SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSCD) POLICY

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1. Introduction

The School aims to inculcate in its pupil a strong sense of the responsibilities, rights and institutions that characterise a well-functioning society. Guided by the Christian tradition, and informed by our liberal educational ethos, SMSCD is inherent to the approach that we take across our curriculum.

In our Civics programme (described in more detail in our PSHCE policy) we make specific provision for the teaching of democratic values and citizenship, the appreciation of and respect for different cultures and points of view, and the importance of charitable dispositions and habits. We also address certain aspects of SMSCD directly in certain subjects – spiritual in Religious Studies and cultural in subjects such as Music, English, History, Classics and Art.

Drawing upon the School's rule, "Do to others all that you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12), the School expects its pupils to conduct themselves considerately, and to show respect to others. Initiatives such as the School Council and Boarders' Council educate the children in the importance of fairness, due process, and the accommodation and airing of multiple points of view. The School has nominated charities and pupils are actively engaged in fundraising for them, and where appropriate, involve themselves in the work of these charities.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy sets out how the School fulfils its obligations in ways that are appropriate to our pupils' ages and backgrounds, and which reflect the School's aims. It begins with a description of elements of the School's Civics programme as pertaining to SMSCD, before addressing each of the SMSCD strands in turn. The teaching of British values is implicit to the entire Civics programme and is detailed in the PSHCE Policy.

3. Civics

'Civics' is the School's overarching SMSCD, PSHCE and charity fundraising programme. It also incorporates school assemblies each week in both the Prep and the Pre-Prep School.

4(a) Charity fundraising

An important aspect of Civics at the School is charity fundraising. Our pupils' involvement with charities is not only a Christian duty, but is an essential means of encouraging them to understand life beyond their immediate surroundings.

The School nominates certain charities. Led by the Stewardship and Charity Coordinator, and in conjunction with the Parents' Association, fundraising events for these charities are held throughout the year. Charities include:

- Eyehope, which restores sight to poor children in Tanzania
- The Cardinal Hume Centre, a local homelessness charity.

Representatives of the charities are invited to School assemblies to explain to our pupils the benefit of their work, and the impact of any money raised. In addition, the School makes provision during assemblies to explain the rationale of charity work, particularly at certain times of year such as Advent and Lent, during which Christian duty mandates almsgiving.

Where possible, the School seeks to secure opportunities for pupils to involve themselves directly in charity work, over and above fundraising.

4 (b) Assemblies and external speakers

As a regular gathering of the entire School community, assemblies are an important means of building shared values and identity. Pupils have the opportunity over the year to participate in assemblies. For example:

- Reading of prayers and declamation of poetry
- Presenting on topics to the rest of the school, such as Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week, avoiding stress during exams, as well as presenting on the business of the School Council and the Eco Committee.
- At the Pre-Prep, boys regularly take part in the 'show and tell' activities. Senior pupils regularly read at the weekly School Mass.

School assemblies provide the opportunity to reflect upon national anniversaries such as Remembrance Day (which is also marked by the Last Post) and Royal Weddings.

We select external speakers to complement our Civics programme and our wider curriculum.

Recent external speakers include:

Speaker & organisation	**Topic**
Obi Adanna, Eyehope	Charitable impact
Dr Aric Sigman	Online health and safety
Councillor Tim Roca	Local government
Dick Moore	Mental Health
Stephen Currid,	Cardinal Hume Centre
Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP	The Role of Parliament
TfL	Travelling safely in London
Midori Hol, The Passage	Charitable impact
Dr Julian Huppert	The role of technology in society

Where these speakers have political affiliations, their speaking topics are chosen such that they do not speak about their political programmes. Instead, the School asks them to share their knowledge of the democratic political process.

The School has reference to the DfE guidance: *Political impartiality in schools 2022.*

4 (c) The School Councils

There are dedicated School Councils in the Prep School, the Pre-Prep and in the choristers' boarding house. The boys participate directly in the choice of their representatives. The operation of each of these Councils follows set rules and procedures. Aside from providing a forum for the boys to air their own views of School life and make suggestions for improvements, these Councils are designed to show democracy in action. The operation of the Councils is allied with the study of democracy in Civics.

The School also runs a suggestion system. There are suggestions boxes in the Prep School, and, for boarding matters, in the boarding house. At regular intervals these suggestions are considered by senior staff, and decisions about whether to proceed with the suggestions (with reasons) are returned to the boys at the relevant assemblies.

5. Spiritual development

As a Catholic institution, spiritual development is integral to the activities of this School. It has a chaplain, a Head of Religious Studies (RS) and a Head of SMSCD, all of whom work with the Head Master and Head of Pre-Prep in ensuring sound spiritual development of the boys.

The liturgy

Westminster Cathedral Choir School was founded to educate choristers who could ennoble the liturgy of the Church. The sacramental life remains integral to our mission and ethos.

The liturgy is an occasion for worship and personal reflection for our pupils. Boys partake in the following:

- Weekly School Mass (Y3 – Y8)
- Sung worship by the choristers of the School in Westminster Cathedral
- Sung worship by the Gallery, School and Junior Choirs, and by the School as a whole, at School Mass
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Religious Education

The aim of our Religious Education programme is the formation of religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically. This takes place through:

- The School's Religious Studies programme, primarily through Religious Studies lessons
- Prayers at assemblies and each day at form time, and readings of Scripture and lives of the saints at Pre-Prep assemblies
- Regular talks and occasional retreats led by the School Chaplain
- Choristers saying grace before and after breakfast and supper, as well as saying night prayers led by a House Master.

Through Religious Studies, Civics and certain History lessons, pupils learn about other religious and philosophical traditions. Special emphasis is placed upon commonality between these traditions, as opposed to focusing upon difference. For instance, they also learn that Christianity, Islam, and Judaism share a common origin. They also learn about the impact of Ancient Greek philosophy upon subsequent civilisations, and study and reflect upon timeless stories from Scripture.

4. Moral development

The moral development of our pupils takes place primarily through their own lived experience and interaction with others within the School community. Healthy relations between the boys, and between boys and their teachers are nurtured by a clear, fair and supportive pastoral system.

It is nonetheless important that the School transmits a clear moral framework to the boys, to equip them to reflect upon their own conduct. Pupils reflect upon stories from Scripture, myth, and contemporary journalism to consider the complexity of human relationships and moral conduct.

Examples of the materials and approaches taught in this respect might include:

- Religious Studies, conveying at its core the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes,
- Study of the ethics of the classical age, such as those of Aristotle, Plato, and Marcus Aurelius during Civics lessons,
- Discussion and written reflections upon moral dilemmas during Civics, asking the pupils to argue opposing points of view.

5. Social development

'Do to others all that you would have them do to you.' (Matthew 7:12)

We also hold that social development best takes place through lived experience. Pupils reflect upon stories from Scripture, myth, and also contemporary journalism to consider the institution of the family and the complexity of human relationships. Pre-prep pupils develop their social skills in the classroom environment and have the opportunity to be chosen as a school council representative, an eco-hero and librarians.

As pupils grow older, seeks to prepare pupils for later life by providing opportunities for them to take on responsibilities and participate in communal decision-making as prefects, School Council delegates, Librarians, Eco Committee representatives and as sports captains, in addition to the content delivered through the Civics programme.

6. Cultural development

The transmission of culture, "the best which has been thought and said in the world", in the words of Arnold, is a primary aim of liberal education. It is therefore central to the School's entire curriculum. As appropriate to their ages, the boys should gain acquaintance with treasures of the Western cultural tradition.

Through Civics lessons and other subjects our pupils also gain exposure to cultural materials from various places and times in history. For instance, they learn about Islam and the Islamic World in Year 7. The school curriculum is structured historically, giving pupils a broad range of historical perspectives. We intend that they look beyond their immediate environment for inspiration and edification.

More specifically, all boys contribute to, and participate in, the distinctive culture of the School. It is important that the boys *live* a cultural life, not only learn it. This is notably true of our choristers, and of our day boys in the various school choirs, who themselves preserve and recreate the ancient musical traditions of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony. Boys also compose and declaim poetry, and participate in plays and musicals.

The School offers regular trips in Britain and abroad. In previous years, these trips have included Iceland, USA and Italy, as well as chorister trips to Rome and Germany.