



Riverside Virtual College Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC), British Values and Cultural Capital Policy.

Legislation	Education/ Other
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1. Purpose and Overview

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is an integral part of education at Riverside Virtual College (RVC). It supports students to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence; distinguish right from wrong; understand and take responsibility for their behaviour; develop positive relationships; respect the law and public institutions; appreciate their own and other cultures; and participate positively in society.

RVC is an online learning community. Our approach to SMSC therefore recognises that students develop and demonstrate these skills through live online lessons, tutorials, assemblies, enrichment, independent learning, communication with staff and peers, wider community experiences and preparation for adulthood.

RVC's mission, "Developing potential in all young people", and our values of Honesty, Integrity and Respect underpin our approach. SMSC is promoted through the curriculum, the wider life of the college, student voice, relationships, behaviour expectations,

safeguarding practice and the opportunities provided for students to develop confidence, independence and aspiration.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, leaders and other adults working on behalf of RVC. It applies across all online and face-to-face activity arranged or supervised by RVC, including live virtual sessions, tutorials, assemblies, enrichment, work-related learning, external visits and communication using college-approved systems.

3. Statutory and Guidance Framework

RVC will have regard to, and where applicable comply with, relevant statutory requirements and current Department for Education guidance. This policy should be read alongside the college's safeguarding, behaviour, equality, attendance, online safety, RSHE, curriculum, complaints and student voice arrangements.

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly Part 2 relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the active promotion of fundamental British values.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. RVC recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that safeguarding arrangements must address online harms and promote a whole-college culture in which children feel safe and are listened to.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including expectations around inclusive and anti-discriminatory practice, challenging racism and discrimination, early help, multi-agency working and safeguarding children from online and other harms.
- Prevent Duty Guidance, including the requirement for relevant education settings to actively promote fundamental British values and build resilience to radicalisation and extremism in an age- and context-appropriate way.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, revised for implementation from 1 September 2026, where relevant to the RVC curriculum.
- Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People statutory guidance, including the information-sharing duty coming into force from 30 September 2026.
- Department for Education guidance on safeguarding and remote education, recognising that safeguarding expectations apply when education is delivered online.

4. Aims

RVC aims to ensure that students:

- develop self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience;
- understand right and wrong, consequences, personal responsibility and the importance of following rules and the law;
- develop respectful, healthy and safe relationships and communicate appropriately online and offline;
- understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities while respecting the rights of others;
- develop an appreciation of diversity, different cultures, faiths and beliefs and the contribution of different communities;
- participate in decision-making and understand how democracy works;
- develop confidence to express views appropriately, listen to others and engage in constructive discussion;
- develop independence, aspirations, employability and preparation for adult life;
- understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including in online environments;
- recognise prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harmful behaviour and know how and where to seek help;
- develop cultural capital through meaningful experiences, knowledge, skills and opportunities that broaden their understanding of the world.

5. Spiritual Development

RVC promotes spiritual development by providing appropriate opportunities for students to reflect on themselves, their experiences, values and the wider world. Students are encouraged to:

- reflect on their experiences, choices, feelings, values and aspirations;
- explore questions about meaning, purpose, beliefs and what matters to them and others;
- develop respect for different faiths, beliefs and worldviews without requiring students to adopt any particular belief;
- show curiosity, imagination, creativity and a willingness to consider different perspectives;

- recognise and respect the rights and dignity of others.

6. Moral Development

RVC supports students to develop an understanding of morality, ethics and personal responsibility. This includes:

- distinguishing right from wrong and considering the consequences of actions;
- understanding the importance of laws, rules and agreed expectations;
- discussing ethical and moral issues in an age-appropriate and balanced way;
- understanding fairness, honesty, integrity, consent, responsibility and respect;
- challenging prejudice, racism, discrimination, bullying and harmful behaviour;
- understanding that online behaviour can have real-world consequences and that the same standards of respect and responsibility apply online as offline.

7. Social Development

RVC supports students to develop positive social skills and participate constructively in the college and wider community. This includes:

- developing positive relationships with peers and adults;
- communicating clearly and appropriately in online and face-to-face settings;
- working collaboratively in pairs, groups and virtual classrooms;
- managing disagreement and conflict safely and respectfully;
- developing empathy and considering the experiences and perspectives of others;
- participating in student voice, enrichment, volunteering, community and work-related opportunities where appropriate;
- developing independence, confidence and skills for adulthood and employment.

8. Cultural Development and Cultural Capital

RVC recognises that every student brings individual experiences, interests, family backgrounds, languages, beliefs, traditions, skills and knowledge. These are valued and contribute to the culture of the college.

Cultural capital is developed through planned opportunities that broaden students' knowledge, experiences, vocabulary, confidence and understanding of the wider world. RVC seeks to remove barriers to participation and provide accessible opportunities that are appropriate to students' age, ability, needs and circumstances.

- learning about different cultures, traditions, faiths and communities;
- celebrating and exploring significant cultural, religious and national events appropriately;
- accessing speakers, careers activities, enrichment and wider experiences;
- developing knowledge of public institutions, services, the arts, literature, history and the world of work;
- encouraging students to participate in their communities and develop aspirations for their next steps.

9. Fundamental British Values

RVC actively promotes the four fundamental British values required within the independent school standards: democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values are embedded across the curriculum and wider life of the college. RVC does not treat them as a one-off activity or event.

Active promotion also means challenging opinions or behaviours that are contrary to these values, while allowing students to discuss and explore controversial or sensitive issues in a safe, balanced and age-appropriate way.

Democracy

Students are given opportunities to express their views, participate in student voice, contribute to decisions that affect their learning and college experience, and understand how democratic processes allow citizens to influence decision-making. Staff listen to student views and provide feedback on how those views have been considered.

Rule of Law

Students learn why rules and laws exist, how they protect individuals and communities, and why consequences matter. RVC expectations apply equally in virtual classrooms and other college activity. Students are supported to understand the relationship between rights, responsibilities, behaviour and safeguarding.

Individual Liberty

Students are supported to make informed, safe and responsible choices, develop independence and understand their rights and responsibilities. Students are encouraged to express appropriate views and understand that liberty operates alongside respect for the rights and safety of others.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs

Students are encouraged to respect people with different faiths, beliefs, cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints. RVC challenges prejudice, racism, discrimination, harassment and harmful stereotypes. Difference is discussed constructively and students are taught that disagreement does not justify disrespect or abuse.

10. Safeguarding, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination

SMSC and safeguarding are closely connected. RVC promotes a culture in which students feel safe, respected, listened to and able to raise concerns. Staff must follow the college safeguarding procedures and refer concerns through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL in accordance with RVC procedures.

In line with KCSIE 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, RVC recognises that children may experience multiple forms of harm and that safeguarding includes online harms. Staff should remain alert to changes in presentation, behaviour, engagement or communication and should not assume that a student is safe simply because learning is taking place remotely.

RVC explicitly challenges racism and faith-based prejudice, as well as other forms of discrimination and prejudice. Staff should promote an inclusive culture and respond appropriately to concerns involving child-on-child abuse, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse, exploitation, radicalisation or extremism, including where concerns arise through online interaction.

Students are taught how to recognise unsafe or harmful situations, maintain appropriate boundaries, use online platforms safely and seek help. Safeguarding concerns are never dealt with solely as behaviour issues where a safeguarding response is required.

11. Online and Virtual Learning Environment

As an online college, RVC adapts SMSC provision to the virtual environment. Staff will:

- model respectful and professional online communication;
- reinforce virtual classroom rules, boundaries and expectations;
- provide structured opportunities for student voice through chat, polls, discussion and other accessible methods;

- promote safe participation and appropriate use of cameras, microphones, chat and screen-sharing;
- teach students about online relationships, privacy, digital footprints, misinformation, harmful content and reporting concerns where appropriate to age and need;
- use college-approved platforms and follow RVC online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements;
- ensure reasonable adjustments and accessible participation routes for students with SEND and individual needs.

12. Curriculum, Tutorials and Assemblies

SMSC is embedded across RVC's academic, vocational, therapeutic and specialist provision. It is also promoted through tutorials, assemblies, enrichment, student voice and preparation for adulthood.

Topics may include, according to age, developmental stage, individual needs and safeguarding context:

- British values, democracy, rules and expectations;
- respect, honesty, integrity and responsibility;
- relationships, consent, boundaries and healthy communication;
- mental health, wellbeing and resilience;
- online safety and digital citizenship;
- bullying, banter, prejudice, racism and discrimination;
- child-on-child abuse and how to seek help;
- crime, serious violence and personal safety;
- faiths, cultures, celebrations and significant events;
- careers, employability, aspirations, citizenship and preparation for adulthood;
- environmental awareness, community participation and current issues.

Sensitive or controversial subjects are handled in accordance with safeguarding, RSHE, equality and political impartiality requirements. Staff provide balanced opportunities for discussion and do not use SMSC activities to promote partisan political views.

13. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

RVC uses social and emotional learning approaches to strengthen students' ability to manage themselves, understand their emotions and develop positive relationships. The five areas used within RVC's programme are:

- Self-management – managing emotions and behaviour and working towards personal goals.
- Self-awareness – recognising feelings, values, strengths and areas for development.
- Social awareness – understanding others, developing empathy and engaging positively with the community.
- Relationship skills – building positive relationships, communicating, collaborating, managing conflict and developing resilience.
- Responsible decision-making – making safe, ethical and constructive choices about personal and social behaviour.

14. Enrichment and Wider Opportunities

Enrichment provides opportunities for students to broaden their experiences and apply SMSC learning. Activities may include external speakers, careers and employer engagement, volunteering, cultural and religious events, charitable activities, competitions, creative opportunities, community activities and other experiences appropriate to students' needs.

Where activities take place outside the normal virtual classroom, RVC will apply appropriate safeguarding, risk assessment, supervision and accessibility arrangements.

15. Student Voice and Participation

Student voice is a key mechanism for promoting democracy, individual liberty and social development. RVC provides structured opportunities for students to express their views about learning, enrichment, wellbeing, the virtual learning environment and college life. Staff should respond to student views appropriately and ensure that students understand how their feedback has been considered.

16. Parents and Carers

RVC works in partnership with parents and carers to support students' personal, social, moral and cultural development. Where appropriate, parents and carers are informed about curriculum and enrichment opportunities and are encouraged to share relevant information that will help RVC understand and meet individual needs.

Where statutory RSHE requirements apply, RVC will follow its separate RSHE policy and the current Department for Education statutory guidance, including requirements concerning curriculum content, accessibility, consultation and parental rights.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of College: Has overall responsibility for ensuring that RVC promotes SMSC and fundamental British values and meets relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

SMSC Lead: Coordinates SMSC provision, supports staff, monitors evidence of delivery and contributes to review and evaluation.

DSL / Safeguarding Team: Ensures safeguarding concerns arising through SMSC, tutorials, assemblies, student voice or online activity are managed through safeguarding procedures.

All Staff: Model the college's values, promote respectful and inclusive behaviour, provide opportunities for SMSC development and report safeguarding concerns promptly.

Students: Participate respectfully, listen to others, contribute to student voice and take responsibility for their learning, behaviour and interactions.

Parents/Carers: Support students' development and work with RVC where concerns or additional support needs arise.

18. Monitoring, Evaluation and Evidence

RVC will monitor the impact and coverage of SMSC through a range of evidence, including:

- tutorial and assembly plans and records;
- student voice activities and feedback;
- enrichment records and participation;
- curriculum planning and work samples;
- staff feedback and quality assurance activity;
- records of relevant external speakers and wider opportunities;
- student participation, engagement and personal development evidence;
- safeguarding and behaviour information where relevant and appropriately anonymised;
- parent/carer feedback where appropriate.

Monitoring will consider accessibility and participation for students with SEND and other individual needs. RVC will use findings to identify strengths, gaps and priorities for improvement.

19. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, inspection or regulatory requirements, safeguarding risks, the RVC curriculum or the online learning environment.

20. Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety / E-Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity / Equality Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Attendance and Engagement Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Student Voice arrangements
- Staff Code of Conduct / Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy

21. Key External References

- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Department for Education, Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026.
- Department for Education, Promoting Fundamental British Values through SMSC.
- Department for Education, Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.

- Department for Education, Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People (updated September 2026).
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (revised guidance in force from 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Safeguarding and Remote Education.

Policy approved / adopted by: _____ Date:
