22 June	Intellectual	Collaboration	World Music Day: How have artists collaborated to produce music with a clear social message?
29 June	Intellectual	Collaboration	School Diversity Month: Reflection on Hillcrest – Celebrate examples of collaboration between different communities
6 July	Intellectual	Collaboration	World Population Day: Focus on examples of female campaigners who have worked together for gender equality
13 July	Intellectual	Collaboration	Head of Year Achievement Assembly: Celebration of different forms of collaboration in school

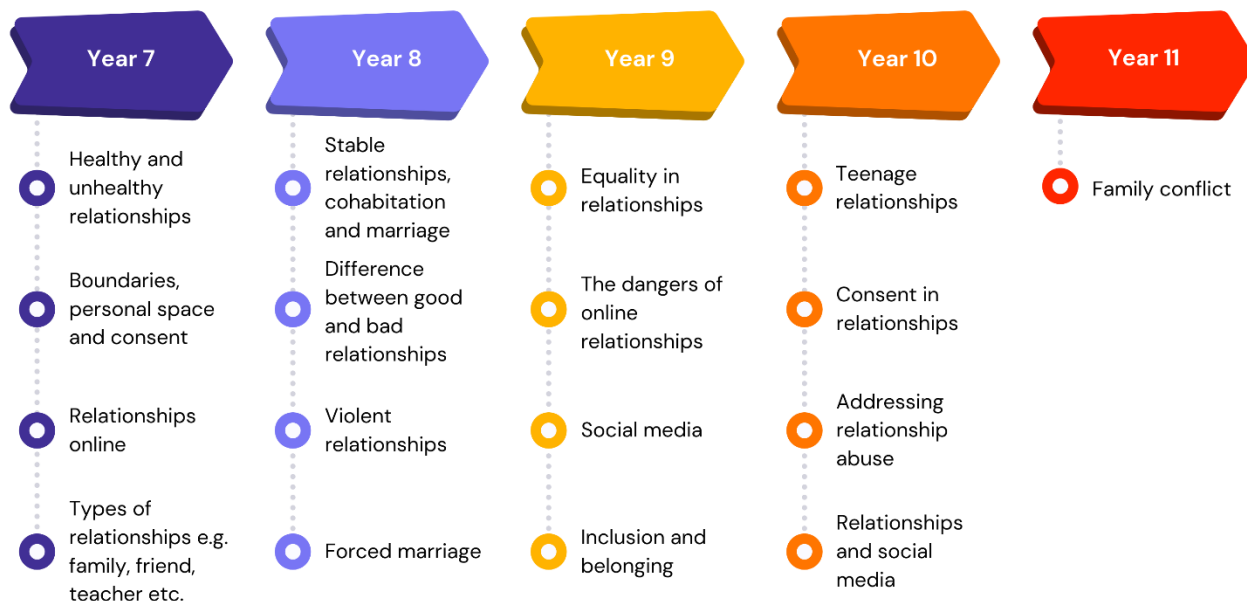
Health education



Careers and finance education



Relationships education



Community education



Sex education

