

Sinai School Ethos

“The world stands on three things: Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Chassadim”

Shimon the Righteous (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

Sinai School aims to enrich the lives of all our pupils with knowledge of core Jewish values and ethics that are suitable for those of all religions and none, and to prepare our Jewish pupils for vibrant Jewish lives based on Torah ideals and practices, an appreciation of our shared heritage and a love of Israel.

Our ethos is based on the Jewish principle that our lives should be built on a foundation of three components: Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Chassadim.

Torah (Jewish learning)

Our teaching and learning inspire our pupils to engage actively with Jewish texts, preparing them for lifelong Jewish learning, spiritual growth and religious practice. We encourage pupils to confidently articulate their Jewish identity, cultivating attitudes of responsibility and love towards their Jewish heritage, its teachings and culture.

Avodah (Service)

Throughout each day our pupils are given guidance and inspiration to develop spiritually, building a connection with God through tefillah (prayer) and mitzvot (commandments and good deeds). Our pupils will have the opportunity to develop confidence and competence to participate in modern orthodox religious services, Jewish lifecycle events and communal life.

Gemilut Chassadim (Acts of kindness)

All Sinai pupils are nurtured to become confident, caring and responsible British citizens. They are encouraged to think and act with consideration and compassion, including raising money for charity and engaging actively in social and environmental action. They are taught to be knowledgeable and respectful of the beliefs, customs and practices of others.

Authority

Our school is part of the family of schools whose foundation body is the United Synagogue and whose religious authority is the Office of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. We are committed to connecting our Jewish pupils to the United Synagogue's core values, including Living, Learning and Caring together with a strong belief in the centrality of Israel in Jewish life. A Rabbi (who is acceptable to the Office of the Chief Rabbi) is consulted on all matters that may relate to the Jewish life and Ethos of the school.

Responsibilities

Promoting our Ethos is not restricted to the Jewish Studies classroom, its curriculum and staff. Every teacher is encouraged to find opportunities to integrate Jewish life and values into the curriculum.

Functional responsibility for maintaining the Ethos lies with the Headteacher supported by the School Rabbi and Head of Jewish Studies (or equivalent). They will support all staff to ensure that they are aware of the school Ethos and how to promote it through their teaching. All staff should be able to raise concerns with the Headteacher/Head of Jewish Studies where they feel that the Ethos is not being upheld.

Oversight is provided by the Governing Board. This is delegated to the Jewish Studies (JS) Committee. Any Ethos-related concerns should be reported to the Chair of the JS committee. When questions arise, the school should consult with the nominated School Rabbi.

Jewish life and culture

Our Jewish Studies programme incorporates both formal and informal educational opportunities to enable pupils to actively participate in a Modern Orthodox Jewish way of life.

Our school calendar aligns (where possible) with the Jewish year. We celebrate Shabbat, festivals and the Jewish new month, at the same time we will timetable activities and events to take account of restrictions during the Omer, the Three Weeks and earlier starts to Shabbat in the winter.

Our uniform and staff dress codes reflect our Modern Orthodox Jewish values, including the requirement for all boys to wear kippot and tzitzit at school.

Parents, extended families, staff and governors are encouraged to participate in both regular and extracurricular activities, which celebrate and enrich the Jewish life of our pupils and their families.

Israel

Sinai pupils learn about Israel as the Jewish homeland and a central component of Jewish life. Through teaching of its language, history and culture, we encourage all pupils to develop a special bond to the land, the people and the State. Ivrit (modern Hebrew language) is taught as a modern foreign language, but also as a vehicle linking our Jewish heritage and practice to Israel.