

Policy Title:	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
Policy Reference:	TOA116
Description:	This policy defines the commitment towards the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students within The Oxford Academy
Status:	Non-Statutory
Category:	Student
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Version:	V2.0
Other relevant TOA policies	None
Adopted by the Governing Body on:	6 July 2010
Date for Review:	July 2012

Change Record

Version	Date	Description
2.1		
2.2		
2.3		
2.4		

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THE OXFORD ACADEMY

The Oxford Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We promote care and respect and expect high standards in all aspects of Academy life.

We aim to build a community clearly based on a Christian ethos, recognising the integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution and protect the vulnerable. We are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy.

Our vision for The Oxford Academy is based on the following beliefs:

- Education matters in society: the provision of a well ordered, stimulating learning environment is a common right for all our children
- The Academy should articulate social and moral values and respect for others, irrespective of their class, gender, race or religion
- The Academy will promote the highest achievement in youngsters, irrespective of their abilities or self-expectations. Competition and collaboration are both equally important to learning. The aspirations of all our students will be nurtured
- The Academy will celebrate students' achievements and challenge fixed notions of ability. We will value and reward young people's verbal, practical, academic, sporting, artistic and leadership skills
- An effective and flourishing Academy should be "public" rather than "private", explaining to parents what is being taught and how the curriculum is being interpreted. It should be open to praise and constructive feedback in a genuine spirit of partnership
- An effective Academy should work closely with neighbouring schools to improve opportunities for children and young people
- The work of the Academy will be underpinned at all times by its ultimate aim – to improve standards, achievement and the life chances of young people. The Oxford Academy is to be, first and foremost, a place of high quality learning and teaching for young people aged 11-19

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Rationale

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is central to the ethos and pedagogy of The Oxford Academy.

This policy document defines what The Oxford Academy means by spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and outlines specific strategies to secure development for all students.

In forming this policy document particular note has been taken of guidance issued by Ofsted in promoting and evaluating students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (April 2010).

While the next section of this policy defines each separately, The Oxford Academy fully recognises that spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of students' development are not only interrelated, they are interdependent.

2. Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view, either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. Depending on your perspective it can be seen as the development of a student's spirit, the soul, personality or character.

The Oxford Academy explicitly aims to support students in developing the following characteristics:

- a set of values, principles and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour
- an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs
- a respect for themselves and for others
- a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion
- an increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflection

- an ability to show courage and persistence in defence of their aims, values, principles and beliefs which does not denigrate or harm others
- a readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit: for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination
- an appreciation of the intangible – for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order – as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity
- a respect for insight as well as for knowledge and reason
- an expressive and/or creative impulse
- an ability to think in terms of the “whole”, for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective
- an understanding of feelings and emotions, and their likely impact.

In developing Schemes of Work (especially in relation to RE, collective worship and assembly), planning lessons and other activities staff will seek opportunities to:

- give students the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they affect peoples’ lives
- where students already have religious beliefs, support and develop these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them
- encourage students to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- encourage students to reflect and learn from reflection
- give students the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- develop a climate or ethos within which all students can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected
- accommodate difference and respecting the integrity of individuals

All staff must ensure that they promote teaching styles which value students’ questions and give them space to develop them, enable students to make connections between aspects of their learning and encourage students to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference.

3. Moral Development

Moral development is about the building, by students, of a framework of moral values which regulates their personal behaviour. It is also about the development of students' understanding of society's shared and agreed values and their understanding that there are issues where there is disagreement and that society's values can and do change. Moral development is about gaining an understanding of the range of views held by different people and the reasons for those views and forming a personal opinion on the views which are held by others.

The Oxford Academy explicitly aims to support students in developing the following characteristics:

- an ability to distinguish right from wrong, based on a knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures
- a confidence to act consistently in accordance with their own principles
- an ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' views and actions
- an ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas
- a considerate style of life
- a respect for others' needs, interests and feelings, as well as their own
- an understanding of the need to review and reassess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience.

In carrying out duties, staff will:

- support a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the Academy
- promote measures to prevent discrimination
- give students opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example, personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong
- develop an open and safe learning environment in which students can express their views and practise moral decision-making
- reward expressions of moral insights and good behaviour

- model, through the quality of relationships and interactions, principles associated with the Academy's vision – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for people, students' welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts
- recognise and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the Academy and wider community
- encourage students to take responsibility for their actions; for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour

4. Social Development

Social development is about young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together and functioning effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. It involves growth in knowledge and understanding of all aspects of society. This includes understanding people as well as society's institutions, structures and characteristics, economic and political principles and organisations, roles and responsibilities and life as a citizen, parent or worker in a community. It also involves the development of the inter-personal skills necessary for successful relationships.

The Oxford Academy explicitly aims to support students to:

- adjust to a range of social contexts by appropriate and sensitive behaviour
- relate well to other people's social skills and personal qualities
- work, successfully, as a member of a group or team
- resolve conflicts and counter forces which militate against inclusion and unity
- reflect on their own contribution to society and to the world of work
- show respect for people, property and the environment
- exercise responsibility
- understand how societies function and are organised in structures such as the family, the school and local and wider communities
- participate in activities relevant to the community
- understand the notion of interdependence in an increasingly complex society

In carrying out duties, staff will:

- foster a sense of community, with common, inclusive values which ensure that everyone can flourish
- encourage students to work co-operatively
- encouraging students to recognise and respect social differences and similarities
- help students develop personal qualities which are valued in a civilised society, for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, inter-dependence and self-respect
- help students to challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community
- help students resolve tensions between their own aspirations and those of the group or wider society
- provide opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life
- provide opportunities for students to exercise leadership and responsibility
- provide positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community

5. Cultural Development

Cultural development is about students' understanding their own culture and other cultures in their town, region and in the country as a whole. It is about understanding cultures represented in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is about understanding and feeling comfortable in a variety of cultures and being able to operate in the emerging world culture of shared experiences provided by television, travel and the internet. It is about understanding that cultures are always changing and coping with change. Promoting students' cultural development is intimately linked with the Academy's attempts to value cultural diversity and prevent racism.

The Oxford Academy explicitly aims to support students in developing the following characteristics:

- an understanding of the influences which have shaped their own cultural heritage
- an understanding of the dynamic, evolutionary nature of cultures

- an ability to appreciate cultural diversity and accord dignity and respect to other people's values and beliefs, thereby challenging racism
- an openness to new ideas and a willingness to modify cultural values in the light of experience
- an ability to use language and understand images/icons – for example, in music, art, literature – which have significance and meaning in a culture
- a regard for the heights of human achievement in all cultures and societies
- an appreciation of the diversity of interdependence of cultures

In carrying out duties, staff will:

- provide opportunities for students to explore their own cultural assumptions and values
- present authentic accounts of the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures
- address discrimination and promote racial and other forms of equality
- provide opportunities for students to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encourage students to reflect on their significance
- develop partnerships to extend students' cultural awareness, for example, through international links and visits

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Board will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.