

Our Lady's Catholic High School

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Love, Learn, Grow

At Our Lady's, we place Christ at the heart of everything we do. Through our school 'Being One of Ours' virtues, we nurture each individual to love, learn and grow in their unique, God-given potential, ready to be of service to the world.

Last Review: Autumn Term 2025

Next Review: Autumn Term 2027

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy at Our Lady's Catholic High School reflects the fact that we are a Catholic community.

Aim

As a Catholic community, we believe in an 'education for life' which means a development of the whole person: mind, body and spirit. Central to the Chaplaincy is the belief that the education provided at Our Lady's is also about the personal development of each individual so they can be 'One of Ours'.

Spiritual Development

Our Lady's sets out to promote spiritual development within a context of Catholic beliefs, values and worship, and seeks to provide pupils with opportunities to explore the Catholic faith and develop a relationship with God. The Chaplaincy also tries to support a journey of faith and belief for those staff and pupils whose family background is in another religious tradition. The potential for spiritual development is open to all pupils.

The Chaplaincy and the school curriculum aim to develop in pupils:

- a set of personal beliefs and values by which to live based on the Catholic faith
- a sense of transcendence – that there is more to life than 'meets the eye', more than a physical or material existence
- an awareness of order, pattern, meaning and purpose in the world – leading towards an understanding that creation is a revelation of God's loving purposes
- a sense of personal identity and self-worth and of all others as created in God's image
- an understanding of Christian teaching on life and death, on suffering, grief and loss
- an awareness that life involves choices between good and evil
- an awareness of God's love and care for them personally
- an understanding of the belief of Jesus as Saviour.

The school sets out, therefore, to provide opportunities in collective worship and throughout the curriculum and life of the school for pupils to:

- be quiet and reflect on life and the world, and 'wait on God';
- become familiar with traditional forms of Catholic prayer and worship;
- give thanks to God for their creation, preservation, salvation, and the promise of eternal life;

- use a variety of prayer forms and techniques, including own prayers; question, explore, discuss and give an account of their own belief;
- use the gifts of imagination and creativity;
- explore and express feelings and emotions;
- develop respect for others as independent, thinking, feeling people;
- face difficult or distressing matters in a context of loving Catholic teaching and support.

Spiritual development has to take place in a particular context, in our case that of Catholic belief and practice. Its distinctiveness, most importantly, consists in its capacity through a context of worship, life and teaching, to offer opportunities for all in the school community to develop a relationship with God through Jesus.

Spiritual development forms the basis for the other three areas of moral, social and cultural development.

Moral Development

The school aims to develop in pupils a moral stance which is based on ideals of love, justice, peace, truth, compassion, redemption and forgiveness based on recognition of others as created in the image of God.

The school will seek to ensure that adult relationships in the school set the best possible Christian example.

We aim to provide opportunities for pupils through the curriculum and school life to:

- develop an understanding of right and wrong;
- develop an understanding of the need for shared values and accepted rules of conduct in school and the community;
- develop self-discipline and a loving concern for others;
- understand links between behaviour and beliefs, including the teachings of the Gospel;
- stand up for and put into practice our values despite external pressures.

In order to achieve this, children need to develop the following habits and skills:

- appreciate the feelings and concerns of others;
- develop and sustain relationships;
- reflect on questions of right and wrong and on their own values;
- discuss their own beliefs and feelings;
- listen with respect to the views and opinions of others;
- exercise care and responsibility for others.

The exploration of moral issues, of questions of right and wrong, and of Catholic teaching on appropriate ways in which to live, will be fostered within the programme of collective worship and RE and through every curriculum area. The Chaplaincy offers guidance to teachers on Catholic approaches to teaching controversial or sensitive issues (see other relevant policy statements, e.g. Sex Education).

The School seeks to recognise and affirm good conduct, commitment and service to others through its reward system, through assemblies, awards, and through celebration and thanks in the context of collective worship.

Social Development

Catholics believe that we are “all one in Christ” and members of God’s family in the Church and accept Christ’s commandment to “love our neighbours as ourselves”. The Chaplaincy sets out to foster the commitment and ability to live and work with others, to share resources and to show concern and responsibility for others in the school and wider community. Pupils will be pointed to the value and importance of working, playing and praying together.

The school sets out to offer a wide range of educational, social, sporting and extracurricular activities to all its members. In sport, there will be a balance of individual and team activities, both competitive and non-competitive. Responsible leadership roles will be encouraged in a range of activities, including extracurricular.

Enterprise schemes will be characterised by stewardship of resources and care for, and enhancement of, the environment.

We aim to develop social skills and insights through the full range of activities in school involving pupils and adults. We will create situations where pupils have to relate to visitors to the school and do so with increasing politeness, tact and confidence.

Pupils will be encouraged to participate in and contribute to the life of the Church and the community through service to the needy, voluntary groups, music or other involvement in church worship, parish and community activities.

The school programme of fundraising, the way funds are raised and the Catholic, charitable and other causes chosen will contribute to developing the habit of care and support for those in need. Pupils will be given the opportunity to choose charities the school should support, and to take an active part in planning and carrying out fundraising.

Social achievement and service to church or community will be recognised and celebrated.

Cultural Development

The school aims to broaden pupils' horizons by introducing them to a range of cultural activities and experiences, by building up an appreciation of their own cultural heritage and traditions, and introducing them to examples of the variety of human cultures, beliefs and ways of life. School also aims to challenge certain cultural practices in an appropriate manner such as Female Genital Mutilation with the aim of ensuring that our pupils are safeguarded.

The planned programme includes the following:

- experience and appreciation of the rich heritage and range of cultures in Britain, in particular through English, Drama, History, RE, Music and Art;
- appreciation and respect for other cultures, faiths and ways of life, in particular through use of the Diocesan/RE syllabus and relevant curriculum materials, and through all curriculum areas;
- exploring the cultures of the pupils who attend the school;
- educational visits to museums, events and places of cultural and historic interest;
- setting out actively to promote mutual respect and harmony between different racial and ethnic groups.

International School Award and Enrichment Days

The governors and staff recognise that:

- global issues are an important part of the lives of our students living in a world where economies are increasingly interdependent and global communication is a daily reality. Our students have access to the internet and increased opportunity to travel, watch news stories from around the world, as they develop and follow for example, international sporting events as they happen
- the global dimension should be reflected in the attitudes and values of our students, the ethos of the school, the Programmes of Study and Key Skills.
- as a school we have a commitment to both gender and racial equality.

We recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. The school curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments and prepares pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and expectations in life.

Together the SMSC programme along with the three personal development Days will enable;

- Pupils to acquire an understanding of cultural traditions and an ability to respond to a variety of experiences.

- Pupils to acquire respect for their own culture and that of others and to understand core British Values.
- Pupils to develop an interest in other ways of doing things and curiosity about differences.
- Pupils to develop the knowledge, skills understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture.
- Pupils to challenge stereotypes and become well-rounded global citizens.

Curriculum:

Every year each pupil at the school will have the opportunity to develop their cultural and international understanding in well planned and focused activities across curriculum areas. This planning is based upon the above aims and uses seven Key Concepts:

1. Diversity
2. Conflict Resolution
3. Human Rights
4. Interdependence
5. Social Justice
6. Sustainable Development
7. Values and Perceptions

Evaluation:

International Education and learning about cultures forms part of our annual School Development Plan, which is evaluated regularly and reported to Governors.