Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Policy

Approved by:	Sarah Paoletti, Headteacher	**Date:** 06/09/24
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Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) Development Policy

1. Introduction

At Educate U, we recognise that every child or young person comes to us with unique experiences, emotions, and challenges, often shaped by adversity or trauma. Our approach to SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural) development is rooted in a deep understanding of these experiences and the impact they have on our students. Our policy is designed to develop a sense of safety, belonging, and healing, while nurturing each student's growth in a holistic, compassionate, and trauma-informed manner.

2. Policy Aims

Our overarching aim is to help each pupil grow into a confident, compassionate, and thoughtful member of society while feeling valued and understood.

We aim to create a therapeutic environment that:

- Promotes a sense of safety, trust, and emotional well-being for every student.
- Encourages self-reflection, self-expression, and emotional growth in a supportive space.
- Builds meaningful and secure relationships that foster resilience and self-worth.
- Helps students navigate social and moral complexities with empathy, respect, and understanding.
- Celebrates cultural diversity and supports students in finding their unique voice within their community.
- The school's lessons are designed to help students grow in their understanding of spirituality, morals, social skills, and cultural awareness.
- Ensure lessons and wider activities develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in line with ISS requirements.

This policy outlines how we meet our statutory duties under Part 2 of the Independent School Standards (2014, updated), ensuring that all pupils' SMSC development is promoted in a holistic, trauma-informed and inclusive way.

3. Principles of Trauma-Informed SMSC at Educate U

We understand that trauma can deeply impact a student's ability to learn, relate, and grow. Our SMSC development is therefore grounded in the following trauma-informed principles:

1. **Safety and Security**: Prioritising physical, emotional, and psychological safety through consistent routines, clear communication, and nurturing relationships. Prioritising trust and connection through the Protect, Relate, Regulate, Reflect (PRRR) model. This helps students feel secure and ready to engage in learning and self-exploration.
2. **Empathy and Understanding**: Meeting each student with compassion, patience, and a genuine desire to understand their needs, experiences, and emotions. Recognising that behaviours often communicate unmet needs or feelings; we respond with empathy and support.
3. **Connection and Relationship-Building**: Establishing strong, trusting relationships between staff and students is at the heart of our approach. We use relational approaches to create connections that help students feel valued, respected, and understood.
4. **Empowerment and Growth**: Encouraging students to recognise their strengths, explore their interests, and build confidence. We provide opportunities for choice and autonomy, helping students feel empowered in their learning and personal development.
5. **Reflective Practice**: Supporting both students and staff in reflecting on their experiences, feelings, and actions. This includes understanding triggers, learning new ways to cope, and celebrating successes.

4. Implementation of Trauma-Informed SMSC Development

Our SMSC development is embedded in all aspects of school life, using the trauma informed Protect, Relate, Regulate, Reflect (PRRR) model to create a safe and nurturing environment:

- **Spiritual Development**:
    - Providing moments of calm, mindfulness, and reflection throughout the school day to support self-awareness and inner peace.
    - Encouraging students to explore their feelings, beliefs, and sense of purpose in a way that feels safe and comfortable for them.
    - Creating opportunities for students to express themselves creatively through art, music, movement, and storytelling, allowing them to connect with their emotions and values.
    - Promoting respect for others' beliefs while recognising and valuing personal perspectives.
- **Moral Development**:
    - Creating a culture of empathy, kindness, and respect by modelling these values in all interactions.
    - Facilitating discussions around ethical dilemmas in a way that feels safe and supportive, helping students to understand different perspectives and make thoughtful choices.
    - Encouraging restorative practices that focus on understanding the impact of one's actions and finding ways to repair relationships and trust.
    - Using restorative approaches to address conflict, focusing on repairing relationships and learning from mistakes

- **Social Development**:
    - Building positive, safe social experiences through collaborative projects, peer support, and guided social interactions.
    - Supporting students to navigate social challenges and build skills in communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution.
    - Providing a variety of social opportunities, both structured and unstructured, to help students practice and develop social skills at their own pace.
- **Cultural Development**:
    - Celebrating diversity by acknowledging and exploring different cultures, traditions, and experiences, promoting a sense of belonging for all.
    - Creating a safe space for students to share their own cultural backgrounds and learn about others in a way that develops curiosity and respect.
    - Integrating culturally responsive practices across the curriculum to ensure all students feel seen, valued, and represented.
    - Embedding culturally responsive teaching so all pupils feel represented and respected

In line with Part 2 of the Independent School Standards we make sure that no political party or viewpoint is promoted in any subject we teach. We take care to ensure that when we talk about political issues with students and we do so in a way that helps them understand all sides of the topic or issue; offering a balanced presentation of opposing views. This happens when Children and young people are in attendance at school, for example when:

- Children and young people are in lessons
- Children and young people are participating in extra-curricular activities organised on behalf of the school or by the school.
- Children and young people are participating in extra-curricular activities beyond regular lessons such as in Student Council, in assemblies, at outdoor education or at school events.
- Or in promotion of the school, including through promotional material, of extra curricular activities taking place at school or elsewhere.

Staff present these topics in a balanced and respectful way, helping students explore different perspectives safely.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Educate U ensure that no one is subjected to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the basis of any protected characteristic. These protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This includes protection for individuals who identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender neutral, as well as those who are questioning their gender identity. We respect each individual's choice of name and pronouns, and we expect all members of our community to do the same.

5. Strategies for Trauma-Informed Practice of SMSC

1. Warm, Predictable Environment: Ensuring routines and expectations are clear and consistent, so students know what to expect and feel safe.
2. Attuned Communication: Using active listening, validation, and open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and understanding.
3. Reflective Supervision and Support for Staff: Providing training, support, and supervision to ensure staff are equipped to respond to the complex needs of our students in a compassionate and trauma-informed way.
4. Personalised Individual Education Plans: Developing individualised approaches that consider each student's needs, strengths, and emotional readiness.
5. *Staff Training and Supervision – Ongoing professional development and reflective supervision to ensure consistent trauma-informed practice."*

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of our SMSC policy, we will:

- Regularly review and adapt our SMSC practices to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of our students. We audit SMSC through the curriculum.
- Use reflective supervision, staff feedback, and student observations to monitor the impact of our trauma-informed SMSC approach.
- Engage students in conversations about their experiences and involve them in shaping their own learning journey.
- Reviewing curriculum mapping to ensure SMSC is embedded across subjects
- Gathering feedback from pupils, staff, and parents/carers.
- Observing pupil engagement and relationships.
- Reviewing the policy annually to reflect the evolving needs of our community and ISS requirements.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher:** Ensure SMSC provision meets ISS standards, is trauma-informed, and is resourced effectively.
- **Leadership Team**: Champion a trauma-informed approach to SMSC development, providing support, resources, and training for all staff.

- **Subject leaders**: Ensure curriculum planning/delivery incorporates SMSC within their subject planning.
- **All Staff**: Build meaningful relationships with students, using trauma-informed language and strategies to support SMSC growth and model the values and behaviours we wish to promote
- **Students**: Engage with opportunities for personal growth and respect the rights and dignity of others…
- **Parents/Carers**: Collaborate with the school to reinforce SMSC values at home and support their child's development.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if changes in legislation, ISS requirements, or school practice require it.