

CVSE Multicultural Policy (incorporating British Values)

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Purpose of the Policy

The Department for Education published in November 2014 guidance on promoting British values in schools and furthering tolerance between different cultural traditions to ensure young people leave school prepared for life in modern Britain. The guidance was aimed at helping both independent and state-maintained schools understand their responsibilities in this area. All have a duty to 'actively promote' the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (values that were first set out by the government in the 'Prevent' strategy in 2011).

As CVSE currently operates only as a Nursery, this policy is most relevant to **Section 1.5 of the EYFS** and its focus on **Understanding the world**.

Calder Valley Steiner Education also takes note of advice from its local Council, namely Calderdale Council, in this area. Calderdale Council has published a number of guidance papers, including '**Advice & Guidance Toolkit Designed to Assist in Promoting British Values in Schools**', and '**Inspection of Schools when promoting British values**'. The CVSE **Safeguarding, Prevent** and **Equal Opportunities** policies (see list of related policies at the end of this document) are also intrinsic to promoting British values across all aspects of CVSE.

British Values and furthering tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions as part of the Steiner-Waldorf curriculum

Department for Education advice (2014) states that:

Aspects of SMSC can be developed through virtually all parts of the curriculum and infused within the day to day operation of a school, e.g. in its behaviors and ethos, although some subjects and activities are likely to be more relevant than others. Expectations in all areas must be adjusted for the age and ability of pupils, including those with special needs.

This advice is in tune with the founding principles of Steiner Waldorf education going back to 1919, that the development of the human being as a socially responsible human being should permeate all aspects of the curriculum. Indeed, the notion of individual freedom and respect and tolerance of others, and what Rudolf Steiner termed **ethical individualism** in his fundamental philosophical work *The Philosophy of Freedom*, goes back further in the development of Steiner's philosophy, while underpinning Steiner-Waldorf education. Though not taught directly in a school setting, it is an active concept that freely underpins the work of the teacher since it embodies our responsibility to the world in its totality. Its natural consequence it also a genuinely liberating notion of freedom, such that, 'To *live* in love towards our actions, and to *let live* in the understanding of the other person's will, is the fundamental maxim of free human beings.' (Chapter 9.) The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum allows for a broad and flexible age-appropriate approach, where particular subject areas may be integrated into a specific Main Lesson block, giving added depth, meaning and context to the subject matter being taught at any one time. The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural programme (SMSC) at a school seeks to develop notions of freedom, understanding and tolerance throughout a school in an age-appropriate way. The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum and teaching methods also makes provision for pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in Britain. Calder Valley Steiner Education seeks to do this in the following ways and situations.

How does Calder Valley Steiner Education promote multiculturalism and further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions?

The Steiner-Waldorf approach gives many opportunities for children of all ages to be introduced to different cultural traditions and beliefs, thereby developing an appreciation of the gifts and values of the culture from which they come while also developing an appreciation and respect for other cultures and other ways of viewing the world. This will be done with consideration to the ethnicity of the pupils and staff within the school, as well as with regard to wider cultural, seasonal and practical considerations. The Nursery aims to give children gifts from many different cultures, faiths and belief systems, both past and present, so that they may understand as fully as possible their own culture and the age in which they live. The ultimate aim of this, and of Steiner Waldorf education generally, is to enable children to grow into balanced, open minded, socially responsible and free thinking individuals.

Section 3.13 on Values from *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* states:

‘Steiner Waldorf education seeks to make the questions of human values the central element of the curriculum.

‘The children in any class come from varied social and cultural backgrounds. These groups of mixed religious, ethnic and national elements coalesce into one social group which stays together for the entire school time. The class is thus a microcosm of the society around them and here they learn to respect and understand differing individual gifts and weaknesses both in academic and social terms.’

Technology

Children recognise that a range of simple or mechanical everyday technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Examples of such technology available in the Kinedergarten include: scales for weighing; oven for baking; construction of dens and houses using planks, furniture and fabrics; opportunity to cook over an open fire; use of water butt; use of wheel-barrow; properties of sand.

Children also experience on site technology such as smoke alarms and the fire alarm, digital camera, mobile phone for use in emergencies.

Children also experience a wide range of technologies during their walks.

§ Early Years/Nursery.

Section 6.4 Early Years Education – Aims and Objectives from *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* includes directions for *Encouraging personal, social and moral development*:

‘Children learn, through their creative play and through their daily social activities, to interact with each other. In the Nursery they learn to share, to work together, and to co-operate. They

know and trust their teachers and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and adults. Teachers and children care for and respect each other...

‘There are moments of reverence each day, and teachers lovingly create opportunities for children to experience joy, awe and wonder. Kindness is practised by teachers and encouraged in the children. **Festivals provide rich cultural and religious experiences for the child. Traditional fairy tales and nature stories [both of which may be selected from any culture, as appropriate] address the feeling realm and gradually awaken a fine moral sense for knowing right from wrong.** The teacher sets the example and has certain expectations for the children.’

The place and importance of Festivals within the Steiner Waldorf curriculum is outlined below.

§ Age-specific issues relating to multiculturalism and directions for Steiner Waldorf teachers

In keeping with the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum generally, issues relating to multiculturalism will always be taught in an age-appropriate way. This and other related issues are addressed in the chapter ‘The Nature of Culture and Multiculturalism in Waldorf Schools’ by Dr. Jeffrey Kane in *Waldorf Education. A Family Guide* (Michaelmas Press: Amesbury, MA, 1995). This may be taken as a guide for teachers, where the author suggests that, ‘teachers should bring stories, myths, histories, ideas, insights and religions from each culture, from Africa, from Asia, from South America, from Europe from all over the world into their teaching. They should do so to the extent these resources reveal some aspect of our humanity, an aspect of our humanity that teachers believe is ready to be revealed to students at their particular stage of development. Each culture is like a light, not a full spectrum of light, but a limited spectrum of light. And each culture reveals a different aspect of ourselves and of humanity. Each teacher has to ask, “What aspect or aspects of their humanity are my students ready to explore?” And might find that it is an aspect that is best expressed by African literature, or by Middle Eastern history, or by Buddhist religious beliefs. Each culture presents a limited spectrum, and the teacher’s job is to determine what spectrum to bring to the students so that they may observe their own humanity in a new way. If Waldorf education is successful, the student receives a full spectrum of light, a full, rounded perspective of herself or himself as a human being.’ [p. 95.]

How does Calder Valley Steiner Education promote British Values?

The Nursery does this by encouraging children to:

- have a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about the world around them and participate actively in artistic, social or cultural activities;
- recognize the difference between right and wrong, understand that actions have

consequences, and apply this in their own lives;

- cooperate well, celebrate diversity and resolve conflicts effectively;

Practical aspects of the curriculum in which British values are promoted, cross-cultural awareness is developed, and knowledge of public services and institutions is fostered:

Walks and local environment:

- During the children's walks, and as an extension to knowledge of their local environment, the teacher will bring to the children's attention objects and events representative of public services and institutions. These might include the following: maintenance of roads, bridleways, footpaths, canals and railway lines (representing means of transport and communication); post boxes (representing the postal service); telegraph poles and transmitters (telecommunications); pylons (electricity services and National Grid); refuse lorries (refuse collection and disposal and Local Council services generally); ambulance or police car (emergency services generally); reservoirs and sewerage works (water supply and treatment). Always beginning with the observation of the object or event within their own local context, the children may be led to a knowledge of its wider significance, and of those people who work to provide it. This will always be done in a sensitive and age-appropriate way.
- Children are aware of, and help with local flood alleviation work, for example sweeping leaves and clearing storm drains, helping with local green dam (building) projects, and clearing invasive plants (e.g. Himalayan Balsam).
- **Handwork.** The children will always be made aware of the origin and processes behind the materials they use (such as wool for knitting, and an awareness of sheep/hill farming). Wherever possible, local materials are sourced so that the children are aware of the full production cycle of the materials they are using, and the wider services used.
- **Gardening.** Through gardening, the children will become aware of the wider significance of food production, sustainability, the significance of locally grown foods, food security, and a knowledge of what food can be grown in the United Kingdom, and what is imported.
- **Music.** Through music, and in particular singing and the children's direct experience of English folk song, their knowledge and awareness of English cultural traditions and practices (such as songs connected with farming, the sea and fishing, village life, work songs generally, songs commemorating national events and so on) will be deepened. Also, songs from other cultures: African, Hebrew etc.

§ Celebration of Festivals.

Besides religious texts, stories, myths, fables and fairytales, an appreciation and respect for different cultures will be fostered through the celebration of a diverse mix of festivals. This is done for children of all ages, from Nursery upwards, and the aim is to enable the children to experience the meaning behind the festival in a living, non-judgemental way.

The celebration of a festival will always have many dimensions to it, so that the developing child's intellectual, emotional and physical can all be engaged in a multi-sensory way. This will often involve stories describing the origins of the festival, craft activities, music and dance

(which might include learning a song in a new language), cooking food relating to the festival, as well as a seasonal aspect.

- The teacher will generally follow and make a selection from the seasonal festivals as outlined in the standard Steiner Waldorf text ***All Year Round. A calendar of celebration*** by Ann Druitt, Christine Fynes-Clinton and Marije Rowling (Hawthorn Press: Stroud, 2011). In doing so, it will be expected that each class will follow the cycle of the seasons, the teacher selecting key festivals, and relating folklore, beliefs, myths and customs appropriate to that festival and the culture from which it comes. They will also bring other dimensions to that festival, such as preparing a festive display for the classroom, as well as teaching songs, games, and undertaking crafts and recipes.
- To gain the widest possible cultural perspective, the teacher may also draw upon the complementary text: ***Festivals Together. Guide to multicultural celebration*** by Sue Fitzjohn, Minda Weston and Judy Large (Hawthorn Press: Stroud, 2006). The celebration of festivals and faiths will be undertaken with consideration for the children and staff within the Nursery and Stay and Play Groups, within the local community, and also with a view to deepening an understanding of cultural traditions and faiths from across the United Kingdom and around the world.
- A Nursery teacher will have an almost infinite variety of **world festivals** to choose from. A teacher might consider including as part of a Ring Time topic themes, stories and activities connected with some of the following (a very selective list!):
 - Various lantern festivals from across the world (e.g. Chinese, Hindu or other tradition).
 - Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.
 - Thanksgiving.
 - Ramadan.
 - Various flower festivals (e.g. Japanese traditions).
 - Chinese New Year (an imaginative supplement to a Numeracy Main Lesson).
 - Various Kite festivals
 - Chanukah, the Jewish festival of lights.
 - Baisakhi, the Sikh and Hindu New Year.
 - Various festivals connected with the moon and sun.
 - Festivals such as the Chinese New Year or Diwali give opportunities to build cultural awareness through sharing different foods, music, dance.

'We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together – black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu – a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.'

Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr.

Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- This document will be reviewed annually
- This document will be discussed and reviewed at EY Teachers' Meetings

Related Policies

CVSE Safeguarding policy (including the Prevent Duty)

CVSE Equal opportunities policy