

Journey Independent School

SMSC Policy

September 2026



Making Learning Inspirational

Policy Statement

At Journey Education Group, we are committed to promoting the Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) development of every student as we believe it plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. The National Curriculum 2000 states that: "The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life." At Journey Education Group, our ethos is focused on the development of the whole person and SMSC values encompass all aspects of school life and all subjects.

1. Introduction

The SMSC policy outlines our approach to fostering an environment that nurtures the holistic development of students. This policy is integral to our curriculum and reflects our commitment to valuing each student's journey. Opportunities for SMSC are both planned and spontaneous, arising out of the day-to-day experience of students and staff in and beyond the school.

Our SMSC education sits alongside our Growth Programme to help shape our students into successful, well-rounded citizens for both today and tomorrow.

The newly adopted Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy – July 2024, encompasses many of the SMSC strands alongside our Personal Development calendar and Citizenship education [Growth lessons and Character, Careers and Culture days].

2. Aims

It is our intention that our SMSC approach will develop and prepare our students for their future and as young adults. Through SMSC we help our students develop their own moral codes and informed views. It will help them to develop an inner discipline, self-confidence and help our students to become respectful and responsible.

At Journey Education group we aim to provide a curriculum enriched with SMSC promoted across all subjects, to all key stages, both in and out of the classroom and through a wealth of experiences and activities. The key qualities we promote through our SMSC education are respect, responsibility, tolerance and kindness.

We invite students to understand other cultures around them by exposing them to the Fundamental British Values of: The Rule of Law, Democracy, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and a tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. FBV are embedded into our curriculum, but we also use bespoke Character, Careers and Culture Days alongside enrichment trips and festival celebrations to promote diversity and what it means to be British.

- To promote the personal development of students through self-awareness and emotional intelligence.
- To enhance social skills, encouraging teamwork, communication, and positive peer relationships.
- To cultivate a moral framework that helps students understand ethical issues and develop a sense of right and wrong.
- To support spiritual growth by encouraging reflection on beliefs, values, and existential questions.
- To celebrate cultural diversity, promoting respect and understanding of different cultures and perspectives.
- To prepare students for responsible citizenship, empowering them to contribute positively to society.

3: Definitions with Implementation

Fostering Growth and Development in Every Student

Through collaborative planning with staff and daily interactions with students, we have established clear definitions that guide our approach to Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development. All four aspects encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and the world around them while considering the feelings and perspectives of others.

Fundamental British Values [FBV]

What is 'Britishness'? FBV are defined by the DfE as:

- (a) Democracy: Respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process
- (b) The rule of law: Respect for the basis on which the law is made and applies in England
- (c) Individual liberty: Support and respect for the liberties of all within the law
- (d) Mutual respect and tolerance: Support for equality of opportunity for all, respect and tolerance of different faiths and religions and other beliefs

Spiritual Development

- Beliefs: Encouraging discussions about a wide range of beliefs, both formal and informal, informed by the study of religions and philosophies through our Character, Careers and Culture days where RE is taught and tolerance for other faiths, as well as our own, discussed. This fosters an understanding of the diverse perspectives within our community.
- A Sense of Awe and Wonder: Creating opportunities for students to explore and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the world, through visits and half termly enrichment trips that inspire curiosity such as trips to the theatre, zoo and museums.
- Feelings of Transcendence: Providing safe spaces for students to engage in discussions about the unexplainable, allowing them to contemplate experiences that

connect them to something greater than themselves, particularly in Growth, Science and English.

- A Search for Meaning and Purpose: (in what is going on in their lives) Promoting inquiry and self-reflection, encouraging students to ask meaningful questions about their lives and experiences that contribute to their personal growth. This has involved exploring such issues as self-awareness, planning ahead, understanding the pressures placed upon us and looking beyond 16.
- Relationships: Recognising the inherent worth of each individual, fostering a sense of community, and nurturing positive relationships that support emotional and social development - the range of the educational experience offered by Journey Education Group.
- Creativity: Offering diverse avenues for self-expression through art, drama, and literature, enabling students to explore and articulate their thoughts and emotions.
- Feeling and Emotions: the sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings and how to use such feelings as a source of growth. This is embedded across the curriculum and delivered through our Growth Programme to help our students overcome barriers and provide strategies to develop their emotional intelligence and to take into life after learning.

Moral Development

Moral development involves students' understanding and navigation of values related to right and wrong, as outlined in the OFSTED Framework and in line with Fundamental British Values. This requires clarity in our institutional values and community principles.

The will to behave morally as a point of principle is fundamental to moral development. In this sense moral development is to do with understanding the principles lying behind actions and decisions and not just behaviour itself.

We therefore aim to promote moral development through: -

- quality of relationships - student council, student pledges, pastoral experience
- standards of behaviour - reward and praise, personalised targets, reflections
- quality of leadership given by the School - code of conduct
- the values the School sets and exhibits through its structures - anti-bullying policy, equality and diversity policy, behaviour policy
- the curriculum and teaching inclusive of therapies - growth programme and wider educational experience

Social Development

Social development encompasses the progressive acquisition of the skills and qualities necessary for students to participate fully in society.

We aim to enhance social development through:

- Promoting cooperation and partnership among students, as well as with teachers, staff and the wider community
- Implementing effective classroom organisation and management strategies - teachers and support staff take into account the school's criteria for effective teaching and learning
- Encouraging leadership opportunities and a sense of responsibility among students with student pledges and student council
- Providing a range of enrichment activities that promote teamwork and social interaction.

Cultural Development

Cultural development focuses on fostering an understanding of each student's cultural identity, alongside the recognition and appreciation of other cultures.

We strive to promote cultural development by:

- Explaining the influences that shape our culture and identity - Humanities, PE, Science, enrichment trips
- Expanding students' cultural horizons by exploring diverse cultures within and beyond our immediate community - Character, Culture and Careers days, RE across the curriculum, English, Growth
- Examining historical cultural features that continue to impact the present e.g. local history of coal mining and how it has shaped Doncaster's communities
- Encouraging respect and appreciation for the diverse values, customs, and cultural heritage of all individuals, including those from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds - Character, Culture and Careers days, RE across the curriculum, English, Growth Programme and enrichment trips.

4. Contribution of School Ethos and Climate

The ethos and climate of Journey Education Group play a vital role in shaping the overall educational experience. We strive for our ethos to genuinely reflect our core values and objectives.

About TEND at Journey Independent School

TEND is a yearly programme of daily lessons in Self, Earth, Community, World & Wonder, aligned to the Journey Independent School curriculum themes.

TEND is Journey Independent School's daily 15-minute lesson, running every morning across the academic year. Each half term, TEND's five pillars and nine art forms are woven together with Journey's curriculum themes — so that pupils are not just studying a topic, but living it: noticing it in themselves, in the land, in their community, in the wider world, and in the things that make them wonder.

This document maps the full year, showing how TEND's themes (Roots, Shelter, Emergence, Renewal, Flourish, Harvest) sit alongside and deepen Journey's curriculum themes (All About Me, Gothic Horror, Building the Future, Dystopia, Space & Exploration, Wild Isles). The two are not separate — they are in conversation.

The Five Pillars

 SELF — Monday	Inner life. Emotional literacy. Identity. Who am I becoming? How does the school theme live inside me?
 EARTH — Tuesday	Land, wildlife, sustainability. Journey's self-sufficiency work. How does this half term's theme show up in the natural world?
 COMMUNITY — Wednesday	Belonging, responsibility, shared life. What does this theme mean for how we live together?
 WORLD — Thursday	Global empathy. Human stories from far away. How does this theme play out across the world, for people we'll never meet?
 WONDER — Friday	Curiosity, beauty, creativity, the unanswerable question. The arts at their most free.

The Closing Ritual

Every TEND session — whatever the pillar, whatever the theme — closes with the same three questions spoken aloud by the teacher. Over a year, they become internal voices.

What did I notice?
What do I care about?
What will I tend?

Year at a Glance

Journey Independent School · TEND Programme · 36 Weeks

HALF TERM	DATES	TEND THEME	SCHOOL THEME	FOCAL ARTS	OVERARCHING QUESTION
Autumn 1	Sept–Oct	ROOTS	All About Me	Photography · Poetry	Where do I come from, and what does that mean?
Autumn 2	Nov–Dec	SHELTER	Gothic Horror	Music · Drama	What holds us together when things get dark?
Spring 1	Jan–Feb	EMERGENC E	Building the Future	Literature · Art	What is trying to grow in me, and in the world?
Spring 2	Mar–Apr	RENEWAL	Dystopia	Film · Dance	What does renewal look like in a world of warnings?
Summer 1	Apr–May	FLOURISH	Space & Exploration	Gardening · Photography	What is my place in the vastness of things?
Summer 2	Jun–Jul	HARVEST	Wild Isles	All Arts	What have I grown — in myself, and in the world?

The SMSC curriculum at Journey demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of students, ensuring a holistic approach to their development. A key feature of this is the Journey Growth Programme, which is thoughtfully embedded within the timetable to support students' emotional and social growth. These lessons respond to the individual needs of students, providing them with essential tools to build self-regulation skills, enhance emotional literacy, and overcome personal barriers to success. By focusing on these areas, the programme complements academic learning and plays a vital role in fostering overall student development.

Our teachers and learning coaches work collaboratively to sensitively deliver mandated PSHRE Growth lessons, explicit emotional regulation techniques and respond to immediate needs. We tailor individualised growth lessons to our students in groups, small or 1:1 interventions, such as Hidden Chimp and Thrive strategies across school. Teachers and Learning Coaches utilise our site to conduct walking-talking therapies outdoors, encourage development through play and nurture strong relationships that break down barriers. These positive connections are the foundation of our curriculum, continuing into the classroom to re-engage the disengaged.

In this context, we believe the following elements significantly contribute to our school environment:

- A strong emphasis on care and support for students
- A clear and consistent code of behaviour
- A well-structured rewards system, which includes:
 - Recognition through praise
 - Target setting and regular reviews
- A comprehensive anti-bullying policy

- A variety of enrichment activities as well as break and lunchtime activities to encourage positive peer relationships
- Diverse teaching and learning styles that cater to individual needs
- Opportunity to shape provision through the Student Council. Students apply at the start of each term, then meet with SLT to present and strategise their improvements to the provision.
- Ownership of the environment and responsibility through weekly pledge badges. Students are encouraged to prove their commitment to kindness, academic success and environmentalism. Students are responsible for selecting their successor based on their own observations in the learning environment.

5. Learning Experiences

As a school, we are dedicated to enriching our students' experiences across the curriculum. We encourage them to:

- Discuss personal matters of concern
- Build relationships with both adults and peers
- Cultivate a sense of belonging within the school community
- Embrace challenges by exploring diverse beliefs and values
- Engage in discussions surrounding philosophical questions
- Understand the reasons behind individuals' spiritual and moral decisions and how these choices impact their lives
- Encounter aesthetically stimulating experiences
- Appreciate moments of silence and reflection

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

SMSC will be monitored and evaluated through Quality Assurance procedures which include lesson observations, work scrutiny, meetings with leadership and audits of schemes of work. Specific SMSC learning walks may take place. Informal and formal observations of pastoral check in time, growth lessons, 1:1s and drop down days will take place on a regular basis. The SMSC merits of trips and guest speakers will also be monitored and audited.

- A whole school and curriculum audit
- Impact evidence of parent/student voice from our Growth work
- Analysis of bullying, racism and derogatory language data [reduction of incidents] collated on individual learners termly using our Growth Tracker, Behaviour Log, Reset Log and our Exclusion Register.
- Review policy every three years or sooner, as deemed necessary.

6. Staff Training and Development

Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their understanding and implementation of SMSC education within their teaching practices.

7. Conclusion

At Journey Education Group, we believe that the SMSC development of our students is

fundamental to their overall education and future success. By embedding SMSC across all aspects of school life, we aim to support the holistic growth of every student, cultivate empathetic, informed, and engaged citizens who contribute positively to the diverse world in which they live.

Policy Review Date: September 2027

Approved by: Angela Cousins Headteacher

Date: September 2026