

Fundamental British Values at Old Swinford Hospital

We want every school to promote the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, November 2014

Democracy

Democracy implies that the majority has a voice. Ours is a *liberal* democracy because key freedoms are developed and protected through our rules and systems and their accountability to the electorate. Pupils at OSH have the opportunity to have their voices heard through our Student Council and its committees, student questionnaires, subject review and boarding visits, prefect and council meetings with Senior Leaders as well as meetings with Governors. Parent Forum complements this process because parents are important stakeholders in this community.

The teaching of Religious Education, PD¹, History and Politics reinforces the value of our liberal democracy. Pupils also hold mock general elections and attend a Model United Nations, both held here. Assemblies, meanwhile, comment on the benefits of democratic politics and debunk hostile counter-narratives.

Importantly, pupils also learn that democracies are not perfect, are usually a 'work in progress' and can themselves be corrupted in times of indifference, dislocation or extremism so that participation in democratic politics is not only a hard earned right, but an important responsibility.

Every November we remember the Old Foleyans who gave their lives or who endured great suffering in order to protect our democratic way of living. We remember that our freedoms have come at a cost.

The Rule of Law

History lessons explain the origins of many of our laws and Politics develops this further by exploring the UK Constitution.

Everybody is equal before the law. This also means that where the majority (see above) enjoy considerable influence in a democracy, laws do exist to protect minorities from harm so that they, too, can enjoy individual freedoms whilst accepting shared responsibilities.

School rules are the same.

From the dining hall queue to the rugby pitch, OSH expects its pupils to develop a respect for rules and an understanding of their place. Religious Education lessons impart an understanding of how some rules can bind communities together, but also how following others blindly can cause injury or suffering. Pupils also, where appropriate, seek to discuss and contest particular rules if they disagree with them. This dialogue helps them understand the importance of having rules and regulations because they give structure for dispute and allow for reconciliation.

Where breaking our own rules carries particular sanctions, pupils must be aware that the laws of the

¹ Personal Development, where the 'British Values' topic is studied in Year 8, whilst further topics on radicalisation and extremism are studied in Years 9 and 10. Year 10 also receive a visit from our police liaison officer who discusses related topics with the pupils.

United Kingdom also apply to them at all times. This matter has been raised at assembly and School Council, as well as a parents' information evening and continually forms part of our PD and IT programmes.

Individual Liberty

In order to best safeguard pupils, schools are usually hierarchical and very regulated communities. But this also makes schools safe places for young people to make decisions for themselves, discount alternatives and also assess risk as they prepare for the future.

Our PD programme allows pupils to learn about their rights and personal freedoms as well as the responsibilities which accompany them. The co-curriculum also provides numerous opportunities for them to develop their own decision making through activities such as DofE and CCF which promote independence and leadership. Our careers and universities programme, as well as boarding life, helps prepare young people to manage the greater freedoms which they will encounter upon leaving OSH after the Sixth Form.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs Our Behaviour Policy is summarised in its opening paragraph as follows:

'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12)

OSH is a Christian school and it is open to pupils and staff of all faiths and none. Pupils and staff are expected, in accordance with our Behaviour Policy, to have tolerance, trust, understanding and respect for others irrespective of age, background and ethnicity. Diversity is regarded as that which is dignified and which is to be celebrated. Also, pupils may and do disagree with one another; where there is disagreement, it is important that it is articulated and expressed in the appropriate way.

RE, PD and house based activities promote lively discussion on matters which include prejudice based discrimination and bullying. OSH is now also a Stonewall Champion school. Finally, the Welfare Committee of the School Council brings pupils from all houses and age groups together not only to discuss these issues but to influence the formulation of the Behaviour Policy.

We have strong relationships not only with the diocese of Worcester but also local and different faith communities as well as the local British Humanist Association. Our annual Inter-Faith Forum not only allows members of the local faith communities to engage with the School, but it also provides pupils with an opportunity to put searching and sometimes difficult questions to these visitors.

As a Christian school, our value system is based on a particular view of the human person as somebody who is dignified, important and full of potential. It is the School's mission to have its pupils realise this potential so that they may bring greater benefit to the common good. In this regard, those values listed by Lord Nash at the top of this document sit very comfortably alongside those which OSH has subscribed to now for nearly 350 years. These values help build the scaffolding that allows our pupils to succeed. Successive teachers and pupils at OSH have benefitted from the evolution of constitutional and liberal democracy in our country; they have experienced laws which restrict excessive state control and allowed for individualism; they have also enjoyed greater rights and responsibilities and grow in their understanding of different peoples, cultures, creeds and philosophies.

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