

Spiritual, Moral, Religious and Cultural (SMRC) Development Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on a bi – annual basis

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out John Grant School's approach to Religious Education (RE) and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, recognising our context as a complex-needs special school supporting children and young people with SEND from EYFS to Post-16. It aligns RE with whole-school personal development, inclusion and safeguarding, and clarifies entitlement, curriculum, assessment, staffing and governance.

2. Note on terminology

National policy and inspection frameworks refer to SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development). In this policy we use SMSC and explicitly include pupils' religious and cultural development through the RE curriculum and wider life of the school.

3. Legal and policy framework

- RE is part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils. Parents/carers may withdraw their child (and pupils aged 18+ may withdraw themselves) from all or part of RE and from collective worship.
- Special schools must provide RE and daily collective worship so far as is practicable, taking account of pupils' age, aptitude and SEND.
- Maintained schools must promote pupils' SMSC development and the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- The Prevent duty applies to schools as a safeguarding duty; RE and SMSC contribute to building resilience and to proportionate, contextual risk assessment and education.
- The SEND Code of Practice (0–25) and the Equality Act 2010 require inclusive practice, reasonable adjustments and accessible communication so all pupils can access and benefit from RE and SMSC provision.
- Inspection: Under Ofsted's renewed framework and toolkits (from November 2025), Personal Development & Wellbeing and Inclusion are evaluated areas. This policy sets out how RE and SMSC contribute to those areas for all pupils, including those with complex needs.

4. Curriculum intent for RE and SMSC

- Affirm each pupil's identity, dignity and family traditions (religious and non-religious), building cultural capital and community cohesion.
- Develop religious literacy: enabling pupils to hold balanced, well-informed conversations about religions and worldviews, using disciplinary lenses (theology, philosophy, human/social sciences).

- Provide meaningful encounters with Christianity and other principal religions and worldviews represented in Britain, appropriate to Norfolk and our local community.
- Enable rich SMSC development through reflection, wonder, ethical thinking, relationships education, and engagement with Fundamental British Values.
- Ensure entitlement and ambition for every learner, with pathways and adaptations for pupils with profound, multiple and complex needs, pre-subject-specific learning and subject-specific learning.

5. Implementation (how we teach)

5.1 Curriculum and timetabling

- The school follows the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus (2019) and associated diocesan resources, adapted for SEND. RE is taught discretely and/or within themed, enquiry-based units across EYFS–KS4, with appropriate provision in Post-16.

5.2 Pedagogy and adaptation

- Multisensory, experiential learning with repetition, overlearning and generalisation to real contexts (including visits, visitors and immersive environments).
- Cognitive accessibility: chunking, scaffolding, dual coding, symbol-supported texts and objects of reference; augmentative and alternative communication (AAC); use of sensory stories and intensive interaction where appropriate.
- Curriculum pathways: pre-intentional to intentional communicators; semi-formal and formal learners; subject-specific study for those for whom it is appropriate.
- Safeguarding by design: trauma-informed practice; dignity-preserving care routines; risk assessment and reasonable adjustments for visits to places of worship and for external visitors.
- Planned opportunities to explore Fundamental British Values across RE and wider curriculum; explicit teaching of respectful dialogue, disagreement and critical thinking at an age-appropriate level.

5.3 Collective worship / reflective gatherings

Daily collective worship is provided as far as practicable and is appropriate to pupils' age, aptitude and SEND. The majority across a term will be of a broadly Christian character, with inclusive opportunities that respect and welcome pupils of all faiths and none.

Parents/carers may request withdrawal. Where appropriate, the school may seek a determination from SACRE if needed.

5.4 SMSC across the curriculum and wider life

- Curriculum mapping identifies SMSC and British Values opportunities across subjects, enrichment, tutor time, assemblies and community projects.

- Personal Development & Wellbeing: mental health and wellbeing, online safety, prejudice-motivated bullying (including religion/belief) and respectful relationships are taught through RSHE/PSHE and reinforced through RE and pastoral systems.
- Pupil voice is planned and accessible (e.g., councils, communication-friendly surveys) to model democracy and inclusion for pupils with SEND.

6. Planning, resources and staff development

- Long-term sequencing follows the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. Medium-term planning uses enquiry questions and identifies disciplinary lenses, core knowledge, vocabulary and adaptations for each class/cohort.
- Resources include high-quality artefacts, visuals, sensory materials and symbol banks, with accessible versions of texts. Class teams may borrow specialist kits; the Subject Leader oversees auditing and storage.
- Professional development: staff access RE and SMSC training (local SACRE/Diocese/NATRE/RE Today) and SEND-specific pedagogy; subject updates are cascaded.

7. Assessment, recording and reporting

- Assessment is primarily formative, focusing on engagement, communication, knowledge recall and application, and the development of disciplinary thinking, adapted to pathways.
- Evidence may include annotated work, photographs, observation notes and pupil voice (including AAC outputs).
- Progress is reviewed within Solar (where used), EHCP outcomes (communication, cognition and learning, social and emotional), and reported to parents/carers through Annual Reviews and reports.

8. Inclusion, equality and safeguarding

- We make reasonable adjustments to ensure our pupils are not placed at a disadvantage in accessing RE, SMSC and visits/visitors.
- Curriculum content and conduct uphold protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) and actively challenge discrimination and prejudice-motivated bullying, including on grounds of religion or belief.
- External visitors and visits to places of worship follow safeguarding checks, risk assessments and accessibility planning; parental communication is proactive and transparent.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- Governing Board: approves policy; monitors statutory compliance and impact for pupils with SEND; receives Subject Leader reports.

- Headteacher/SLT: ensures time, staffing and resources; oversees curriculum, inclusion and safeguarding; approves visits/visitors.
- Subject Leader for RE/SMSC: curriculum intent and sequencing; resource audit; CPD; support and coaching; monitoring (planning samples, learning walks, pupil voice); annual action plan.
- Class Teachers and Class Teams: adapt planning and deliver high-quality lessons; gather evidence; communicate with families; enable pupil voice.
- SENCO and Therapists: advise on access, communication and regulation strategies; contribute to EHCP outcomes and reviews.

10. Parental engagement and right of withdrawal

We view parents/carers as partners. Termly information highlights planned units, visits and key vocabulary/symbols. Parents/carers may request withdrawal from RE and/or collective worship. We will invite discussion to clarify aims and adaptations and to minimise unintended loss of curriculum entitlement, and will supervise pupils appropriately if withdrawn. Pupils aged 18+ may withdraw themselves.

11. Monitoring and review

The Subject Leader and SLT monitor curriculum quality and access through planning reviews, learning walks and evidence sampling, with a focus on complex needs pathways and equity of participation. Findings inform the annual subject report and improvement plan. The Governing Board reviews this policy annually.

12. Key references (summary)

- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and school inspection toolkits (from November 2025).
- DfE guidance: Promoting fundamental British values through SMSC (2014).
- Home Office: Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (2023, updated 2024).
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015, updated 2024) and Equality Act 2010 duties (reasonable adjustments).
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998 s.71: parental right to withdraw from RE and collective worship.
- Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994: RE and daily collective worship ‘so far as practicable’.
- Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2019) and Diocese of Norwich support materials.
- Ofsted subject report: ‘Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report’ (April 2024).