PROMOTING BRITISH VALUES POLICY

Every voice matters. Every person belongs.

Every right carries responsibility.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. It establishes how these values are made meaningful, accessible and relevant to pupils through curriculum, school life and everyday experience.

At Riverside Bridge School, the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs are embedded within the culture, curriculum and everyday life of the school.

For our pupils, these values must be more than abstract concepts. They should be experienced, understood and applied in ways that are meaningful and accessible to each learner. This may begin with being given a genuine choice, having a means to express an opinion, recognising another person's needs, experiencing fair and consistent boundaries or participating within a group. As pupils develop, these experiences provide foundations for increasingly sophisticated understanding of rights, responsibilities, diversity, democracy, law and citizenship.

Riverside Bridge School is a diverse and inclusive community. We recognise that respect for difference includes respect for different cultures, backgrounds, identities, faiths and beliefs, including those who hold no religious belief. The school actively promotes equality, challenges discrimination and prejudice and supports pupils to understand that individual rights exist alongside responsibilities towards others.

Fundamental British values are promoted through the curriculum, the Curriculum Drivers, pupil voice, relationships, community participation, Preparing for Adulthood and the everyday experiences of school life.

Our aim is to prepare pupils, at a level meaningful to them, to participate safely and positively within modern Britain: able to communicate their views, make choices, understand appropriate boundaries, respect the rights of others and contribute to their communities.

Our Responsibilities to pupils

At Riverside Bridge School, we will:

- promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs;
- ensure that British Values are made meaningful and accessible according to each pupil's communication and developmental profile;
- ensure every pupil has an appropriate means through which their voice, choices and preferences can be expressed and recognised;
- provide genuine opportunities for pupils to participate in decisions that affect them;

- provide genuine opportunities for pupils to participate in decisions that affect them;
- help pupils understand that rules and boundaries contribute to safety, fairness and the rights of others;
- support pupils to develop increasing choice, autonomy and independence;
- teach pupils about rights and responsibilities in developmentally appropriate ways;
- promote respect for different identities, cultures, backgrounds, faiths, beliefs and perspectives;
- challenge discrimination, prejudice, intolerance and stereotypes;
- provide opportunities for pupils to participate within their school and wider communities;
- ensure that pupils encounter different people, experiences, cultures and perspectives through a broad curriculum;
- develop pupils' understanding of citizenship and participation as they prepare for adult life;
- promote safe and responsible participation in society, including within digital environments;
- ensure that staff model respect, fairness, inclusion and responsible behaviour;
- recognise and respond appropriately to concerns relating to extremism or radicalisation in accordance with the school's safeguarding responsibilities; and
- ensure that no pupil is excluded from experiencing and developing an understanding of British Values because of their communication, cognitive, sensory, physical or other needs.

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APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

PROMOTING FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES AT RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

Upholding rights. Embracing diversity. Building citizenship.

Fundamental British values form part of Riverside Bridge School's responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The five fundamental British values are:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

These values are not unique to Britain, nor are they taught as a narrow definition of what it means to be British. Riverside Bridge School recognises that many of these principles are shared across cultures and communities represented within our diverse school population.

Values that are experienced

For many pupils at Riverside Bridge School, abstract concepts such as democracy, liberty or the rule of law require carefully planned, concrete experiences before they can be understood.

British Values are therefore developed through pupils' lived experiences.

A pupil who is supported to communicate yes or no, express a preference or make a meaningful choice is beginning to experience individual liberty.

A pupil whose communication is recognised and acted upon is experiencing the principle that their voice matters.

A pupil participating in a class decision, school council or other form of pupil voice is experiencing democracy.

A pupil learning that agreed expectations help to keep themselves and others safe is developing foundations for understanding the rule of law.

A pupil learning alongside someone who communicates, behaves, worships, looks or lives differently from them is developing mutual respect and an understanding of diversity.

These experiences become increasingly sophisticated as pupils mature and according to their individual developmental profiles.

British Values and the Curriculum Drivers

The school's Curriculum Drivers provide a natural framework through which fundamental British values are experienced across the curriculum:

- A Sense of Self supports identity, choice, autonomy, rights and responsibility;
- A Sense of Community develops participation, fairness, responsibility and understanding of others;
- A Sense of Culture broadens understanding of identity, diversity, faith, belief and different perspectives;
- A Sense of Wonder encourages curiosity, questioning, enquiry and respectful exploration of ideas; and
- A Sense of Future supports citizenship, rights, responsibilities and participation in adult life.

The relationship is not intended to create a separate British Values curriculum. Instead, the Five Drivers provide meaningful contexts through which these values can be encountered and applied.

Preparing for life in modern Britain

As pupils grow older, their experiences should become increasingly age-appropriate and connected to adult life.

Depending upon the individual learner, this may include developing understanding of:

- personal rights and responsibilities;
- making informed choices;
- public services and institutions;
- laws and expectations within the community;
- equality and discrimination;
- different faiths, beliefs and cultures;
- voting and democratic participation;
- online participation and safety;
- employment and workplace expectations;
- community participation;
- contributing positively to society.

Preparation for life in modern Britain therefore applies to every pupil and every curriculum pathway. The level of abstraction may differ, but the entitlement does not.

British Values at Riverside Bridge School ultimately begin with a straightforward principle that every pupil should experience that they have a voice, that they have rights and responsibilities, that other people have rights too, and that they belong within a diverse community in which they can participate and contribute.

Section 02

AN ACCESSIBLE AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE APPROACH

Adapting experiences. Enabling understanding. Ensuring inclusion.

Fundamental British values must be meaningful to the individual learner. At Riverside Bridge School, pupils have diverse communication, cognitive, sensory, physical and developmental profiles, and a single approach to teaching these concepts would not provide equitable access.

The school therefore promotes the same fundamental values for every pupil while adapting how those values are experienced, communicated and understood.

Starting with lived experience

For some pupils, understanding begins through immediate and concrete experiences rather than abstract explanation.

This may include:

- experiencing genuine choice;
- communicating acceptance or refusal;
- being listened to and responded to;
- taking turns;
- sharing space and resources;
- recognising familiar expectations;
- experiencing consistent boundaries;
- participating in group decisions;
- encountering people who are different from themselves;
- developing increasing awareness of themselves and others.

For other pupils, these foundations develop into more explicit learning about democracy, laws, rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, faith, belief and citizenship.

The complexity of the learning changes; the entitlement to experience these values does not.

Pupil voice and communication

Every pupil has a voice, regardless of whether they communicate through speech.

Staff use pupils' personalised communication systems to enable them, as far as possible, to express preferences, make choices, communicate opinions, accept or refuse, contribute to decisions and advocate for themselves.

Pupil voice may therefore be expressed through speech, signing, symbols, AAC, Objects of Reference, gesture, eye-pointing, body language, behaviour or other recognised forms of communication.
Staff must be careful not to interpret an absence of spoken language as an absence of opinion.

Development rather than simplification

Accessibility does not mean reducing British Values to superficial activities.
For example, democracy is not simply holding a vote; the important learning concerns having a voice, listening to others and understanding that decisions may reflect the views of a wider group.
Similarly, the rule of law is not simply following classroom rules, and mutual respect is not simply being polite.
Staff consider the underlying concept and identify experiences through which the individual pupil can begin to understand and apply it.

Age-appropriate learning

British Values should develop with the pupil's age and stage of life.
An older pupil accessing a pre-formal or semi-formal approach may continue to require highly concrete and experiential teaching, but the contexts through which values are explored should mature appropriately.
For example, choice and autonomy for a younger pupil may be developed through play and familiar routines, while an older pupil may experience the same underlying principles through community access, relationships, personal care, travel, enterprise, work-related learning or decisions about their future.
This ensures that pupils are not offered an infantilised understanding of citizenship because of their developmental profile.

Section 03

DEMOCRACY

Hearing every voice. Respecting opinions. Shaping decisions.

At Riverside Bridge School, democracy begins with the principle that every pupil's voice matters. Pupils are supported to understand that they can express views, preferences and opinions and that these should be listened to and respected. They also gradually develop an understanding that other people have views of their own and that shared decisions sometimes require consideration of different perspectives.

Experiencing democracy

Opportunities to experience democratic participation are embedded throughout school life and may include:

- making meaningful choices;
- expressing preferences and opinions;
- contributing to decisions about learning or activities;
- class discussions and decisions;
- pupil voice activities;
- school council or representative groups;
- surveys and consultations;
- voting where appropriate;
- contributing to decisions about aspects of school life.

The way pupils participate is adapted to their communication profile so that democratic participation is not limited to those who can speak, read or write.

Choice is not the same as democracy

The school recognises an important distinction between individual choice and collective decision-making. Choosing a preferred activity develops autonomy and individual liberty. Democracy develops further when pupils begin to recognise that other people's views also matter and that decisions affecting a group may need to take account of different preferences.

For some learners, this understanding will emerge gradually through supported experiences of turn-taking, waiting, sharing, choosing together and responding to the decisions of a group.

For others, learning may develop into more explicit understanding of voting, representation, government, elections and democratic institutions.

Pupil participation

Pupils should have meaningful opportunities to influence their school experience rather than pupil voice becoming a token activity.

Staff and leaders therefore seek pupils' views in accessible ways and, where appropriate, communicate what happened as a result.

As pupils mature, opportunities for participation become increasingly connected to community life, citizenship, Preparing for Adulthood and self-advocacy.

Through these experiences, pupils develop the foundations for understanding that having a voice brings both the right to be heard and the responsibility to recognise the voices of others.

Section 04

THE RULE OF LAW

Understanding boundaries. Promoting fairness. Protecting rights.

Understanding the rule of law begins with experiencing environments in which expectations are clear, fair, consistent and designed to protect people's rights and safety.

For many pupils at Riverside Bridge School, this understanding develops initially through familiar routines, boundaries and everyday experiences before progressing towards more explicit understanding of laws and responsibilities within wider society.

Rules, boundaries and safety

Pupils are supported to understand, at an appropriate level, why particular expectations or boundaries exist.

Rather than teaching rules simply as instructions that must be obeyed, staff help pupils make connections between expectations and their purpose, for example:

- keeping themselves safe;
- keeping other people safe;
- respecting other people's rights;
- looking after shared environments and belongings;
- participating safely within the community;
- understanding appropriate boundaries.

This supports pupils to develop understanding rather than compliance alone.

Individual understanding

Some pupils may not yet understand abstract explanations of rules, consequences or law. Staff therefore use communication, modelling, predictable environments, repetition and direct experience to make expectations understandable.

A pupil's disability, communication need or dysregulation must also be considered when interpreting their behaviour.

The school's approach to the rule of law should therefore remain consistent with its Positive Support principles. Understanding why behaviour occurs and providing appropriate support is compatible with maintaining clear and safe boundaries.

Developing understanding of law and responsibility

As pupils mature and where developmentally appropriate, learning may extend to:

- laws within the wider community;
- rights and responsibilities;
- personal and public safety;
- consent and boundaries;
- online behaviour;
- relationships;
- travel and road safety;
- workplace expectations;
- discrimination and equality;
- consequences of actions;
- the role of services and institutions that help keep people safe.

These concepts are taught through meaningful and age-appropriate contexts rather than as disconnected factual knowledge.

The aim is for pupils to develop the greatest possible understanding that rights, freedoms and responsibilities exist within a society in which laws help protect both themselves and other people.

Section 05

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

Enabling choice. Developing autonomy. Empowering independence.

At Riverside Bridge School, individual liberty is developed through pupils having meaningful opportunities to exercise choice, develop autonomy, express preferences and make increasingly informed decisions about their own lives.

For many pupils, the foundations of individual liberty begin with learning that their communication has an effect: that they can choose, accept, refuse, request, express discomfort and influence what happens around them.

Choice and autonomy

Staff create genuine opportunities for pupils to make choices throughout the school day.

Depending upon the individual learner, this may include choices about:

- activities and resources;
- food and drink;
- leisure and recreation;
- who or what they engage with;
- ways of completing or presenting learning;
- personal appearance and preferences;
- community activities;
- future options;
- aspects of their education and adult life.

Choice should be meaningful rather than offered simply to demonstrate that a choice has taken place.

Where possible, pupils should experience the outcome of their decisions and develop an understanding that choices can have consequences.

The right to communicate acceptance and refusal

An important aspect of autonomy is recognising pupils' communication of acceptance, refusal, preference and discomfort.

Staff should understand how individual pupils communicate these responses and respect them wherever possible, while recognising that there may be circumstances in which adults have safeguarding, health or other duties that require intervention.

As pupils develop, they are supported to understand personal boundaries, consent, privacy and their right to seek help.

Developing informed decision-making

Individual liberty involves more than simply being offered choices.

Pupils are progressively supported to develop the knowledge and experience needed to make increasingly informed decisions. This includes learning about personal safety, relationships, health, money, online activity, community participation and future options at a level appropriate to the individual.

Staff balance protection with opportunity, recognising that pupils need appropriately managed experiences of decision-making, challenge and risk in order to develop confidence and independence.

Liberty and responsibility

As understanding develops, pupils are supported to recognise that individual freedom exists alongside the rights and freedoms of others.

Preparation for Adulthood provides increasingly meaningful opportunities for pupils to exercise autonomy through community participation, travel, relationships, enterprise, work-related learning, independent living and decisions about their future.

The aim is for every pupil to have the greatest possible voice, choice and control over their own life.

Section 06

MUTUAL RESPECT AND TOLERANCE OF DIFFERENT FAITHS AND BELIEFS

Respecting difference. Valuing diversity. Challenging prejudice.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to creating a community in which difference is recognised, respected and valued.

Pupils are supported to understand that people may have different identities, cultures, families, abilities, appearances, experiences, faiths, beliefs and perspectives, and that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Mutual respect

Mutual respect is developed through everyday relationships as well as through planned curriculum learning.

Staff model respectful interactions and support pupils to:

- recognise and respond to others;
- share spaces and experiences;
- develop positive relationships;
- recognise personal boundaries;
- consider the needs and feelings of others;
- resolve differences appropriately;
- recognise unfair or discriminatory treatment; and
- understand that respect applies even when people disagree.

For some pupils, these concepts begin through very early experiences of shared attention, turn-taking, interaction and awareness of others. For others, they develop into increasingly complex understanding of relationships, equality, discrimination and social responsibility.

Faith, belief and diversity

Pupils are provided with meaningful opportunities to encounter and learn about different religions, beliefs, cultures and traditions.

This may occur through:

- Religious Education;
- the wider curriculum;

- stories, music, art and food;
- celebrations and significant events;
- visitors and community experiences;
- places of worship where appropriate;
- the experiences of pupils, families and staff;
- opportunities to explore different perspectives.

Learning should move beyond festivals and celebrations alone and help pupils recognise that faith and belief can influence people's identities, values, practices and ways of understanding the world.

Pupils should also develop an age- and developmentally appropriate understanding that some people do not hold religious beliefs.

Respect rather than agreement

Promoting tolerance does not require pupils to agree with every belief or viewpoint they encounter.

As pupils' understanding develops, they should be supported to recognise that people can hold different views while continuing to treat one another with dignity and respect.

This is particularly important for pupils developing more sophisticated discussion, debate and critical thinking.

Challenging prejudice and discrimination

Prejudice, discriminatory language and behaviour that undermines the dignity or rights of others are challenged appropriately.

Responses should take account of the pupil's communication and developmental profile and seek to develop understanding rather than relying upon sanction alone.

Where appropriate, pupils are taught about equality, stereotypes, discrimination and protected characteristics through accessible and age-appropriate learning.

Section 07

CURRICULUM, WIDER SCHOOL LIFE AND MONITORING

Embedding values. Enriching experiences. Evaluating impact.

Fundamental British values are promoted through the whole educational experience at Riverside Bridge School rather than through a separate programme of study.
They are reflected within curriculum learning, relationships, pupil voice, community experiences, Preparing for Adulthood and the culture and expectations of the school.

Across the curriculum

Opportunities to develop British Values occur naturally across different curriculum subjects and Areas of Learning.
For example, pupils may encounter:

- democracy through pupil voice, discussion and collective decision-making;
- the rule of law through citizenship, community safety and understanding rights and responsibilities;
- individual liberty through choice, self-advocacy and independence;
- mutual respect through relationships, collaboration and understanding difference;
- different faiths and beliefs through RE, culture, history, literature, arts and community experiences.

Teachers should make purposeful connections where they genuinely enhance learning rather than attempting to attach a British Value artificially to every lesson.

SMSC

Fundamental British values are closely connected to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).
Through SMSC and the wider curriculum, pupils encounter opportunities to explore identity, relationships, values, culture, community, responsibility and different perspectives.
These experiences contribute to pupils becoming increasingly confident participants within school and wider society.

Learning beyond school

Community learning provides particularly important opportunities for pupils to experience rights, responsibilities and social expectations within authentic contexts.

As pupils mature, opportunities may include accessing shops and services, using transport, visiting cultural and community settings, enterprise, work experience and participating in activities beyond school.

These experiences enable pupils to practise communication, decision-making, social responsibility, independence and respectful participation within their communities.

Safeguarding and the Prevent duty

Promoting fundamental British values forms part of the school's wider safeguarding culture.

Staff remain alert to concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism and follow the school's safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

The school's approach should remain proportionate to the pupil's age, communication and developmental understanding. British Values education should build pupils' confidence, belonging, critical thinking and understanding of others rather than creating fear or suspicion of difference.

Monitoring

Leaders monitor the promotion of fundamental British values through the school's existing curriculum and quality assurance processes rather than creating a separate evidence system.

This may include consideration of:

- curriculum planning and learning;
- pupil voice and participation;
- classroom and wider-school practice;
- community experiences;
- SMSC provision;
- Preparing for Adulthood;
- staff understanding;
- equality and inclusion;
- relevant safeguarding information.

Monitoring should consider not simply whether British Values appear within curriculum documentation, but whether pupils are genuinely experiencing opportunities to develop voice, choice, responsibility, respect and participation.

Section 08

RELATED POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

The Promoting British Values Policy should be read alongside the school's wider policies and frameworks, including:

- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Total Communication Policy
- Positive Support Policy
- Preparing for Adulthood Policy
- PSHE Education Policy, including Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.
- CEIAG Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Information Report

Together, these documents support Riverside Bridge School's commitment to preparing pupils to participate safely, confidently and positively within their communities and within modern Britain.

At Riverside Bridge School, promoting British Values means enabling every pupil to experience that their voice matters, their choices have value, their rights are respected and they have responsibilities towards others. Through inclusive and meaningful experiences, pupils develop the foundations to participate, contribute and belong within a diverse society.