



LANCASTER STEINER SCHOOL

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS WRITTEN BY SAM ORAM & SU EASTHAM

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Spiritual Development Policy

Introduction

Lancaster Steiner School provides pupils with a spiritually rich environment in which they feel safe and able to be themselves. There is a strong sense of reverence within the Steiner educational philosophy which underpins the ethos of the school. Children are shown by example ways to express themselves and talk about their lives to their teachers as needed. Lancaster Steiner School's Spiritual development is done in context, relating to practical life and is inter-disciplinary. The spiritual development of our pupils is a very important element of the schools' general approach to education and is a part of all subjects. It develops the children's life skills and their understanding of others. At our school we strongly promote:

- Telling the truth
- Respecting the rights and property of others
- Being considerate to one another
- Caring for those who are less fortunate
- Accepting responsibility for one's own actions
- Self-discipline
- Doing the right thing.

We will not accept:

- Bullying
- Cheating
- Deceit
- Cruelty
- Irresponsibility
- Dishonesty
- Selfishness
- Disrespect

Relationship to Other Policies

Please also read Curriculum Policy, Send Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Promoting Good Behaviour Policy, and our British Values Statement

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To make clear to parents, staff and other interested parties the school's approach to the spiritual and moral development of its pupils;
- To ensure that spiritual and moral development in line with Steiner Waldorf teaching at Lancaster Steiner School is held central in the school's provision;
- To equip LSS pupils with real life skills which enable them to make a positive contribution to society (Every Child Matters).
- To explain how we intend to actively promote the British values

Spiritual Development in School

The values and attitudes promoted by the staff influence the behaviour and attitudes within the school. The quality of relationships and the atmosphere within the school reflect an appreciation of their shared values.

In developing the spirituality of children, we help them to become aware of

- The beauty of the natural world - to respect all living things
- The mystery and wonder of existence
- The world of imagination and creativity
- The value of the non-material dimension of life
- The need to understand oneself and one's feelings
- The need to value oneself and one's feelings.
- The need to recognise the feelings and achievements of others

In this way, spiritual development encourages

- Self-awareness
- Reflection
- Reasoning
- A sense of enduring identity
- Good relationships
- Co-operation and empathy
- The formation of long term ideals

The school will promote spiritual development through:

- Fostering high self-esteem by encouraging children to take risks or face challenges in their learning and play within a secure and positive environment.
- Demonstrating its appreciation for work of the child's imagination and provide opportunities for them to use their own creativity and imagination.
- Offering opportunities for aesthetic experience in art, music, dance, and literature.
- Posing questions that encourage children to consider issues of meaning and purpose.
- Helping pupils to question things which could prevent them from developing into mature adults.
- Developing good listening skills in the children
- Improving co-operation and understanding in relationships, providing opportunities such as group activities where children have constructive and enjoyable interaction with others; it is important that they sometimes work with those children who they would not normally choose as partners.
- Fostering emotional well-being by encouraging children to express their feelings and to have the ability to control their emotional behaviour.
- Developing the capacity for evaluative reasoning and critical thought by encouraging children to look beyond the surface.

Opportunities for the above points appear throughout the Steiner curriculum. There are no timetabled lessons for spiritual development as it is considered in everything we teach.

Examples of ways in which this is done:

- In Kindergarten, children follow the teacher's example of loving, patience and care and it is common to see children help each other looking after a friend who is hurt or sharing a valued toy.
- In the first class 1 maths block the children learn to 'share' and 'give away' before other mathematical operations so that they do not place too much importance on acquiring more.

- In class 1 the children are provided with time and resources to play together in ways which encourage them to get to know each other, understand each other and value each other better as a the group.
- By classes 3 - 5 the children begin timetabled Philosophy 4 Children lessons which do focus more overtly on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Lancaster Steiner School places such importance on its pupil's spiritual development in order to:

- enable each pupil to develop their own spirituality and understanding of the community at large so that they may take their place in society as informed, independent and responsible individuals throughout their lives;
- actively encourage pupils to consider the needs, opinions and rights of others and develop an understanding of the laws and social institutions of our culture (in an age-appropriate manner) and understand that rule of law protects and provides justice for everyone.
- encourage pupils to consider and evaluate ethical and political issues (in a non-partisan way which takes account of a range of perspectives)
- stimulate a growing awareness of spiritual values, enabling pupils to think about their own actions;
- enable pupils to reach their full potential, and on leaving the school be able to make informed, realistic and responsible decisions, including an ability to evaluate political controversies without prejudice.

Promotion of British Values in School

Please read our British Values statement, here are some examples of how we actively promote a respect for democracy are:

1. At age seven and upwards the children almost daily engage in a sharing and recall in which every child is given a chance to speak - everyone has a say.
2. At age 10+ children will study the ancient Greeks and learn about the original principles of democracy and how Greek democracy has been adapted so that all people including women are allowed to vote for their representatives.

We actively promote a sense of responsibility to the wider community and National Institutions

1. Through our assemblies which include the whole school community and to which members of e.g. the Police, the NHS, local councils are invited.
2. We organise visits to the local Town Hall and prepare a basket of produce for local residential homes at Harvest Festival.
3. We engage in e.g. litter picks for the local community centre and have regular visits to that centre for games etc.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

This relates to the child's developing understanding of what is "right", "wrong" and "fair".

The School will try to build on the moral training within the home while accepting that there might be different approaches between home and school.

Moral development is concerned with:

- Developing the child's awareness and understanding of the moral code of the communities in which they live; these may or may not be statutory.
- Helping the child to realise that to enjoy rights we have to accept responsibilities.
- Developing the child's understanding of why rules are necessary.

- Developing the child's self-discipline so that rules are observed as a point of principle and not out of the fear of sanctions.
- Giving the child the knowledge and ability to question and to reason so that they are capable of deciding on the most appropriate action after considering the consequences of an action.
- Develop the skills necessary to explain their own behaviour.
- Value physical wellbeing, privacy, feelings, beliefs and rights of others.

The School will promote the moral development of the child by;

- Exploring examples of moral behaviour and ethical dilemmas in an age appropriate manner. Building on the learning in kindergarten Class One pupils study Fairy Tales which offer strong role models and examples of immoral behaviour by villain characters, Class Two pupils study Fables which offer the opportunity for exploration of moral behaviour and Class Three pupils study the Old Testament with a focus on exploring the roles of authority figures and the need for laws. The study of the history of the development of modern systems of weights and measures and the introduction of money also gives scope for exploring fair, moral behaviour, and the need for consequences for immoral behaviour within society. Examples in Kindergarten include stories and songs that emphasise desired behaviours such as sharing and persistence.
- Showing respect to all adults and building teacher child relationships that support the children in accepting proper authority and doing as they are told. This will then be related to the respect for the law in Britain.
- Having a consensus of values that are stated clearly and owned by everyone, especially the children and involving the child in the evaluation of these. Children who work together to agree a set of rules experience something of a democratic process of law-making. This is then linked to English Law.
- Building up the self- esteem and confidence of the child and celebrating achievements. At kindergarten stage this is addressed through their projects.
- Encouraging everyone within the school to behave in an acceptable way towards one another.
- Leading children in understanding the consequences of their actions.
- Celebrating positive behaviour and giving opportunities for older children to be role models for younger children.

It is worth noting that "active promotion" of British values in Kindergarten is implicit rather than explicit. Sharing, kindness and fairness link to democracy and these are behaviours subtly encouraged on a daily basis. When little children link to the wider school, they begin to sense what it means to reach out to a wider community.

Related Programmes of Study

These encourage tolerance.

- All Classes, celebrate and understand the Christian festivals Easter, Christmas
- All Classes, Take part in school festivals Michaelmas, Martinmas, Advent spiral, Candlemas, Easter Egg Hunt, May Day, Whitsun and St Johns
- All Classes, daily circle time, daily verses give a sense of reverence to learning and the school day
- All Classes, non-denominational blessing of meals give a reverence and gratitude for nature.
- All Classes, monthly assemblies to share singing, work and school achievements.
- Class 5 Ancient Civilisations, Hinduism, Buddhism
- Class 4 Norse Mythology, beliefs in history

- Class 3 Old Testament exploring the roles of authority figures and the need for laws, Christianity
- Class 2 Fables offering exploration of moral behaviour
- Class 1 Fairy Tales offering strong role models and examples of immoral behaviour by villain characters
- In Kindergarten, special days are acknowledged that are important to different children e.g. Eid to Muslim children.

The Social Studies Policy explains in more detail about our Religious Studies programme.

Daily Circle Time

Kindergarten has a daily ring time that follows the seasons of the year. This brings children's attention to the beauty of nature and care for animals and other creatures. Serving food to friends at snack time develops a sense of gratitude and care.

Each lower school class has circle time every day. Daily verses give a sense of reverence to learning and the school day as well as providing each class with time to talk and listen to each other and work together. Circle times often promote a reverence for nature and a feeling for the current season and the morning verse is said every day with emphasis. Opportunities to promote moral development may also be provided during Circle Time, discussing issues which have arisen in class and finding the right way to deal with them as a group. This type of discussion circle time may be done outside of the daily circle time session. As explained elsewhere in this document, this event is also a chance to "give everyone a say" thus actively promoting the underlying fairness of democratic process.

Assemblies and School Plays

Once a month the whole Lower School come together for assembly where children may share the work that they have been doing, give presentations, share songs and poems. This promotes a sense of belonging and being responsible to a wider community. Visitors may come to these assemblies such as our local Member of Parliament, Police Officer or local faith member to share about their faith. Thus there is active promotion of respect for British Institutions and tolerance of different cultures. The seasons and the sharing of work and celebrations of achievements form an important part of the school year. At the end of each term the classes will take turns to perform in an end of term performance or class play which the parents are invited to attend. These may range from poetry, songs or short plays from the younger classes to a full scale class play particularly at the end of Class 5 which has a Classical Greek Myth theme. The end of year performance at the end of the summer term is an opportunity for wishing the Class 5 children well in their new High Schools and welcoming the upcoming Class 1 children from Kindergarten.

This is a ceremony to mark this important moment in our eldest and youngest children's lives.

Calendar of Festivals

Throughout the year the school community come together to take part in the Calendar of Festivals, which are largely social events, giving the parents the opportunity to feel part of their children's education through the sharing of their stories, songs and performances. They are also a time for reflection and reverence for life and nature, an opportunity to sing and celebrate key events in the children's school year such as Easter and Christmas. While many of the festivals are broadly Christian in their basis, they have a strong historical and cultural foundation, for example, the Easter Egg Hunt, they also incorporate seasonal celebrations such as Midsummer and traditional British feast days such as May Day. We are keen to be inclusive in our

celebrations and in the past year have incorporated Eid and Hanukah into this calendar for the class 1-5 pupils. On a weekly basis the class 1-5 pupils take part in dances of universal peace, a movement and singing activity which uses key phrases from the world's spiritual traditions and explores the mood of these aspects of celebration.

Spirituality in the Community

All pupils of Lancaster Steiner School are encouraged to:

- Be part of a community;
- Think about the needs of others;
- Explore ways in which we can serve others
- Explore and share beliefs.

Lancaster Steiner School is a non-denominational school and values the beliefs of our whole community. We encourage and promote service to the wider community and many ways and the school takes part a number of community ventures and visits, for example: visiting the Priory to meet the curate and explore this key centre of Christianity in Lancaster, visiting other faith centres or inviting in visiting speakers from a wide range of faiths and cultures, entering an art competition promoting water safety, visiting Scaleford and Laurel Bank Retirement Homes throughout the year to perform for the residents, inviting the local toddler group to attend school festivals, The Big School's Bird Watch, recycling and composting our waste, encouraging children to join the children's book group at the city library and attending a diversity awareness themed teddy bears' picnic.