



## Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Policy

### Equality Statement

Centre Academy East Anglia is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief. We provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment

Review Date: Sep-25  
Last Review Date: Sep-24  
Held on website: Yes

### Signed by Chair of Proprietor Body

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Murphy'.

Signed:

Date: 12/09/24

Chair of Proprietor Body

Mr R Murphy

*Centre Academy East Anglia is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.*

## ***Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Policy***

Centre Academy East Anglia (CAEA) is dedicated to providing and promoting a supportive and nurturing environment for all its students, so that each may achieve his or her full potential within the school curriculum, within the school's social activities and context and within British society as a whole.

Although non-denominational, CAEA has at its heart a Christian *ethos*, echoed by the proximity of a beautiful 12th century church, 'St Marys', and the historical significance of the Main House, which for hundreds of years provided a home for the minister at the church. However, CAEA also promotes international understanding within our culturally diverse school population by emphasizing shared community and collective responsibility as well as individual responsibility—and by having our children actively involved in school and community activities. The school is committed to the belief that excellence in education can only be fully achieved when partnerships between school, parents, students, and community work as a cohesive whole. We receive positive comments about students' respectful actions in the community and involvement in community activities.

Central to CAEA's *ethos* is the belief that the education provided is not only about the gaining of knowledge and the acquiring of essential skills, important though they are, but that it is also about the personal development of each student, in its fullest sense. This includes enabling students to develop their self-esteem, self-discipline, respect for others and responsibility to the environment through their involvement in a variety of programs and other initiatives.

### **Role of School Assemblies**

Assemblies generate a feeling of "belonging" and togetherness as a school family, where students' achievements are recognised and valued, and the spiritual dimension emphasised as an important part of school life. Important messages about concern for others or the environment can be conveyed.

The aims for our assemblies are:

- To celebrate achievement
- To promote students' spiritual development
- To increase their understanding of religious practices such as prayer and meditation and the religious experience which underlies them
- To promote the *ethos* of the school through the expression and celebration of shared values
- To provide an opportunity for individual reflection on spiritual and moral concerns.

An all-school assembly is held weekly where an aspect of religious or moral education is discussed. Individually and collectively, our children participate in:

- an illustrated talk by an invited speaker/charitable organisation
- exploration of religious/moral themes
- 'Celebration' assemblies where, for example, an individual child may inform the school about a particular religious holiday or similar event (Eid, Easter or Hanukah, for instance).

In addition, each week there is a theme that is discussed by the class tutor during one of the morning tutor periods.

### **Spiritual development**

Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. They will also develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to foster their own lives and independence.

Students' spiritual development involves the growth of their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve. They will learn to explore their beliefs and experience, respect values and discover their inner selves.

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.

The DCFS guideline outlines four levels that RE teaching should address:

- The school community
- The community within which the school is located
- The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life
- The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance, recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

### **Religious Observance**

Contemplation and reflection are important aspects of all religions, and pupils will have some first-hand experience of this through prayers, singing and reading from holy books. As we live in a predominately Christian society our religious observance is predominantly Christian-based. The local vicar has an important role in carrying out the above. The vicar is involved with our Harvest, Christmas and Easter services. They are aware of the school's aims for the teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and has a copy of the school policy.

CAEA celebrates the concept of religious and cultural diversity by, for instance, having parents representing various religions and nationalities lead discussion groups of students so that they can question, debate and ultimately gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the diversity that is part of modern-day Britain.

CAEA's methodology is that of discussion, exploration and reflection. This methodology is carried out through what is taught in its curriculum, through participation in music, drama and artistic activity, through collective worship and through the School's *ethos*.

The teaching of RE is concerned with the development of understanding of religion as a significant area of human experience. It is also an aspect of personal growth enabling the individual to explore questions concerning the meaning of life. The moral element is the process whereby a person develops responsible attitudes towards others, and skills of moral judgement about what are considered to be right and wrong.

As CAEA is a special needs school teaching is individually tailored to the needs of our students and the community. In practice this means that subjects such as RE, History or English might be taught discretely but also together within a humanities framework, with links to PSHE and Citizenship.

### **The Multi-Cultural Dimension**

The aims of RE are in line with the school's policies on Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality, which offer equal opportunities for all. In line with these policies, we wish pupils to understand, appreciate and respect peoples of all different religions, races, ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities. In this, our RE goals are supported by a variety of courses. Our study of GCSE History, for example, explores the history of slavery in the New World, the fight for equality that People of Colour continue to experience and the religious and cultural gifts that they have ultimately given the country.

## Religious Aims:

- RE encourages students to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; it encourages them to express their responses and to develop individual tolerance of others
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other World Religions and to recognise religion as an important expression of human experience.
- RE enables students to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- These goals are reinforced through our social skills, where students discuss and debate issues informing their individual and collective identities. The issue of identity is particularly important for special needs students, many of whom have experienced anxiety and bullying prior to joining us, to the extent that they experience significant difficulties with self-concepts and other manifestations of individual identity.
- To teach students to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and help to challenge prejudice. In this regard, our course in International Issues (Current Affairs) acquaints CAEA students with many of the forms of prejudice that people experience throughout the world, the various forms of prejudice others face becomes increasingly clear to our students in what is largely a discussion-based class. This may lead to the question of which forms of prejudice they note in the UK—and this often then leads to a discussion of British values and how these values can/cannot fight prejudice.
- To appreciate moral values such as honesty, liberty, justice, fairness and concern for others
- To investigate and understand the questions and answers that religions can offer about the nature, meaning and purpose of life

Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims.

## Moral development

Students' moral development involves them acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the will to do what they believe is right. Education will provide them with the tools that they need to make these judgments. Moral education will encourage students to be able and willing to reflect on the consequences of their actions and to learn how to forgive themselves and others. They develop knowledge, skills and understanding, qualities and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and act on them. It is appreciated that different people may hold differing opinions concerning what is right or wrong, due to alternative religious or moral beliefs, but the school's *ethos* supports the "rule of law" (DfE 2013).

Students' moral development is addressed throughout the curriculum and in social times within the school, for example where students act as 'mentors' and look after new or vulnerable students. Discussions take place in tutor periods daily and will often address any wrongs or difficult situations that the pupils have observed during the school day or that they have observed via the news or on the internet. Here, our Current Affairs course reinforces such goals.

Through observation, staff assess the development of positive attitudes within a student e.g. how the student empathises with and understands the beliefs and values of others, and how he/she forms personal judgements. This understanding of others is aided by the teaching of social skills to all classes.

As religious and moral views are often controversial and involve personal decision and commitment, it would be wrong to assess the personal stances of students in relation to such matters. A student's view in relation to a moral dilemma will not be assessed as right or wrong, although the process of arriving at

that view may be assessed. Staff will record a student's strengths and particular needs in the student reports to parents.

### **Moral Aims**

- A developing sense of responsibility not only for their own actions, but for their responsibilities to others.
- A developing awareness of, and pride in, their own unique gifts, talents and privileges, and a parallel rejection of all forms of prejudiced perception of others on the basis of class, race, sex, religion or nationality
- An appreciation of the importance of honesty, truthfulness and the development of personal integrity
- An awareness of the feelings, needs and rights of others
- A growing disposition towards generosity by helping those less fortunate or weaker than ourselves
- An appreciation of the importance of being kind to others and a clear rejection of unkindness, cruelty or bullying. In our PSHE, social skills and tutoring groups, students are encouraged to share some of their experiences with regard to the more negative aspects of human behaviour—and conversely, the more positive ones, and the reasons behind both.

### **Social development**

Students' social development involves them acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to all communities.

At CAEA students are required to learn their obligations and the responsibilities/constraints that go with joining a 'school family', but also to enjoy the satisfaction of being part of a thriving and positive community; they understand that all members of the school faculty are individuals, thus different, and should be appreciated as such. Students are given the opportunity to experience a variety of social roles, but are also expected to be role models for each other, and especially younger pupils, as they develop into adulthood. Social development is seen to be closely related to the development of moral principles.

### **Social Aims**

CAEA's socially-based programs and initiatives are particularly important because many of our special needs students have experienced various forms of intimidation, persecution, bullying and the like prior to beginning at the school. Accordingly, many have not had the chance to experience more positive opportunities that should be part of a child's overall social possibilities. Thus, in addition to helping our children become increasingly comfortable with relationships, plus in social situations and in socially-based roles, we provide opportunities for them to understand the individual and collective self, to experience leadership roles and to learn principles of decision-making. Specifically, we:

- Provide opportunities for students to work in groups to experience a variety of social roles, leadership, supporting etc.
- Provide opportunities for different age students to experience working co-operatively in partnership
- Provide opportunities for students to exercise leadership and responsibility
- Provide opportunities for students to learn to respond to the initiatives of others, and what it means to share a common purpose
- Provide opportunities for students to understand the 'political' aspects of living in society

- Provide opportunities for students to be involved in a decision-making process, for example decisions regarding boarding; this will involve democratic participation.

## **Cultural development**

Students' cultural development involves them acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and providing them with opportunities to participate in cultural activities. CAEA actively promotes the fundamental British values of “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs” ( DfE, 2014).

We do not give ‘lip service’ to these values and principles. Rather, our efforts are grounded in the belief that to understand these values our students must experience fundamentally what they mean.

--Thus, with regard to democracy, our students experience the rigors of elections for School Council, they engage in active debates concerning contemporary social and moral issues, and they enjoy discussions and initiatives that proceed from the tutor periods.

--Respect for the rule of law is developed through their inculcating the axiom that ‘there is no such thing as freedom without responsibility.’ Thus, our students understand that the school, like any other country or organisation, must be grounded in rules/laws for the good of the whole. Accordingly, our students must accept and adhere to rules that overall are intended to ensure collective fairness and well-being—but they are also encouraged to offer what may be alternative opinions that at the very least will receive a fair hearing.

--Individual liberty and mutual respect are concepts that are particularly germane to a school. In essence, it is appreciated that while individual liberty can in many instances be encouraged and applauded, there are other times when it may threaten the needs of the many. Accordingly, students at CAEA are given frequent opportunities to achieve on individual levels, but they are also expected to balance these with respect for their peers—and therefore, they learn that sensitivity to others in many instances should and must prevail.

--CAEA students acquire a respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity about differences. In large measure, these goals are achieved by the provision of a wide-ranging and diverse education which encourages students to discuss, debate, experience and take part in whole school experiences. These embrace the cultural, social, religious and moral aspects of man—and as such, form the basis for a CAEA education.

A purpose of education at CAEA is to develop the students' understanding and appreciation of the music, art, drama, poetry, science and technology of the society in which they live. It is, however, appreciated that cultural development is not limited to school and that parents will have a major impact on their child’s understanding of the world around them and the historical context of culture.

## **Cultural Aims**

- To provide students with the knowledge of the nature and roots of their own cultural traditions and practices, including historical, social, religious, aesthetic, ethnic or political and also of the key features of other major cultural groups within their own society
- To develop an understanding of the diversity of religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic and political traditions and practices within their society
- To encourage a personal response and accomplishment in a range of cultural fields; these might include literature (both prose and verse); music; technology (including information technology); art and design; and sport.
- To enlarge students' capacity to relate what they learn, in school generally and in particular areas of the curriculum, to their appreciation of wider cultural aspects of society, and to evaluate the quality and worth of cultural achievements.

## **Achieving the Aims**

The moral, spiritual, social and cultural (personal) aspects of a student's development do not form part of any separate curriculum area's scheme of work at CAEA; they are considered to be a part of the whole school environment. The formation of character, beliefs, and values is really the development of character and personality and is not something which can be attained by formula, curriculum organization or prescription.

To further its aims, CAEA has a number of more formal structures which are intended to contribute to the general process of moral, spiritual, social and cultural development. These structures support the *ethos* of the school and contribute in many ways towards the development of a spiritual, moral, social and cultural environment.

### **1) The Curriculum**

All subjects and all teachers can and do contribute to personal development simply by their interaction with pupils during lessons. However, certain subjects such as PSHE, Citizenship, SEL, English, Current Affairs, American Literature, Drama, History, Geography, and Sport have, by their subject matter, a particular contribution to make.

### **2) The Tutor System**

Each student is a member of a Tutor Group whose Tutor is responsible for their academic, social and personal welfare. As part of their role, Tutors conduct four/five tutor periods a week which, as well as dealing with routine administration, will at times, both explicitly and implicitly, deal with the promotion of personal values.

### **3) Mentoring**

All new students are allocated a mentor within their tutor group; the mentor who will ensure that the new student is aware of the timetable, where the class is and break times etc.

### **4) Year Activities**

Across the school specific activities take place which are explicitly designed for further personal development. Across the school a commendation system is used, with Certificates provided for extra special attainments or out of school achievements.

### **5) Co-Curricular Activities**

There are a diverse variety of activities which make a major contribution to personal development, including visits to the Theatre, to Art Exhibitions and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

### **6) Responsibility and Leadership**

The system of Head/Deputy Head Student and the School Council provide both formal and informal opportunities for students to exercise leadership, service and responsibility.

### **7) Special Services**

During the school year there are occasions, such as Harvest Festival, the Carol Service and Remembrance Day, which are celebrated in St Mary's church. These serve both to remind the school of its heritage and enable it to celebrate collectively.

### **8) The School Ethos and Rules**

There is so much more to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development than just conforming to a set of rules. It is important, however, to have a well regulated and disciplined environment for any educational achievement. CAEA has policy documents on the school codes of behaviour that are based on the fundamental tenet of mutual respect, and these together with the Christian ethos of the school (implicitly) are expressions of the values that CAEA seeks to encourage. They are considered to be a vital ingredient in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.

**Finally:**

At CAEA, as noted in our mission statement, we offer a supportive and nurturing programme and environment for all our students so that they may achieve their full academic potential. We also emphasize education for the whole child in order to instill in our students those values that we believe are needed as they begin to master the essential life skills that their emergence into adulthood will require. Ultimately, it is essential that our students see themselves as individuals, as members of the school and finally, as persons who will go on to become worthwhile participants in the Britain of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Section 80(1), Education Act 2002

Section 79 (1), School Standards and Framework Act

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

PSHE Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy