

Coloma Convent Girls' School

British Values and Our Catholic Ethos



Approved by:

Board of Governors - 5th December 2019

The government set out its definition of 'British values' in the 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), which was designed to prevent the extremism and religious radicalisation of young people. British values are considered by the present government to be **democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs**. The promotion of 'British values' is central to Catholic education because British values have their origin in the Christian values of our nation.

"We are proud that Catholic schools promote values that are both Catholic and British, including: respect for the individual, democracy, individual liberty, respect, tolerance and inclusiveness. Our schools promote cohesion by serving more ethnically diverse and poorer communities. Catholic schools provide high standards of education which are popular with parents from all social, economic and faith backgrounds."

Paul Barber (Catholic Education Service)

At Coloma Convent Girls' School we recognise, not only the importance of helping students to flourish academically but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, so they are fully prepared for life in British society and for their role as citizens, able to make the strongest possible contribution to the Common Good of all. We teach the importance of British Values by going much deeper into the meaning of what it means to live a good life, within a framework of Catholic Christian Values. This provides the context and meaning for understanding why *British values* are important.

Coloma Convent Girls' School is delivering a curriculum which is broad, balanced and based on a developmental framework of spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. This is evidenced in our whole-school approach; through assemblies, charity fundraising, strong links with other schools and the local community.

Our framework for understanding British values draws on the example of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all, which is developed in Catholic Social Teaching. At Coloma Convent Girls' School, we seek to provide an education which focuses on the formation of the whole person and on our vocation and purpose in life. We are guided by our motto 'To work is to Pray' and by the Christian values of honourable purpose (that is, vocation and service), respect, compassion, co-operation and stewardship as we reflect on our place and purpose in the world. We place a significant emphasis on the celebration of individuality and difference within our communities and our calling to work for the Common Good, in the service of others.

Our Catholic ethos, which includes explicit reference to Christian and *British values*, makes a tangible difference to the way we work together and with our wider communities. Within this framework it would be impossible to overlook the government's view of British values expressed as 'democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.' We have audited our curriculum to identify where we find natural applications of this in our everyday learning. The examples that follow are an indication of some of the many ways we seek to embed *British values* at Coloma Convent Girls' School and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

Democracy

The right to vote is a recurring theme in our history studies. From Magna Carta, Bill of Rights, the Rise of the British Empire, the suffragette movement and the history of Electoral Reform, we are developing an

understanding of the complex history and the journey Britain has made to our modern democracy. Students are able to vote for their form captains to create a student council. The 6th form also has a chance to vote for the head girl committee. Students also have the opportunity to take part in various debating events such as the Youth Speaks public speaking competition and the Jack Petchey Speak Out challenge.

The Rule of Law

The importance of laws, whether they be those that serve to maintain order in the classroom, our school, or country, are consistently reinforced every day in the context of dealing with behaviour, through assemblies and indeed throughout the course of the whole school day. The curriculum is designed to ensure students are taught the values and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police are regular parts of our learning programmes and help reinforce this message. Through our whole school PSHE curriculum students study a wide range of laws particularly relating to relationships and sex.

Individual Liberty

At Coloma Convent Girls' School students are actively encouraged to make independent choices knowing that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. As a school we seek to educate and provide boundaries for students to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and an empowering education. We encourage students to see themselves as unique individuals able to make a unique contribution to building community. Students are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights, responsibilities and personal freedoms and receive advice about how to exercise these safely, for example through our exploration of E-Safety

Mutual Respect

Respect is a key value of the Coloma Code of Conduct and is modelled by students and staff alike. Coloma promotes respect for others and this is lived out in the classroom during break times as well as in extra-curricular activities such as sport and performance. In line with our commitment to democracy, students are always able to voice their opinions as we foster an environment where students can debate ideas and are safe to disagree with each other. One way this is fostered is through student voice where the opinions of the student body are listened to by members of the senior leadership team. We encourage students to substantiate opinions and to appreciate the value of co-operation and consensus as well as decision-making through voting. Our emphasis on fairness and justice means that we expect our students to show kindness towards the marginalised and disadvantaged. Coloma takes a very strong stance on social inclusion and anti-bullying through an explicit focus on strategies to enable respect for difference. The PSHE curriculum also explicitly teaches about respect within personal relationships.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

This is achieved through equipping students with the ability to develop positive values, understand their own beliefs and their place in a culturally diverse society. We give our students opportunities to experience such diversity within the School community by way of a multi-faith Sixth Form and within the wider community. All students experience a connection with other cultures and beliefs through our RE programme and local, regional and international links. The emphasis on enterprise, working with others, and learning other languages directly contributes to the appreciation of others' perspectives on life. Our Religious Studies curriculum follows the teaching of the Church in providing a broad and balanced education, which includes an understanding of and respect for people of other faiths or none and other religions, cultures and lifestyles. The students celebrate Black History month every year with a variety of events and assemblies celebrating a variety of different cultures.