

# SMSC Policy: Wellbeing, Mental, Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Policy

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## Contents

Purpose & Aims.....	3
Introduction .....	3
What is Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Education? .....	4
Organization and Implementation of SMSC .....	5
Embedding Our School Values .....	6
Health & Wellbeing.....	7
Health and Wellbeing for All .....	9
Staff .....	9
SMSC Development .....	10
Teachers' Role .....	10
Character Education.....	10
Virtues in Practice .....	11
Moral Education Program .....	12
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) .....	12
Where can you find SMSC in ASCS School? .....	13
Outcomes.....	18
Inclusion Practices at ASCS .....	18
Monitoring and Evaluation .....	18
Links .....	19

## Purpose & Aims

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to faculty of American School of Creative Science (ASCS). It has three main aims:

- To explain how the ethos and education provided by ASCS enables the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- To note the contributions that specific aspects of school life make to this development.
- To enable the school to more readily review the SMSC provision.

## Introduction

At ASCS we believe that fostering our students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is intrinsic to their personal development and the roles they will go on to play in society. This principle is infused into the ethos and education of day-to-day school life. ASCS's philosophy of holistic and complete strongly affirms the importance of SMSC to our community: its elements are encompassed in the diagram below:



## **What is Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Education?**

The Spiritual development of children is shown by their:

- Ability to reflect about their own and other's beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings, values, faiths, and perspectives.
- Knowledge of and respect towards others faiths, feelings, and values.
- Sense of enquiry in learning about themselves, others, and the world they live in.
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Willingness to reflect on their learning and experiences.

The Moral development of a child is shown by their:

- ability to recognize the difference between right and wrong (integrity), and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives.
- respect for the civil and criminal law of the UAE and the world. To understand the consequences of their behavior.
- interest in investigating, and offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues.

The Social development of a child is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socializing with students from different religious, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds as well as those of different ages.
- to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively.
- volunteer their time and support
- Knowing how communities and societies function at a variety of levels

The Cultural development of a child is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific, and cultural opportunities



- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of different cultures within school and further act as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Society
- interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect, and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic, and socio-economic groups in the local, national, and global communities
- Ability to recognize and value the things shared across cultural, religious, ethnic, and socio-economic communities.

It is a priority of ours to send our children to the secondary school and higher education as well-rounded, developed, and aware citizens who are equipped to deal with the world they live in and the situations and experiences it may challenge them with. We place an emphasis on creating reflective and inquisitive learners who are very socially, morally, and spiritually aware with an understanding, acceptance, and ability to immerse themselves in culture.

### **Organization and Implementation of SMSC**

- SMSC education will take place across all areas of the curriculum.
- SMSC has particularly strong links to Islamic Education, Quran enrichment program, Moral Education, collective prayers, pastoral services, Virtues in Practice and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) education.
- All areas of the curriculum will draw examples from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible.

In order to develop a strong sense of identity in our students, we will use classroom discussion to enable them to:

- Talk about their experiences and feelings.
- Express and clarify personal ideas and beliefs.
- Speak about difficult events, e.g., bullying, death.
- Share thoughts and feelings with other people.
- Explore relationships with friends/family/others.
- Consider the needs and behavior of others.
- Show empathy towards others
- Develop self-esteem and a respect for others.
- Develop a sense of belonging.
- Develop the skills and attitudes that enable children to develop socially, morally, spiritually, and culturally e.g., empathy, respect, open-mindedness, sensitivity, critical awareness etc.

Many areas across the curriculum provide opportunities for students to:

- Listen and talk to each other to develop trusting relationships
- Learn an awareness of treating all as equals, accepting people who are different because of physical and learning difficulties.
- Agree and disagree.
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively.

### *Embedding Our School Values*

#### **Integrity**

Our students are dependable, open, honest, accountable, authentic, and humble.

The school community conducts themselves in a trustworthy, ethical, and reliable manner in everything they say and do.

#### **Tolerance**

Every individual must have moral obligation or duty which involves respect for the individual as well as mutual respect and consideration between people.

#### **Collaboration**

Individuals to have an opportunity work together. We go above and beyond to exceed expectations.

We respectfully and ethically interact with each other and those around us.

#### **Courage**

We give permission for imperfection, every individual to have the courage to be themselves and speak their mind.

#### **Compassion**

We are all individuals who are caring recognizing the unique challenges faced by our community and will provide support with kindness and empathy.

## *Health & Wellbeing*

At ASCS the wellbeing of all is the utmost priority and is promoted through the following values in the table below. Evidence of wellbeing has included deliberate consideration to ensure our direct and indirect counselling services accommodate whole school fundamental needs as well as unique, specific cohort needs and individual needs. By promoting our core values, wellbeing is instilled in all that we do:

Health & Wellbeing	
Provision	Evidenced
Monitoring Wellbeing	Start of Year Wellbeing Check Up Survey Ongoing Wellbeing Student Surveys Report a Concern QR Code Wellbeing Focus Group Talks
Mental Health First Aid Training	Certified Mental Health First Aiders for Teen to Teen, Adult to Teen, and Adult to Adult
Social Emotional Learning Curriculum	SEL Lesson Plans and Reporting against CASEL SEL Competencies
Wellbeing Thursday Homeroom Sessions	Lessons that directly target whole school needs such as core units on Digital Citizenship, Relationships, Growth Mindset, Mental Health Awareness, etc
Internal ECA provisions ensuring 100% student participation	ECA provisions include Kindness Squad, Mindfulness & Wellbeing, etc as well as clubs that allow students to engage in activities of personal interest
Anti-Bullying Campaigns	Student led activities to promote awareness, how to respond and how to reach out. Anti-bullying pledges Report a Concern QR Codes
Mental Health Awareness Campaigns	Student led activities to promote awareness of mental health and to de-stigmatize seeking help when one is not okay. Students engaged in activities to learn healthy coping skills and strategies to use to regulate emotions.

Digital Citizenship Program	<p>Lessons on 6 core concepts: Media Balance, Privacy &amp; Security, Digital Footprint, Relationship &amp; Communication, Cyberbullying &amp; Hate Speech, News &amp; Media Literacy.</p> <p>Digital Safety Charter</p> <p>Common Sense School Award</p> <p>E-Safety Committee &amp; Policy</p> <p>E-Safety Review</p>
Health Screening & Clinic Education	<p>BMI checks</p> <p>Healthy Steps Program</p> <p>Healthy Lunch Box Checks &amp; App</p> <p>Healthy Eaters Awards</p> <p>Parent Workshops: Healthy Eating, Diabetes Awareness, Breast Cancer Awareness</p> <p>Events: World Heart Day, Handwashing Day, Diabetes Day, Pink Day</p>
Online Drop In	Social Worker Online Counselling Sessions for parents and students (drop-in)
Group Counselling Services	Group Counselling Plans and resources aligned to ASCA standards with pre-assessment and post-assessment analysis
Targeted Support Workshops	For our upper and middle school students these monthly targeted workshops allow us to address cohort specific needs and awareness programs.
Individual Counselling Services	<p>Student Action Plans</p> <p>Caseload Counselling Logs of Sessions</p> <p>SLT Caseload Review meetings with Social Workers</p>
Pastoral Team	<p>Supervisors &amp; Social Workers</p> <p>Attendance Reviews and counselling letters</p> <p>Behavior Reviews with Incident Report Review Analysis</p>
Staff Professional Development	10 Modules on Anti-Bullying equipping staff to



	prevent but also on how to respond Digital Citizenship Training Keeping Children Safe Online Apple Classroom Safeguarding SEND Safer Recruitment Training Safeguarding in Sport and Physical Activities training Mental Health & Wellbeing Safeguarding Children Training
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## Health and Wellbeing for All

### *Staff*

It is important to the school to ensure everyone has a good sense of health and wellbeing. To this end, the school place importance on supporting staff to have a good balance for work and life. Opportunities include:

- Member of staff trained as a Mental Health First Aider, ensuring in addition to this that we have a bi-lingual staff member trained in Adult-to-Adult Mental Health First Aid
- Promotion of Five Ways to Wellbeing with access to resources on Staff Page on Firefly
- Promotion of Self-Care for Staff as part of our Social Emotional Learning Curriculum
- Opportunity for staff to join the school's Wellbeing Committee
- Promoting Kindness in the Workplace through Annual Pledge with weekly kindness reminders
- Access to Tru Doc Wellness Service
- Return to work meetings post sickness/absence
- Staff fitness sessions
- Staff social events
- #TeacherTalk
- Staff Teacher Choice Awards
- Golden ticket early release days

## **SMSC Development**

Additional practical activities to encourage students' SMSC development include:

- Working together in different groupings and situations.
- Meeting people from different cultures and countries.
- Participating in a variety of different educational visits.
- Participating in live performances.
- Studying literature and art from different cultures, supported by visits from writers and artists and participation in workshop.
- Making and evaluating food from other countries.
- Studying the contributions to society that certain famous people have made.
- Presenting with teachers about different cultures
- Cultural Day and Ramadan Around the World

### ***Teachers' Role***

Teachers will help students' SMSC development by:

- Encouraging teamwork in all subject especially PE and games.
- Encouraging an appreciation of, and respect for, the work and performance of other students, regardless of ability.
- Celebrating achievements.
- Using assembly themes to explore important aspects of both UAE, Islamic Heritage and other cultures, e.g., festival days and global events.

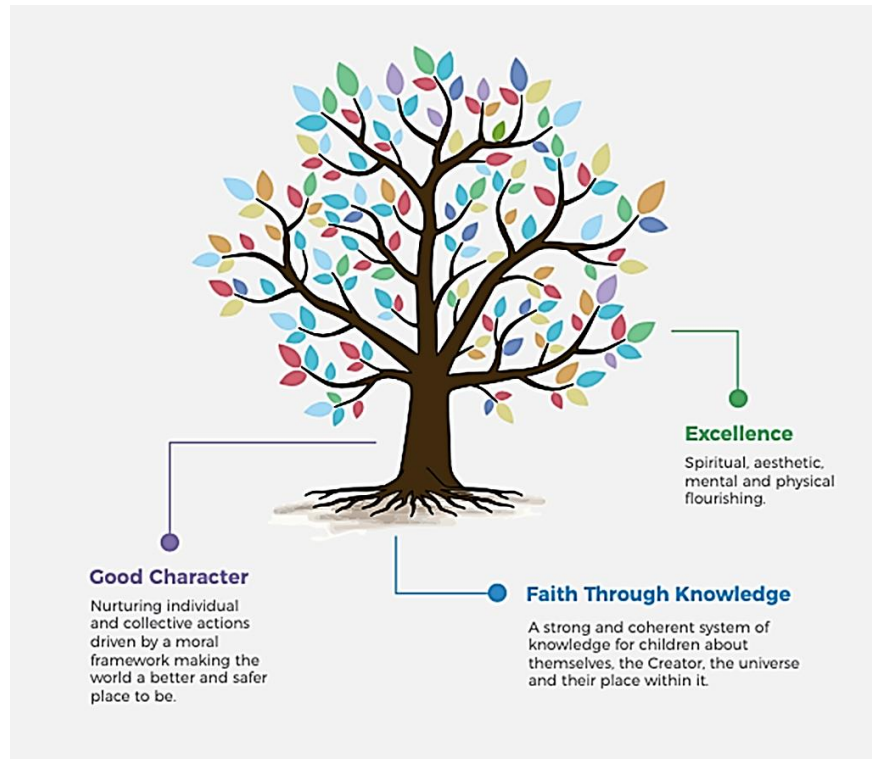
## **Character Education**

The new unified UAE School Evaluation and Inspection Framework (2022) states that “a high-quality moral education nurtures character. It leads to behavioral and life-choices that prepare young people well for adult life. It infuses ethical values such as tolerance, honesty, and respect. It also helps build communities and teaches students about heritage and culture, both in the UAE and in the wider world”.

There are strong links between moral development, well-being, and citizenship. All of these features strongly in the UAE's aspirations to deliver a world-class education system and to oversee a progressive, cohesive, and tolerant society.

Therefore, character education is vital as it is a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs students motivation and guides their conduct so that they can reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity, and cooperate consistently well with others.

At our school, our 5 core values (Integrity, Tolerance, Collaboration, Courage, Compassion) underpin everything that we do.



### *Virtues in Practice*

Our Virtues in Practice Program is designed for Elementary Grades K-4 to employ quality children's literature to help children fall in love with the good, promoting a culture of kindness where students actively advocate application of virtues in their day-to-day lives. Every two weeks their teachers highlight a key intellectual, moral, or civic virtue – such as respect, responsibility, diligence, honesty, generosity, or perseverance. They read quality children's literature at a "Morning Gathering" in Homeroom lessons on Tuesdays to provide inspirational or insightful examples of virtue in practice. The reading of these well-written and often beautifully illustrated stories helps children fall in love with the good, and cultivate a vocabulary of virtue. A child's dreams of greatness spring from the dramas playing out in the theatres of their imaginations. Stories inspire them. Grand narratives draw them forward, encouraging them.

Our study of virtues in practice in Middle School & High School deepens with the study of lives of individuals and stories within the news that embody these virtues.

Most children rise to meet a new day with hope in their hearts and an openness to the road they are about to walk. Our task is to nurture that hope by providing them with inspiring guideposts for the road ahead. In the Virtues in Practice program, literature is the tool and the weekly homeroom session for

Virtue in Practice is the vehicle. We employ the homeroom circle time as the opportunity to speak to the best in each of us.

### **The Basic Structure (20 minutes)**

With 15 to 20 minutes of clear focus and a good story. The homeroom session highlights every two weeks a new virtue, one that the entire school shares. Teachers begin by introducing the new virtue, for example, *compassion*. They might ask the students what they already understand or know about compassion. The teacher reads the first story and then asked, “now what do you think we mean by compassion?” At that point the class is well positioned to be more specific. The teacher then posts the definition where all can see it and reflect upon it. The definitions provide summary reflections in words that make sense for each age group. This is followed by the Positive Affirmation to help challenge students' mindsets and overcome any negative thoughts, and is part of internalizing the Virtue. When affirmations are repeated often, they are internalized, one believes in them, and you can start to make positive changes having now understood how this virtue applies in your daily life. Every two weeks, a class leads on an assembly presentation on the Virtue in Practice for that two-week cycle, sharing their understanding and application of this key virtue with the school community.

### ***Moral Education Program***

Moral Education covers four pillars of teaching and learning. Character and Morality, the Individual and the Community, Civic Studies and Cultural Studies. The four pillars complement one another, using the lens of moral thinking, learning and building character. Moral Education for Arabs and Moral, Social, Cultural Studies for ASL students are taught as stand-alone subjects with key aspects of the core pillars integrated into our Wellbeing lessons, assemblies, Social Emotional Learning, and Virtues in Practice programs.

### ***Social Emotional Learning (SEL)***

Embedding a culture of kindness is achieved through the core units on Respect, Care, Inclusiveness, Integrity, and Courage. *The Kindness in the Classroom lessons have all been mapped to:*

- *Common Core,*
- *The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*
- *A trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL)*
- *The National Health Education Standards And the 6-8 curriculum is mapped to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standard*

Each unit incorporates a six week study with opportunity to:

- ***inspire*** the audience, be it students or adults,
- ***empower*** them by giving them skills or knowledge,
- *give them the opportunity to **act**,*
- *offer them an opportunity to **reflect** on their learning/actions, and*

- give time to **share** their thoughts

## Where can you find SMSC in ASCS School?

In planning lessons, teachers are aware of the need to plan opportunities to develop a wide variety of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural needs.

SMSC has particularly strong links to Social Emotional Learning, Wellbeing Lessons, Islamic Education, Moral Education, Assemblies, Circle Time activities and Collective Prayer Time and all areas of the curriculum will draw examples from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible. We have a pastoral program that actively works to proactively address whole school, small group cohort, and individual students' needs.

We actively promote visitors and workshops in school to support us in generating an excitement for learning with our children. We believe these opportunities give our children a different learning opportunity and a more in-depth chance to explore and question more specifically around a topic, theme, or idea.

The tables below are inserted to show how we make provision for children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development across the phases at ASCS.

Spiritual Development	
Provision	Evidenced
Islamic Education	Islamic & Moral Education Curriculum Plans & Lesson Plans informed by MOE.
Moral Education and Moral, Social, Cultural Studies	Internal Quran Competition, Beam Quran Competition, Teach Me One Ayah for Staff, Quran Memorization program for parents
Quran Program	Red Crescent Ambassadors and initiatives: building wells, building Mosque, etc
Dhur Prayer	Ramadan, Eid, and Hajj celebrations
Whole School Programs in Activity Calendar	Ramadan Reminders & Quizzes
Whole school ethos and values driven by our Motto: Excellence Rooted in Faith	Student Iftar

Children are given the opportunities to reflect upon the meaning of spiritual experiences across the school by exploring through questioning when presented with different experiences. Planned opportunities for spiritual awareness can be seen across the school.

Examples of experiences commonly regarded as spiritual include:

- Connecting and belonging

- Heightened self-awareness
- Prayer and worship (children are invited to take part in daily prayer)
- To value what is important
- A sense of security, well-being, worth and purposefulness

At ASCS we have a climate within which children can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected; and respecting the integrity of individuals.

Moral Development	
Provision	Evidenced
Debates and World Scholars Cup	Debating meetings and planning activities, debate content
School Behavior Policy and Code of Conduct	
Islamic Education	Regular reviews of behavior, group counselling plans, student voice and student surveys
Student Voice	Celebrations of children achieving in reward assemblies
Student Council Work	
Student Leadership Opportunities	School website and posts celebrating children's achievements
Anti-bullying Campaigns	Sports competitions
Assemblies and reward/sanction systems	Anti-bullying action plan, assemblies, etc
Sporting competitions	E-safety content made by students
E-safety teaching and monitoring	Common Sense School
	Playground Buddies
	Kindness Squad
	Whole school assemblies and explicit discussions and teachings around our school values: belong, believe, achieve
	Newsletters
	Wellbeing Newsletters
	Charity work
	Dubai Police Visits
	External Visitors: Anxiety Workshops, etc

## Excellence Rooted in Faith

Our school motto, “Excellence Rooted in Faith” is the driver of our moral teaching. We teach children excellence equipped with moral compass to distinguish between right and wrong by thinking through the consequences of their own and other’s actions. We also endeavor to:

- Ensure an awareness of faith
- Assist parents about schools’ expectations of basic values
- Promote and model respectful attitude toward oneself
- Spread attentiveness and awareness to oneself spiritual, moral, academic, psychological, and social needs
- Encourage a sense of pride and responsibility and a spirit of interdependence toward student's role as a global citizen.
- Provide safe, faith-founded learning environment for students from KG to High School.

## Students Outcomes

- Children understand that they need to make responsible and reasoned judgements and explore what their personal values are.
- Children are then continually encouraged to ensure their commitment to their own personal values situations.
- Children respect others’ needs, interests, and feelings as well as their own.
- Children have a desire to express these views and appreciate that there is a need to review and reassess their values, codes, and principles in the light of further experiences.
- Children are provided with clear moral codes as a basis for behavior which is promoted by all in our community.

We promote BEAM Ethos and other forms of equality providing children with opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values including personal rights and responsibilities.

Our School Code of Conduct creates an inclusive environment for all and outlines our safe learning environments in which students can practice their moral decision making and express their views. Our classes set up promote a sense of corporate responsibility and team approach.

All classes reward and promote moral insights and good behavior encouraging children to take responsibility for their actions including respect for property and care for the environment.



Social Development	
Provision	Evidenced
Charitable Initiatives/Events	Red Crescent Ambassadors
Business Entrepreneurship	Charity drives: building wells, Ramadan Meer, Building Mosque
Community Service	ASCS Souk events with proceeds contributed to current charitable campaigns running in school
Eco School	Grade 9 Mentorship, Fitness, Sustainability, Literacy, Inclusiveness Badges
Digital Citizenship	ECO Committee
Curriculum enrichment	Common Sense Media School
Department competitions	Internal Extra-Curricular Clubs
	Field trips
	Science Fairs, Math Whiz, Math Marathon, etc

Social development is very much about teaching children an acceptability in their actions and about them belonging in our school and our community. This relies on teachers and staff teaching them to become socially aware and giving them the ability and opportunity to adjust to a variety of social contexts applying appropriate and sensitive behavior. We teach our children to relate to others and see things from other points of views. We place a strong emphasis on children using learn to learn skills and working successfully as part of a group.

Children at ASCS are confident to share opinions and views with others and are mature when resolving conflicts. They have a respect for those around them and the environment in which they live and have a shared responsibility for the success and happiness of our community.

In our school, there is a strong sense of community and belonging. Our children's involvement is testament to their development.

Our school council is very active and represents the interests, sensitivity, and drive of our school in participation as a community to enjoy, support and work collaboratively with one another for everyone's gain.

The school curriculum provides experiences of all aspects of culture for students including languages, aesthetic, mathematical, literacy, technological and scientific references. There are also opportunities for cultural visits, developing project-based learning and knowing about local and international landmarks.

Furthermore, our children understand their place in local, broader, and global community and social awareness is thoroughly explored through several curriculum subjects, most notably, SEL, history, social studies, and Geography as well as numerous activities such as Linking school projects, debating clubs to name but a few.

Cultural Development	
Provision	Evidenced
SEL Scheme of Work	Curriculum newsletters and planning
School visits	Visits to museums, galleries, other schools, contrasting localities
Arts Curriculum	Author Visits
Extra-curricular Plan	Opportunities to take part in productions
High School Electives	Sports day
Resources including library books reflecting a range of cultures	Library
Teaching of Humanitarian Values with link to historical figures	Displays
	Internationalism
	Cultural day exhibitions
	Flag day

Our Children learn about and experience the diversity of other cultures both within modern UAE and throughout the world. This is achieved through a carefully thought-out program of events over the year including visits, assemblies, projects, workshops, curriculum planning and Islamic Education planning.

Children who are becoming culturally aware are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics and these are very evident at ASCS:

- An ability to reflect on important questions of meaning and identity
- An interest in exploring the relationship between human beings and the environment

Our school develops cultural development by:

- Extending students' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language
- Encouraging them to think about special events in life and how they are celebrated

- Recognizing and nurturing particular gifts and talents; providing opportunities for students to participate in literature, drama, art, crafts, and other cultural events and encouraging students to reflect on their significance
- Reinforcing the school's cultural links through displays, posters, exhibitions, etc. as well as developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend students' cultural awareness, for example, theatre, museum, and gallery visits

## **Outcomes**

Through our SMSC program, we will:

- Enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence.
- Enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of the UAE.
- Encourage students to accept responsibility for their behavior, show initiative and 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.
- 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.

## **Inclusion Practices at ASCS**

We promote each student's inclusion in activities, settings and locations that are appropriate to them individually to meet their needs. Within school, students work with a range of people and interactions with others are always positively promoted. This may include working with external coaches, theatre groups etc.

The curriculum is planned for students and may include transitioning within the range of resources and places on the site and going into the community to meet with a range of people in a variety of situations which include community events and shared participation with other schools/colleges.

We believe it is important to facilitate opportunities to be part of the community as the students, families, and staff.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

All aspects of SMSC are continually monitored and evaluated by SLT, phase leaders, the curriculum leaders and governors with adaptations continually being made to further improve our provision for children's development.

We listen to the views of our students and their parents. We operate an open-door policy for the sharing of news and have a formal system in place.

## **Links**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Wellbeing Policy
- Moral Education and Moral, Social, Cultural Studies Curriculum Plans
- Safeguarding
- E-Safety
- Anti-Bullying
- Health & Safety
- Inclusive Education

This is an ever-growing area of our curriculum and the importance of it is not underestimated.

***“Together we ignite a passion for learning, by creating an inclusive community which fosters virtues, innovation, and best practice focused on achieving successful outcomes for all our students.”***