



St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Academy

British Values Statement

As a Catholic school our ethos is to uphold the values of the Gospel: respect for the life and dignity of each individual; trust in God; honesty; compassion; forgiveness; mercy; community; servant leadership; equality; simplicity; justice and peace. These values are embedded in all that we teach and are promoted in all of our interactions with others in the school and the wider community.

We fully recognise and embrace the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom and are committed to ensuring that groups or individuals within the school are not subjected to intimidation or pressured towards radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them.

St Mary's has a clear Equality policy which aims to prevent discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status or similar. St Mary's also seeks to lay the foundations for our pupils' future lives, beyond the formal curriculum, preparing them for the diverse and dynamic society in which they will live and work. An understanding of British values is a critical part of this education.

The Government set out its definition of British Values in the 2011 'Prevent' strategy and the Department for Education has reinforced the need *'to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values'*. Actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to these values, which are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Many of these values are embedded within our Catholic Ethos and Mission, but in addition St Mary's uses strategies within the National Curriculum and beyond to secure pupils' understanding of the wider implications of British values. The examples that follow show some of the ways in which St Mary's seeks to embed British values.

Democracy

Elections are held for school council representative in each class. This fosters the concept of freedom of speech and group action to address need and concerns. Within their classes, pupils are able to vote to make choices brought to them by these representatives. Pupils are also able to make their views known via our regular Governing Body Pupil Questionnaires.

Pupils explore the principle of democracy in age-appropriate assemblies. Older pupils run mock elections and learn about the mechanism of government in the UK, helping them to develop an understanding of the vital importance of democracy in securing a fair society where everyone has a voice. Our pupils have also participated in the a local Junior Cadets group and a Local authority run scheme to promote and develop the local area, supporting such initiatives as an anti-litter campaign . In our Remembrance assemblies and teaching, we recognised all those who fought and died in the World Wars to maintain and uphold our values.

The Rule of Law

The school has a clear behaviour management policy and high standards of behaviour of both pupils and staff are expected by the Governing Body. The rights and responsibilities of every pupil are emphasised through our class-based behaviour rules, which are developed by the whole group, and through the use Restorative Approaches to serious or protracted issues, which focus on the harm that has been done and on how it might be mended. Our RE and PSHE curricula recognize and underline the importance of the ideas, feelings and needs of others. Assemblies emphasise that we are all equal under the law and that it is not only wrong, but illegal to discriminate against others on the basis of characteristics such as disability, gender, race or faith. Regular visits from authorities such as the PCSO and Fire Service help to reinforce the message that our laws are for the protection of all.

We aim to ensure that our pupils have the knowledge and confidence to withstand attempts to radicalise them by alerting them to the intolerance that is inherent in all extremist viewpoints.

Individual liberty

Pupils at St Mary's are encouraged to know and understand their rights and personal freedoms and advised how to exercise these safely, e.g. through our E-Safety policy, EPR AND PSHE curricula, circle times and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to exercise their right to free speech by articulating their views to their School Council Representatives. They also use the pupil 'Worry Box' to share concerns about issues, alerting school leaders and initiating a productive dialogue. This has built up a strong sense of trust, because pupils know that adults take their concerns seriously, that they will listen and, where necessary, take action.

We aim to ensure that pupils know their rights, but also that they are aware of the responsibilities that they entail. Teachers and other staff endeavour to set clear, consistent boundaries so that pupils can make informed choices in a safe, secure and supportive environment. St Mary's has clear Anti-bullying and Behaviour Management policies that are openly shared with every member of our community.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is at the heart of our faith: Jesus said, '*You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*' Our Mission Statement echoes this, '*We live love and learn with the guidance of God,* with its emphasis on the need to value the unique contribution of each person in our school. We expect all members of the St Mary's community to treat each other with respect, consideration and integrity. Pupils learn through their interactions with staff and each other, in the curriculum and assemblies that their behaviour has an impact on others. They frequently work collaboratively and are encouraged to listen to and value the opinions of others.

Pupils are encouraged to understand and reach out to communities who are less fortunate than themselves and each year raise significant amounts for charity, demonstrating their respect for those who live in very different circumstances to ours. Pupils are encouraged to organise their own fundraising events for charities that they wish to support.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

Despite being a faith school, we welcome pupils from other faiths or none. As we grow, our intake is becoming more ethnically and religiously diverse which is adding to the richness of our community. Tolerance is emphasised through our RE and PSHE curricula and our assemblies' programme, which celebrates key dates and festivals of other faiths and gives pupils an understanding of the beliefs and customs that underpin them.

Pupils benefit from the opportunity of hearing about different communities and faith traditions in the UK and the world, and we encourage parents and others to share their culture and customs with the children.

We encourage pupils to understand their place within a culturally diverse society and above all to ensure that they leave St Mary's with a set of values which will ensure they will contribute positively to society in the future.