



# storyybrook

## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development Policy





## Contents

1. Purpose
2. Scope of this policy
3. Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
4. Understanding SMSC in a specialist SEMH context
5. Key principles
6. Aims of SMSC development
7. Implementation: curriculum and practice
8. Promoting Fundamental British Values
9. What this looks like in practice
10. Roles and responsibilities
11. Monitoring, evaluation and impact
12. Links to other policies
13. Summary statement





## 1. Purpose

Storyybrook takes its duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils seriously, including the duty to promote British Values. The purpose of this policy is to set out how Storyybrook promotes the **spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development** of all pupils as a central part of its curriculum and wider provision.

At Storyybrook, SMSC development is not a discrete subject but a core thread running through all aspects of school life, reflecting the school's ethos, values and trauma-informed approach.

Our school has a distinctive identity and ethos, popular with parents/ carers and families, where the development of social, spiritual and emotional intelligence is as important as academic achievement. The range of experiences we offer supports our children academically whilst also ensuring that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are met.

We are incredibly proud of our curriculum and the experiences we provide children who in turn demonstrate how they are deeply proud of our school, their British values and diverse society to which we belong and play an active part. We are proud that our curriculum gives our children the knowledge, skills, confidence and self-belief to lead a happy and fulfilled life by encouraging them to always aim high and work towards following their aspirations in life.

At Storyybrook, our decisions, behaviours and actions are values-driven. Our school values are at the core of everything we do. They underpin our teaching and learning, and provide an environment which prepares our pupils as confident, happy citizens.

As a specialist SEMH setting, we recognise that many pupils arrive with disrupted experiences of education, relationships and belonging. Therefore, SMSC development is fundamental to:

- rebuilding trust and engagement
- supporting emotional regulation and identity
- developing relationships and social understanding
- preparing pupils for life beyond school

## Our Vision

At Storyybrook we envision a school where every child feels safe, understood and valued; where relationships come first and every individual experiences a true sense of belonging.





We strive to create an inclusive community in which pupils develop the confidence, resilience and skills to thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Through nurture, high expectations and meaningful support, we empower our pupils to overcome barriers, rebuild trust in education, and believe in their own potential.

Our vision is for every child to leave Storyybrook as a confident, capable and compassionate individual, ready to engage positively with the world around them.

## **Our Values**

At Storyybrook, our values underpin everything we do. They shape our relationships, guide our decisions, and create a culture where every child feels safe, understood and able to thrive.

### **Belonging**

We create a school where every child feels accepted, valued and part of a community. We recognise that many of our pupils have experienced disruption or exclusion, and we work tirelessly to ensure they feel safe, connected and included in all aspects of school life.

### **Respect**

We treat everyone with kindness, dignity and fairness. We teach pupils to understand and value differences, to listen to others, and to recognise the impact of their words and actions on those around them.

### **Resilience**

We support pupils to develop the confidence and skills to overcome challenges. Through a trauma-informed approach, we help children understand their emotions, build regulation strategies, and learn that mistakes are opportunities for growth.

### **Inclusion**

We are committed to removing barriers to learning and participation. We celebrate diversity and ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background, needs or experiences, have equal opportunities to succeed and be heard.

### **Integrity**

We act with honesty, consistency and fairness in all that we do. Staff model strong moral values and provide clear, predictable boundaries so that pupils feel safe, secure and able to trust the adults around them.





## Love

We place care, compassion and relationships at the heart of our school. We believe that positive, trusting relationships are the foundation for learning, growth and wellbeing, and we demonstrate unconditional positive regard for every child.

These values are lived through our daily practice and are reflected in our relational approach of **regulate, relate, repair and reflect**, ensuring every child is supported to feel safe, succeed and thrive

SMSC development is intrinsically linked to safeguarding, wellbeing and behaviour, and contributes directly to a culture of safety, consistency and belonging.

## 2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all staff, pupils and stakeholders at Storybrook and is implemented through:

- the formal curriculum
- therapeutic and SEMH provision
- behaviour and relationships practice
- wider school experiences

All staff are responsible for promoting SMSC development as part of their professional role.

## 3. Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and curiosity in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions





- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues

**The social development of pupils is shown by their:**

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, leadership and responsibilities, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

**The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:**

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- knowledge of Britain’s democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

**4. Understanding SMSC in a Specialist SEMH Context**

At Storybrook, SMSC development is understood through a relational lens, recognising that behaviour is communication and development may not follow a typical trajectory .

**How each area looks in our setting:**

**Spiritual Development**

- Developing self-awareness, reflection and emotional understanding





- Supporting pupils to explore feelings, identity and meaning
- Building a sense of belonging and connection

## Moral Development

- Understanding right and wrong through relational and restorative approaches
- Developing accountability and empathy
- Learning about consequences in a supportive, non-punitive way

## Social Development

- Building relationships and trust
- Developing communication and cooperation skills
- Learning to manage conflict and repair relationships

## Cultural Development

- Understanding and respecting diversity
- Exploring different beliefs, values and traditions
- Developing a sense of identity and belonging within a wider community

This approach reflects the school's commitment to holistic, inclusive development and aligns with its SEND and SEMH provision.

## 5. Key Principles

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is crucial for individual pupils and important for society as a whole. It is the heart of what education is all about - helping pupils grow and develop as people and effective participants in modern Britain.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is cross curricular and promotes the aims and principles of the policies for, Religious Education, Collective Worship, PSHE, Sex and Relationships Education, and Equal Opportunities These policies all underpin the Curriculum model, putting the child at the centre of all we do.

It is an expectation that all staff, in all subjects, can and should make a contribution to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of pupils through the curriculum and through the use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies e.g. discussion, reflection, pupil participation, circle time and also through their own conduct. Please see the section on the school website that details how SMSC is taught and developed through each curriculum area.

**SMSC development at Storyybrook is underpinned by the following principles:**

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Review By: R. Burbridge





- Relationships first - positive relationships are the foundation for development
- Trauma-informed practice - behaviour is understood in context
- Consistency and predictability - essential for emotional safety
- Inclusion and belonging - all pupils feel valued and respected
- Safeguarding as a priority - all development is underpinned by safety
- High expectations with support - all pupils can succeed

**These principles reflect the school's core values of:**

- belonging
- respect
- resilience
- inclusion
- integrity
- love

## **6. Aims of SMSC Development**

Storybrook aims to:

- promote the holistic development of all pupils
- develop self-awareness, confidence and emotional literacy
- support pupils to understand and manage their behaviour
- build positive relationships and social skills
- foster respect for diversity and inclusion
- prepare pupils for life in modern Britain
- support pupils to become confident, resilient and responsible individuals

These aims align with the school's ethos of supporting pupils to **re-engage with education and thrive socially, emotionally and academically.**

### **General Aims for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

We aim to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and in society
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life





- enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong, to respect the civil and criminal law of England and to appreciate the rule of law is essential for well-being and safety
- enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in Britain and to respect and support participation in the democratic process
- promote respect and consideration for differences in gender, race, religion
- help each pupil achieve their full potential across all areas of the curriculum
- develop the individual strengths of all pupils and to help and provide support in areas for development
- inspire and stimulate the pupils in order to foster a love of learning and enquiry, to reason rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills
- help our pupils towards independent learning and to equip them with all life skills in order for them to take their place in a fast -changing society
- ensure there is continuity and progression in skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum
- develop respect for religious and moral values and understanding of other races, religions and ways of life while challenging opinions, stereotyping or behaviours in school that are contrary to British values
- help the pupils understand the world in which they live
- develop a sense of responsibility, consideration for others, self-respect and self confidence
- promote good relationships between home, school and the local and wider communities

### Spiritual Development

This relates to the quest for individual identity and the search for meaning and purpose in our existence. It leads towards the understanding of self and others. It has to do with feelings, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. It is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith and spiritual development is therefore accessible to everyone.

Children are given opportunities to reflect upon the meaning of spiritual experiences. **Examples of experiences commonly regarded as spiritual include:**

- curiosity and questions
- awe and wonder
- connection and belonging
- heightened self-awareness
- acts of Worship





- deep feelings of what is felt to be ultimately important
- a sense of security, well-being, worth and purposefulness

**Our school supports children’s spiritual development by:**

- giving children the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples’ lives
- encouraging children to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- giving children the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they impact on people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- developing a climate or ethos within which all children can grow and flourish, enjoying individual liberty and mutual respect
- celebrating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals, including tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- promoting learning opportunities which value children’s questions, encourage deeper questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.

**Moral Development**

Moral development at Storyybrook is understood within a trauma-informed and relational framework. We recognise that many pupils may have experienced inconsistent boundaries, disrupted relationships or limited opportunities to develop a secure understanding of right and wrong. As a result, pupils may require explicit teaching, modelling and supported practice to develop moral understanding and accountability.

At Storyybrook, moral development is not approached through punishment, but through consistent boundaries, restorative approaches and relational support, enabling pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. Pupils are supported to develop empathy, reflect on their actions and repair relationships, in line with the school’s approach of regulate, relate, repair and reflect.

**Our school supports children’s moral development by:**

- providing clear, consistent expectations and boundaries that are predictable and safe
- using restorative conversations to explore behaviour, impact and responsibility
- supporting pupils to regulate emotions before addressing behaviour, recognising that dysregulation can affect decision-making
- explicitly teaching right and wrong, including understanding rules, fairness and consequences
- modelling respectful, calm and fair interactions at all times





- creating a safe environment where pupils can reflect, make mistakes and learn from them
- helping pupils develop empathy, including understanding the feelings and perspectives of others
- challenging discriminatory language, prejudice and harmful behaviours in a supportive and educational way

## Social Development

Social development at Storyybrook is supported through a relational and trauma-informed approach, recognising that many pupils may have experienced difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships. Pupils are explicitly taught and supported to develop social skills, including communication, cooperation and conflict resolution, through structured opportunities and consistent adult modelling.

### Our school develops pupil social development by:

- identifying key values and principles on which school and community life is based
- fostering a sense of community, with common, inclusive values
- promoting racial, religious and other forms of equality
- encouraging pupils to work co-operatively
- encouraging pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities
- providing positive experiences to reinforce our values as a school community -for example, through assemblies, team building activities, residential experiences, school productions
- helping pupils develop personal qualities, which are valued in a civilised society, for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, interdependence, self-respect and awareness of others' needs
- providing opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life
- providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility
- providing positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community

## Cultural Development

Cultural development at Storyybrook is approached in a way that recognises the importance of identity, belonging and inclusion, particularly for pupils who may have experienced disruption, exclusion or a lack of representation. We aim to ensure that all pupils see themselves reflected positively within the school environment while also developing an understanding and appreciation of the diverse world around them.





Within a specialist SEMH setting, cultural development also supports pupils to develop a sense of belonging, self-worth and connection, which are essential for emotional security and engagement in learning.

## **Our school develops cultural development by:**

- promoting a strong sense of belonging and identity, ensuring pupils feel represented, valued and included
- celebrating diversity through curriculum content, displays and wider school experiences
- providing opportunities to explore different cultures, beliefs, traditions and ways of life
- supporting pupils to understand and respect differences in a structured and supportive way
- addressing prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination through discussion and education
- providing access to creative and expressive opportunities, including art, music, drama and storytelling
- developing pupils' understanding of their place within the local, national and global community
- using real-life experiences and discussions to build cultural awareness and social understanding

This approach ensures that pupils develop their understanding in a way that is developmentally appropriate, relational and aligned with the school's SEMH provision.

## **7. Implementation: Curriculum and Practice**

SMSC development is embedded across the school through a broad, balanced, integrated and therapeutic curriculum.

### **Curriculum Delivery**

SMSC is delivered through:

- PSHE and RSE - developing relationships, identity and wellbeing
- SEMH curriculum - emotional literacy, regulation and resilience
- Core subjects - exploring values, diversity and real-world contexts
- Creative curriculum - art, music and storytelling to support expression
- Outdoor learning - promoting reflection, teamwork and resilience

### **Therapeutic and Relational Practice**

SMSC is also embedded through:





- nurture-based approaches
- emotional regulation strategies
- restorative conversations
- consistent adult modelling

Storybrook's regulate → relate → repair → reflect model underpins all interactions

## **Wider Opportunities**

Pupils are provided with opportunities to:

- participate in school council and pupil voice
- engage in community activities
- celebrate achievements
- develop independence and responsibility

## **8. Promoting Fundamental British Values**

At Storybrook, the promotion of Fundamental British Values is an integral part of the school's commitment to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. These values are embedded across all aspects of school life and are closely aligned with the school's ethos, curriculum and relational approach to behaviour and development .

As a specialist SEMH setting, we recognise that many pupils may have experienced disrupted education, inconsistent boundaries or difficulties in understanding social expectations. Therefore, the teaching of British Values is approached through a developmentally appropriate framework, ensuring that pupils are supported to understand not only the values themselves, but how they apply in real-life situations.

The promotion of British Values at Storybrook is closely linked to safeguarding and the development of pupils' social, emotional and moral understanding. Through consistent modelling, explicit teaching and everyday interactions, pupils are supported to:

- understand the importance of rules, fairness and safety
- develop respect for themselves and others
- build the confidence to express their views appropriately
- learn to make safe and responsible choices
- appreciate diversity and challenge discrimination





This work contributes directly to the school's safeguarding culture, ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to stay safe, form positive relationships and engage responsibly with the wider community .

At Storyybrook, British Values are not taught in isolation but are embedded within the curriculum, behaviour systems and wider school experiences, ensuring that they are consistently reinforced and meaningfully understood by all pupils.

## **Storyybrook actively promotes:**

### **Democracy**

- pupil voice and school council
- opportunities to express views and make decisions

### **Rule of Law**

- clear expectations and consistent boundaries
- understanding consequences through restorative approaches

### **Individual Liberty**

- supporting pupils to make safe choices
- developing independence and confidence

### **Mutual Respect and Tolerance**

- promoting inclusion and diversity
- challenging discrimination and prejudice

These are embedded through daily practice and curriculum delivery.

## **9. What This Looks Like in Practice**

At Storyybrook, SMSC development is visible in everyday interactions and routines.

### **Staff will:**

- model respectful, calm and consistent behaviour
- use relational language and restorative approaches
- support pupils to regulate emotions before addressing behaviour
- create opportunities for reflection and discussion





## **Pupils will:**

- learn to identify and manage emotions
- build positive relationships with peers and adults
- develop empathy and understanding
- take responsibility for their actions

## **The environment will:**

- be safe, predictable and nurturing
- promote inclusion and belonging
- celebrate diversity and achievement

This ensures that SMSC development is consistently implemented across the school.

## **10. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Governing Body**

- ensure compliance with statutory requirements
- monitor effectiveness of SMSC provision

### **Headteacher and Leadership Team**

- embed SMSC across the school
- monitor implementation and impact
- ensure staff training and development

### **All Staff**

- model positive behaviour and relationships
- embed SMSC in daily practice
- support pupils' development consistently

## **11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact**

The school will monitor SMSC through:

- pupil voice and feedback
- behaviour and wellbeing data
- learning walks and observations





- staff discussions and reflection
- curriculum review

### **Impact is measured through:**

- improved behaviour and relationships
- increased emotional regulation
- pupil engagement and attendance
- positive social interactions

SMSC provision is reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the cohort.

## **12. Links to Other Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEMH Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- RSE Policy

## **13. Summary Statement**

At Storyybrook, SMSC development is central to the school's ethos and practice. Through a consistent approach, pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to thrive socially, emotionally and academically.

This policy reflects the school's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils can develop a strong sense of identity, belonging and responsibility, preparing them for life in modern society.

