

## **Promoting British Values in The Downs School**

The philosophy of the school is 'Learning together, learning for life,' which encapsulates our belief that being part of a vibrant and active community enriches the learning experiences of our students. We understand the importance of the school's role in actively promoting a strong sense of community amongst our students, who are aware of the multicultural, multi-faith and changing nature of the United Kingdom.

The values enshrined in the Equalities Act of 2010 are at the heart of our school. We believe that it is wrong to discriminate against anyone on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, political beliefs, financial status or any other protected characteristic, and actively promote these values within the school community. We recognise the vital role played by schools in safeguarding young people from discrimination and radicalisation, and ensure that this role is supported by extremely robust safeguarding procedures.

The five British values, set out in the Government's 2011 Prevent Strategy, are the foundation of an effective community. The values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for other faiths and traditions are celebrated within the school community, both through our curriculum, reflecting the National Curriculum, and through a wealth of extra-curricular events and activities. The school focuses on a different British value each half term, with the students debating the importance of the value with their tutors.

Below are some examples of how the British values are celebrated within the school:

Democracy:

The principle of democracy is consistently being reinforced at The Downs School, with democratic processes being used for important decisions within the school community. For instance, elections being part of the process for selecting Head Boy and Head Girl positions and Student Council representatives. Students have a voice that is listened to through various focus groups. The principles of democracy and justice are explored in RE, History, Philosophy, Sociology and Politics, with students studying examples of individuals who have campaigned for democratic and civil rights and the history of how Britain became the democracy it is today. In KS4 and KS5 Geography, students study the impact of dictatorships and corrupt governments on economic development. In PE/Sport, democracy is delivered through allowing students to take a role in the delivery of some lesson elements as young leaders. Decision-making is a key aspect in sport and students are encouraged to think for themselves deciding on a response, often in conjunction with others. Students are 'allowed' to make mistakes and tolerance for their own and one other's decisions is encouraged. Democratic management is explored within the KS5 Business Studies curriculum, particularly focusing upon leadership styles and the value of democratic vs autocratic approaches to leadership. This develops the students' understanding of the importance of consultation to find out opinions of employees before reaching a decision. In Mathematics, students are taught the value of democracy through open discussion about which solution seems to be the right one, as well as focusing on the mathematics of voting systems in the topics of Sampling and Percentages. For example, how representative is a sample?

In the KS3 personal development curriculum, students take part in mock elections that explore Britain's current political system, including the major political parties. Six brand new parties are formed, who develop a clear vision on some of the following policy areas: education, crime, health, climate change, recycling, transport, finance and technology. These parties then campaign for votes

and students vote and the winner is announced. In KS4, the focus is on political literacy, with students developing a more complex understanding of British democracy in practice.

The rule of law:

Students are taught the rules and expectations of the school which are highlighted by the student code of conduct and student expectations. The personal development curriculum focuses on 'Riots and Responsibilities,' exploring the issues behind the riots of 2010, including the causes of the riots and the consequences for those who participated in them. This supplements a programme of tutor activities and assemblies for students of all ages, in which their rights and responsibilities as members of the school community are explored.

In History, students have the opportunity to contrast the situation in Britain today where the rule of law is upheld with other times and places where this has not been the case. In PE/Sport, the rule of law is delivered through teaching of rules/laws as they apply to different activities. In their Art lessons, students explore British values within the unit 'This is me'. They explore Banksy and Blek Le Rat's political and controversial work. This is further supported through the exploration of Barbara Krugers' work. Within the KS4 Business Studies curriculum students are taught about a number of laws which the government has created to safeguard employees in the workplace. Focus is specifically placed upon the minimum wage, the EU Working Time Directive, as well as legislation surrounding race, sex, age or disability discrimination. In Mathematics, students focus on the mathematics of speed limits and alcohol units, as well as understanding the need to follow universal algebraic rules and conventions.

Individual liberty:

At The Downs, students are actively encouraged to make independent choices, in the knowledge that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. The personal development curriculum focuses on the UN Convention, The Rights of a Child and explores issues surrounding the death penalty. The Downs has a robust anti-bullying culture and has been awarded the West Berkshire Council 'Safe in Our Hands' Anti-Bullying Award. A comprehensive Positive Behaviour Policy is also in place.

The importance of equality and individual liberty is also explored through topics in History, such as the Civil Rights Movement, whilst the topical issues surrounding the rights of movement throughout the EU is covered in KS4 Geography. In PE/Sport, individual liberty is inculcated by students being encouraged to make decisions in competitive and sporting contexts. In their Art lessons, students produce an extended homework project entitled 'freedom,' exploring political, historical influences and producing their own interpretation of the theme. In the music curriculum, civil liberties are discussed as a context for Blues and Jazz music in KS3 and K34, when recounting the history of the African slaves and their musical influences on the genre. Freedom of expression is a regular feature in KS3 music listening work, as students distinguish between opinion and fact when discussing different music and are encouraged to support their differing opinions with factual references. In Mathematics, the way the subject is taught encourages students to exercise their freedom in exploring how to achieve specific lesson outcomes. As a fundamental part of drama and dance lessons at The Downs School we aim to create an environment where students have the right and feel safe to voice their opinions and have their views heard and respected by others. There are numerous occasions in schemes of work where students are encouraged to debate controversial subject areas that cover history, politics and ethics. Additionally students are given the opportunity to explore and experience drama and dance from a range of cultures and

traditions which develops their understanding and tolerance. Civil Liberties are discussed and accessed through the influence of the Game of Soldiers' scheme of work which explores the Falkland's war. In dance students challenge the perception of stereo typical positions in society by exploring the social issue of Conflict.

#### Mutual respect:

Mutual respect is encouraged and nurtured throughout The Downs School, both through study in the classroom and through the application of school expectations. A key element of the RE syllabus taught throughout KS3 and KS4 is the encouraging of mutual respect and the discussion and acknowledgement of a variety of beliefs and opinions. Students are provided with a safe environment in which to explore and express their own views. In PE/Sport, mutual respect is delivered through the process of team games and problem solving activities, where ethics and interactions between participants is key to successful outcomes. In the music curriculum, the discussions surrounding music from different cultures allows us to challenge the use of stereotypical cultural references and discuss how it can lead to discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour with the students. In drama and dance, the students spend a significant amount of time working in different group settings. This encourages and allows the students to work as a member of a team, this is particularly apparent in practical work where each student adopts a particular role within a production or performance team. The students develop skills in tolerance, understanding, empathy and mutual respect, which are exemplified by our participation in the Man Made boys dance project.

In the KS4 personal development curriculum there is a focus on sex and relationships education. Students develop their understanding that relationships are all about making positive choices, and that sexual orientation is a positive choice that all of us are free to make.

#### Tolerance for other faiths and traditions:

RE is compulsory until the end of KS4, which gives all pupils the opportunity to explore and experience a range of other faiths and traditions. During their time at The Downs School, students explore issues as diverse as religious food laws, issues surrounding the problem of suffering, the differences between religious identities and a range of moral and ethical issues. Through study both of and from religion, pupils are able to develop tolerance and respect for a range of faiths and traditions as well as reflect on their own views and beliefs. The provision of meaningful Collective Worship also allows students the opportunity to reflect on a range of traditions and their meanings to different people as well as themselves. Students are also given the opportunity to be involved in a school exchange programme with schools in France, Germany and Spain, giving them first-hand experience of cultures that differ from their own, as well as through the Languages curriculum. In PE/Sport, tolerance for other faiths and traditions is delivered through exposure to sports activities from 'other cultures,' such as softball or handball; the exploration of how issues of race, gender, disability or socio-economic background can be factors which affect participation in sport; and the participation of students in culturally diverse events (County Youth Games). In their Art lessons, students explore different cultures through the Day of the Dead project and review how other cultures treat the dead. They also explore Paganism through The Greenman project, researching

artists' responses to the Greenman motif. The music curriculum promotes tolerance and understanding of other cultures by incorporating music from many parts of the world (North America, South America, Africa and India as well as from other cultures closer to home in Europe and the United Kingdom). The importance of cultural differences is discussed in many different topics throughout KS3 and KS4 Geography.

In the KS3 personal development curriculum, students use experiences of modern day human rights abuses to consider the topic 'Human rights or wrongs.' At KS4, students focus on the Bosnian War, exploring the often conflicting viewpoints of the Red Cross, the United Nations, and the Muslim, Serbian and Croatian communities.

The Downs School strives endlessly to ensure that its students leave with the strongest foundation of values upon which to build a successful life and a successful contribution to our society.