



THE BISHOPS' BLUE COAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Spiritual Development Policy

Is this Policy Statutory?	No
Review Period	3 Years
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Committee	Students Committee

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1. Statement of intent

- Our school vision states that:

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith, and a rich set of opportunities that support and challenge our learners so they are equipped to succeed. Through their engagement in society at Bishops' and beyond, students make a positive difference through their wise action and a sense of responsibility. Our students' initiative, drive and resilience will enable them to flourish and live 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10).

- At Bishops, we take a holistic view of the development of our young people and our staff within the context of our Christian beliefs and values. Whilst we strive for academic excellence, we firmly believe that school is also a place where students grow spiritually through a deepening understanding of themselves, other people, the natural world and God. We believe that the purpose of education is to support young people to flourish not only academically but also personally and spiritually so that they can become the best versions of themselves and truly live a life in all its fullness.

2. Aims and purpose of the policy

- This policy outlines:

- What we mean by `spiritual development` at Bishops
- How we nurture and promote the spiritual development of our students
- The roles and responsibilities of staff, students, parents and carers in this process

- This policy aims to ensure that there is:

- a shared understanding of spirituality across the school community
- an understanding by staff of our collective responsibility in nurturing spiritual development

- an understanding by parents, carers, students, and governors of our commitment to the holistic development of our students as individuals who can flourish academically, personally and spiritually

3. The statutory framework for spiritual development

- The role of schools in nurturing and promoting the spiritual development of students was fixed with the Education Act 2002 which states that schools must have a balanced and broadly based curriculum that *'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school'*.

- Spiritual development is therefore an area of school life that is subject to inspection, forming part of the Ofsted framework and its subsidiary guidance for schools on SMSC and British values.

- Church of England educational policy and guidance also gives priority to the spiritual development of young people. Its *Vision for Education* is one that embraces excellence and academic rigour within a wider framework of spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development that enables young people to flourish.

- Spiritual development is therefore a particular focus of Church school inspections and the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) Evaluation Schedule which asks: *'How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development enabling all pupils to flourish?'*

- This policy therefore has due regard to all relevant governmental and Church of England legislation and guidance relating to spiritual development in schools including, but not limited to, the following documents and initiatives:

- *Education Act 2002*
- *Education Act 2011*
- *Promoting Fundamental British Values as Part of SMSC in Schools: Departmental Advice for Maintained Schools*, DfE 2014
- *Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools*, DfE 2018
- *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, The Church of England 2016
- *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium*, The Church of England 2001
- *Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Schedule*, The Church of England 2018
- *Mental Health and Well-being: Towards a Whole School Approach*, The Church of England, March 2018

- *Spiritual Development: Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom*, The Church of England, 2019
- *Spirituality in a Church School Within a Performance Driven Culture*, Anne Lumb (Grove Education, 2016)
- *Growing Faith*, The Church of England 2021

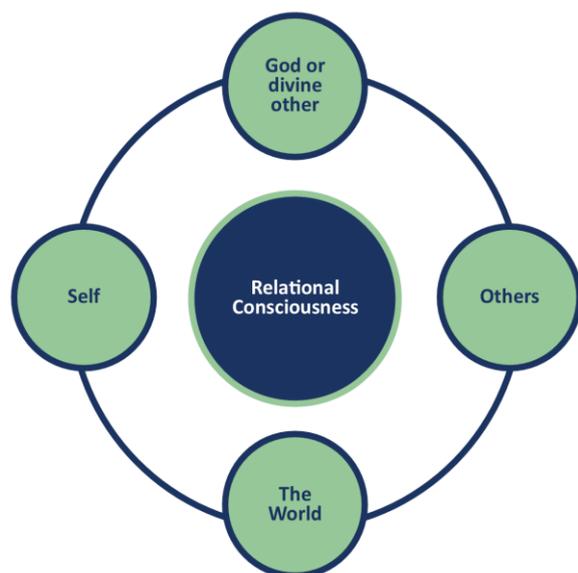
- This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behavioural policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality policy
- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Staff Code of Conduct policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Staff Well-being Policy

4. What is meant by `spiritual development` at Bishops?

- Spirituality is a difficult term to define and embraces a wide range of meanings. However, it is widely accepted that spirituality is concerned **with a deep and deepening relationship between an individual and themselves, others, the world around them and God or a `divine other`.**

- For many within our church school community, the relationships that are at the heart of spirituality are explicitly Christian in nature, rooted in a biblical understanding of the world and a prayerful connection with God. Whether understood in an explicitly Christian way or otherwise, though, this idea of `relational consciousness` being at the heart of spirituality is central to how we understand spiritual development at Bishops. It can be shown using a simple diagram:



Rebecca Nye, 1988

- To support the spirituality of our students, we are therefore concerned with ensuring that high quality opportunities are provided across both the formal curriculum and the wider life of the school to help students:

- develop a sense of self and identity which they are comfortable with
- develop an understanding of how they can relate well to others, both in school and beyond
- develop a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world, including an awareness of how and why they should act to protect and nurture it
- develop an appreciation of, and a relationship with, God or a `divine other` beyond what can be seen, and to ask deep and meaningful questions about the meaning and purpose of life

- At Bishops, spirituality is therefore primarily about **relationships**. It is about helping students understand the internal relationship with themselves and the external relationships they have with one other and the world around them. As we are a Church school, spirituality is also understood in terms of nurturing not just our students but also our staff's relationship with God or their sense of a divine other.

- We therefore believe that spirituality should be at the heart of our ethos and daily life. Creating an environment that actively nurtures spiritual development is essential for all in our school community to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

5. Spiritual development within the context of our school vision

- Our understanding of spirituality at Bishops is rooted in our school vision to *know, nurture and inspire our students to be the best version of themselves, flourish and live 'life in all its fullness.'* (John 10:10).

- In supporting their spiritual development, our aim as a school is to provide a rich and deepening set of opportunities for students

To know:

- Themselves and their place in the world
- Others and their responsibilities towards them
- God or to develop an awareness of a `divine other`

- To be nurtured in:

- Christian virtues, character growth, hope and aspiration
- A sense of community, belonging and respect
- A sense of justice, equality and care for the natural world

- To be inspired:

- By their learning and their daily experiences at Bishops
- To be the best versions of themselves
- To make a positive difference in the world through wise action and courageous advocacy

- Our formal and informal curriculum is guided and underpinned by a set of principles that create a coherent and overarching framework to support the academic, personal and spiritual development of our students in all areas of school life. These curriculum principles are:

- Wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Dignity and Respect
- Hope and Aspiration

- Guided by our vision and curriculum principles, we endeavour as a school community is to nurture the development of the whole child so that they can flourish in their relationships with themselves, with others, with the world and with God. Through being attentive to the spiritual development of our students, we believe that we simultaneously promote the flourishing, well-being and mental health of our whole community of children, staff, parents and carers. This is one of the ways that we strive to realise the Church's *Vision for Education* to be `deeply Christian, serving the common good`.

6. An inclusive vision of spiritual development

- Bishops' Blue Coat High School has a clear sense of its Christian roots and identity and this provides the spiritual and moral basis for our work as we seek to know, nurture and inspire young people to flourish and be the best version of themselves. We aim to nurture and support the character growth and spiritual development of all of our students through providing an education that is grounded in Christian values, beliefs and a life of worship.

- However, we recognise that many of our families, children and staff may either not have any religious affiliation or may hold a non-Christian approach to faith. In line with Church of England guidance, we therefore promote an invitational approach to worship. Therefore our "approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other traditions and beliefs, and for the religious freedom of each person." (Vision for education – page 10)

- Our vision for the spiritual development of young people and adults at Bishops, therefore, is an inclusive one, not one that is restricted to members of our community who identify explicitly as Christian. In this respect, we are in line with Ofsted guidance according to which *'spiritual is not synonymous with religious'*.

- We believe that we all have innate spiritual capacities and that all areas of our formal and informal curriculum can support their spiritual development, whether they consider themselves to be religious or not. Our definition of spirituality as being concerned **with a deep and deepening relationship between an individual and themselves, others, the world around them and God or a 'divine other'** ensures that the spiritual development of **all** can be nurtured and developed.

7. Spiritual development in practice at Bishops

- We believe that spiritual development at Bishops is something that should influence all areas of our educational provision as it does all areas of life. Whilst it may be particularly prominent in certain specific areas of school life - such as our programme of collective worship or RE lessons - the responsibility for nurturing the spiritual development of our students is a whole-school concern and is therefore shared by **all** staff and curriculum areas.

- At Bishops, spiritual development is expressed through:

- the close, high-quality relationships that exist between staff and students and between students themselves
- our pastoral system and the emphasis it places on nurturing values of respect, forgiveness and reconciliation across the community
- the work of our school leaders, including our Chaplain, and the spiritual care that is provided for all members of our community, including teachers, students, parents and carers.
- our weekly programme for collective prayer and worship which provides daily opportunities for all students to experience prayer, stillness and moments of reflection
- our prayer space and sanctuary, physical spaces in our school that provide welcoming environments for all students and staff to experience prayer and reflection
- the challenging and inspiring lessons that take place every-day across all areas of our curriculum, and which provide rich opportunities for our students to reflect upon their values and beliefs, to ask deep questions and to grow personally and spiritually

8. Roles and responsibilities

- **The governing body** is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory
- The overall implementation of this policy

- **The Headteacher and SLT** are responsible for:

- Reviewing, amending and implementing this policy

- Arranging appropriate training for staff members
- Supporting the spiritual development of staff

- **Year Leaders and Pastoral Support Officers** are responsible for:

- implementing the systems that support our students` mental and emotional health and which nurture positive relationships between students and teachers
- corresponding and meeting with relevant staff, students, parents and carers where necessary

- **Form tutors** are responsible for:

- nurturing the spiritual, personal, emotional and mental well-being of their tutees
- using the programme of collective worship to facilitate acts of worship, prayer and reflection

- **The School Chaplain** is responsible for:

- designing and implementing a rich and varied programme of collective worship to nurture the spiritual development of students and staff
- leading acts of worship and periods of reflection and providing pastoral and spiritual guidance and support for all members of the Bishops community

- **Subject Leaders** are responsible for:

- designing and implementing programmes of study that maximise opportunities for students to develop not only academically but also personally, spiritually and ethically
- ensuring that members of their teams are aware of and exploit opportunities to engage their students in the kind of deep questioning, open enquiry and reflection that promotes character growth and spiritual development

- **Classroom Teachers** are responsible for:

- adopting a holistic approach to teaching and learning that ensures that lessons have more than just an academic focus
- maximising opportunities during lessons for students to develop not only academically but also personally, spiritually and ethically

- **Parents and Carers** are responsible for:

- supporting the spiritual development of their children at home by nurturing their relationships with themselves, with others, with the natural world and with God or a divine other
- supporting the school as it seeks to nurture the spiritual development of their children in a wide variety of ways

- **Students** are responsible for:

- developing an open, receptive and expansive mindset towards their education, understanding that academic excellence is only one of the valuable outcomes that we are striving for

- embracing opportunities within school and beyond to develop themselves spiritually in ways that suit their temperaments and capacities