

VALUES POLICY FOR MEMBER SCHOOLS

This policy is for all AMS UK member schools. The values outlined in it also cover fundamental British values as described in the recently revised Independent School Standards. The Department for Education has yet to issue guidance on fundamental British values, once it does we will communicate this to our member schools. We will also update this policy in light of any guidance issued by Department for Education.

Values

The following values should be actively promoted in all AMS UK member schools. Any issues of non-compliance will be taken very seriously and could lead to the termination of a school's membership from the Association:

1. Promoting Gender Equality

All schools must promote gender equality to ensure that equal opportunities exist for both males and females. AMS UK will not tolerate any form of gender discrimination that contravenes the law in any of its schools. If any such case comes to our attention we will take immediate action.

2. Tackling Discrimination

All schools must have a zero tolerance approach towards all forms of discrimination (e.g. race, colour, religion, gender, lifestyle, ethnicity, disability and age). All schools should also oppose all forms of prejudice and intolerance - including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia and racism. All schools should continuously work to foster mutual respect and understanding between people of all faiths and none.

3. Actively promoting fundamental British values

All schools must actively promote fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance, freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of association. This is now a requirement for all independent schools and we have already issued guidance on how schools can meet it (see **Appendix A** for examples of how schools could promote fundamental British values).

Overall, schools should promote shared understanding and respect for all cultures and faiths – a focus on the things that unite rather than things that divide.

4. Forced Marriages, 'Honour-killings', Female Genital Mutilation

AMS UK completely opposes forced marriages, female genital mutilation and honour killings. All schools must teach their pupils that these are abhorrent practices, inconsistent with any faith. These practices are also against the law.

5. External Speakers

All schools must take great care not to invite any controversial speakers on to their premises to address pupils or propagate unacceptable views. To this end, schools should carry out background checks before they invite anyone. If schools are having difficulty in this area then they should contact their local AMS UK representative who will be happy to help.

6. Wider Community

All schools must place a great emphasis on service to the local and wider community. They should strive to ensure that they work with and serve children and families from faith and non-faith backgrounds through direct education provision, charitable activities and joint initiatives with other service providers.

Schools have a key part to play in promoting better understanding and cohesion within their local communities; they should work hard to engage with community groups of all faiths and none to share learning and experience of different cultures and faiths. As part of this we recommend that schools also organize visits to the places of worship of other faiths (e.g. Churches and Synagogues).

7. Partisan Political Views

AMS UK is not aligned with any political party or movement (in the UK or abroad) and we do not promote any partisan political views. In line with education regulations, all schools should present political issues in a balanced way with all points of views being considered. Schools should not promote any partisan political views on their premises.

8. Extremism

AMS UK takes all allegations of extremism very seriously and we would take immediate action against any concerns of this nature in our schools. All schools must immediately make us aware of any potential extremism concerns and we will work with the relevant authorities to address them.

APPENDIX A

AMS UK GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE CHANGES TO THE SMSC REQUIREMENTS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

On 29 September 2014, the Independent School Standards were updated and a number of key changes came into effect in regards to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural standard (SMSC). This followed significant previous changes to the Independent School Standards that came into force in January 2013. This note explains the key changes and offers some guidance on the types of activities schools can do to meet the new requirements (the Department for Education has not yet published any specific guidance in relation to the changes).

Changes to SMSC

Based on the consultation process on the changes and discussions with some of our stakeholders, we understand there are 3 key changes to the SMSC requirements (although a number of amendments have been made).

Independent schools are now required to:

1. **Encourage** respect for democracy
2. **Actively promote** fundamental British values
3. Encourage respect for other people, **paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010**

During routine Ofsted inspections, schools will be assessed on how well they are meeting these new requirements, so it is very important that schools address them. Ofsted have been paying particular attention to SMSC provision in schools since January 2013 when the previous changes to the standards came into force.

Practical steps for schools to implement on the new requirements

The following are examples of the types of things schools can do to meet the new SMSC requirements (these are examples for illustration purposes only and schools should not view these as blueprints for passing an Ofsted inspection).

Encouraging respect for democracy:

- Schools can put into place democratic processes such as allowing pupils to vote on choosing their school trips or other activities. They can then explain the benefits of the democratic process which gives them the option to choose the activities themselves.
- Schools can encourage pupils to set up a pupils council in which pupils can vote to select a leader who will represent them in the school and take their concerns up with

teachers. They can then explain the benefits of pupils organising themselves in this way to deliver positive outcomes.

- Schools can encourage respect for democracy by organising activities focused on life under strict dictatorships or communist / fascist states (i.e. Nazi Germany). This allow pupils to appreciate democracy and UK law.

Actively promoting fundamental British values:

- Schools can develop a programme of promoting democratic processes in the school. This could be a 'theme of the week' type activity and could include topics such as: why we vote? how councilors and MP's are elected and the strengths and weaknesses of democracy.
- Schools can use assembly time, tutor time and citizenship lessons to explain the UK's parliamentary system and how it differs from other democratic systems in the world such as the presidential system in America. Pupils can then compare democratic and non-democratic systems in the world.
- Schools can organise visits to the Houses of parliament or to local MP's surgeries. These types of visits need to be part of an ongoing programme on promoting fundamental British values and not limited to 1 or 2 visits a year.
- Schools can organise workshops on mutual respect and what it means. Pupils can be asked to perform plays on the theme of mutual respect. The school could also organise a competition with all year groups competing. A panel comprising of elected students could form the panel of judges who decide the winner.

Encouraging respect for other people, paying particular regard to protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010:

- Schools should read the Department for Education's guidance on the Equality Act 2010, this can be accessed on:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>. This document explains the protected characteristics in detail and what regards need to be given to them by schools.
- Schools can arrange for pupils to visit local community groups of all faiths and lifestyles so that they learn about their beliefs and practices and respect them. Throughout these visits teachers should stress the need for pupils to respect all individual they meet in the communities, regardless of their faith, gender, lifestyle or background. These visits should not be isolated activities but part of an ongoing programme of engaging with the wider community.
- Schools can arrange pupils to visit disabled peoples centers to understand how they live their lives and what activities they do. They can also invite them to their schools and arrange appropriate activities for them. By doing these activities, pupils will

understand the harms of discrimination and the importance of having mutual respect and harmony in society.

- Schools should encourage pupils to respect people of all genders, faiths, lifestyles and backgrounds and teach equality between girls and boys. They can do this by having regular competitions/quiz's on themes of equality and respect for diversity.

AMS UK encourages all its member schools to start implementing the new SMSC requirements immediately. As soon as the DfE publishes any relevant guidance we will promptly disseminate this to our member schools.

If any school is struggling with implementing the new SMSC requirements, please contact your regional AMS UK contact who will be able to discuss the contents of this note with you in more detail.

AMS UK
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