

The Lotus Academy Trust



Supporting children to find opportunities in every difficulty

The Damara School



Specialist SEMH Independent School

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) Statement

Approved by: Trust Board

Initial Ratification: 31 August 2019 **Review:** October 2020, September 2023, February 2026, September 2026

Next review due by: September 2027

INTRODUCTION

The Damara School has a strong commitment to the personal and social development of all pupils and ensures that pupils' development in non-academic terms will enable them to play a confident, informed role in society, have a fully developed value system, and be able to interact with other people in a positive way.

The school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils through its teachings and ethos, the curriculum and everyday school life. The SMSC programme actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and challenges opinions or behaviours that are contrary to these fundamental British values.

The programme is adjusted for the age and ability of pupils and is embedded across all Learning Areas (see Schemes of Work for all Learning Areas and the Curriculum Policy).

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This statement reflects the requirements set out in:

- The Education Act 2002
- The Academies Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025/26, which includes updated guidance on schools being aware of the risks of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories online
- The Equality Act 2010
- The updated statutory relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education guidance, which must be followed from September 2026
- The Independent School Standards 2014

PRINCIPLES OF THE SMSC PROGRAMME

The school's SMSC programme ensures that the following principles are actively promoted and supported in all pupils:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law

- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (including those people who leave their faith or those who hold no faith) should be accepted and respected, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting unfair or illegal discrimination

In addition, the programme promotes:

- Self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- The ability to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Acceptance of responsibility for behaviour, showing initiative and understanding how pupils can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely (national and global)
- The ability to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- Tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- Respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- Respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England

AIMS OF THE SMSC PROGRAMME

The programme aims to:

Personal Development

- Develop pupils into self-assured, confident, happy, positive young people
- Help pupils to learn to articulate their feelings and justify them in both informal and formal settings
- Give pupils responsibility and trust to develop their confidence
- Celebrate achievement and encourage pupils to have the confidence to undertake difficult tasks and have a wide range of experiences
- Encourage pupils to question things which prevent them from developing into confident adults – for example, lack of aspiration and unfair discrimination
- Help pupils in their development by having adults and older pupils in the school act as appropriate role models for younger pupils

Understanding Law and Democracy

- Encourage pupils to value and respect the English legal system, and not simply law generally or some other type of law

- Help pupils understand why democracy is perceived within the UK as the fairest form of political organisation
- Help pupils understand why taking part in democracy is a good thing
- Help pupils understand why law-making on the basis of representation in Parliament is seen as better than alternatives
- Actively encourage the support of different political viewpoints and prevent political indoctrination
- Ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views and that any discussion of political systems will promote those political systems based on democracy

Community and Service

- Connect pupils with communities other than the school's own
- Teach co-operation and initiative, giving pupils responsibility within the school setting, and enabling pupils to serve other people in the wider community
- Equip pupils to understand how public services (e.g. Parliament, the police force, the Civil Service) and services (e.g. healthcare, welfare services and education) have evolved – especially if their role is best understood in a historical context – and how they relate to the daily lives of pupils and their families
- Use opportunities such as educational visits, work-shadowing or work experience in relevant organisations to enhance pupils' understanding

Cultural Understanding and Respect

- Enable pupils to gain knowledge and respect for their own culture before they learn to value and respect other cultures
- Prepare pupils to interact positively with people of different cultures and faiths through opportunities such as links with other schools and organisations, theme days, field trips and cultural celebrations
- Help pupils understand issues related to protected characteristics and ensure they respect all those with those characteristics
- Adopt strategies to ensure that pupils do not form a negative or restrictive view of the role of any gender
- Prepare pupils for engagement with communities where gender mixing is common and understand and respect that any gender can fulfil almost any role in society, with very few exceptions (such as ministers in some religions)

Critical Thinking and Online Safety

- Ensure pupils are aware of the risks of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories online and are taught to critically evaluate information they encounter
- Develop pupils' capacity for critical and independent thought
- Encourage pupils to question, discuss and debate issues in a respectful manner

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are supported, advised and guided to:

- Foster their own inner lives and non-material wellbeing
- Sustain their self-esteem in the learning experience
- Develop their capacity for critical and independent thought
- Foster their emotional life and express their feelings
- Experience moments of stillness and reflection through mindfulness practices
- Discuss their beliefs, feelings, values and responses to personal experiences
- Form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships
- Reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life
- Explore their own beliefs and experiences and those of others
- Respect the faiths, feelings and values of individuals and groups
- Enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world
- Use imagination and creativity
- Develop strategies for reflection

How Spiritual Development is Promoted:

- Timetabled mindfulness sessions and reflective tutor time
- Celebration assemblies recognising achievements and personal growth
- Religious Education delivered within the Learning Areas, providing pupils with opportunities to consider moral issues, foster a school community spirit and develop experiences of awe and wonder through focused attention and reflection
- Opportunities for quiet reflection in the 'safe space'
- Exploration of nature and the environment
- Discussion of philosophical questions and ethical dilemmas
- Opportunities to explore personal identity and values

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are supported, advised and guided to:

- Reflect on the consequences of their actions
- Learn how to forgive themselves and others
- Make moral, responsible decisions and act on them
- Recognise the unique value of each individual
- Recognise the challenges of life today and the role they play in it
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views of others
- Gain the confidence to cope with setbacks and learn from mistakes
- Take initiative and act responsibly with consideration for others
- Distinguish between right and wrong
- Show respect for the environment
- Recognise right and wrong and understand consequences
- Respect the law and understand the consequences of breaking it

- Investigate moral and ethical issues and offer reasoned views
- Understand the importance of honesty, fairness and justice

How Moral Development is Promoted:

- The school's holistic and therapeutic approach to behaviour management, which involves understanding what may underlie behaviour and what is being communicated
- Clear behaviour expectations based on respect, responsibility and safety
- Daily reflective tutor sessions where pupils reflect on their experiences of the day
- Restorative approaches to conflict resolution
- Discussion of moral dilemmas in PSHE and across the curriculum
- Modelling of positive moral behaviour by all staff
- Recognition and celebration of positive moral choices
- Teaching that does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Implementation of the updated statutory guidance on reasonable force, including recording of all 'significant incidents' and reporting to parents/carers

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are supported, advised and guided to:

- Display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate
- Make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities
- Develop an understanding of individual and group identity
- Learn about service in the school and wider community
- Understand the place they have within society and the role they need to play
- Understand the changing nature of society and how this is an opportunity not a threat
- Develop their compassion for others in society
- Take initiative on wider social issues and establish ways they can help on an individual, local, national and global scale
- Use a range of social skills in and out of the classroom
- Participate in the local community
- Appreciate diverse viewpoints
- Participate, volunteer and cooperate in and out of the school
- Resolve conflict and restore relationships
- Engage with the 'British values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance

How Social Development is Promoted:

- Through a multi-disciplinary approach involving Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Educational Psychology, and Mindfulness/Counselling that helps pupils bridge communication gaps and build social-emotional skills.

- School Council and pupil leadership opportunities
- PSHE curriculum that teaches pupils about their rights and their responsibilities to each other and ensures pupils experience the process of democracy through participation in classroom management and pupil leadership
- Collaborative learning and group work
- Educational visits and community engagement
- Work experience and links with local employers
- Theme days focusing on social issues
- Celebration of diversity and different cultures
- Teaching about the protected characteristics to ensure pupils respect all those with those characteristics
- Parent consultation events and family engagement activities
- Links with other schools and organisations

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are supported, advised and guided to:

- Recognise the values and richness of cultural diversity in Britain and how these influence individuals and society
- Recognise world faiths and beliefs and the impact they have on our culture
- Develop an understanding of Britain's local, national, European and global dimensions
- Broaden their perspective on different communities and cultures within the local area
- Interact with different cultures/lifestyles and explore their advantages and disadvantages
- Appreciate cultural influences
- Appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system
- Participate in cultural opportunities
- Understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity

How Cultural Development is Promoted:

- Religious Education teaching that respects, promotes and celebrates diversity at every opportunity and ensures that teachings of religious law do not disregard the requirements of English civil or criminal law nor make any suggestions to pupils that all religions are wrong
- Celebration of cultural festivals and events
- Educational visits to places of cultural significance
- Study of different cultures through 'The Society I live in' and 'The World around me' Learning Areas
- Art, music and drama exploring different cultural traditions
- Food Preparation and Nutrition exploring cuisines from different cultures
- Resources that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity
- Guest speakers from different cultural backgrounds
- Links with schools and organisations from different cultural backgrounds

- Study of British history and institutions
- Understanding of how British culture has been shaped by different influences

IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

SMSC is embedded across all Learning Areas and is not taught as a separate subject. Examples of how SMSC is promoted include:

English and Literacy

- Reading texts that explore moral and social themes
- Discussion and debate on ethical issues
- Exploring different perspectives and viewpoints
- Writing about personal experiences and reflections

Maths and Numeracy

- Understanding the importance of accuracy and honesty
- Problem-solving and logical thinking
- Understanding how mathematics is used in society
- Financial literacy and budgeting

Scientific Knowledge

- Understanding the impact of science on society
- Ethical debates about scientific developments
- Environmental awareness and responsibility
- Appreciation of the natural world

Computing

- Understanding online safety including the risks of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories online
- Digital citizenship and responsible use of technology
- Understanding how technology impacts society
- Respecting intellectual property and copyright

PE: Mind, Body, Spirit

- Mindfulness practices including meditation, mindful breathing, mindfulness awareness of emotions and senses, use of 'safe space', taking a 'headspace' and 2 minutes thinking time
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Fair play and respect for rules

- Personal challenge and resilience
- Health and wellbeing

Exploration of My Imagination

- Creative expression and imagination
- Appreciation of the arts and creativity
- Exploring different artistic traditions
- Self-expression and identity

The Society I Live In

- Understanding British values and democracy
- Understanding the law and legal system
- Understanding public institutions and services
- Citizenship and community participation
- Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) teaching that prepares pupils for adulthood, matches pupils' emotional and physical maturity, and is taught within a framework that respects pupils' wishes to keep some matters confidential where possible and in line with child protection guidance

The World Around Me

- Environmental awareness and sustainability
- Understanding different cultures and countries
- Global citizenship
- Appreciation of diversity

The World of Work

- Understanding the world of work and different careers
- Work ethics and professionalism
- Financial literacy
- Preparation for adult life

Enrichment

- Wide range of experiences to broaden horizons
- Community engagement and service
- Cultural experiences
- Personal development and new skills

PROMOTING BRITISH VALUES

The curriculum actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff must promote the development of these values in all interactions with pupils.

Democracy

What pupils learn:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- Why democracy is perceived within the UK as the fairest form of political organisation
- Why taking part in democracy is a good thing
- Why law-making on the basis of representation in Parliament is seen as better than alternatives
- How to participate in democratic processes

How democracy is promoted:

- School Council elections and meetings where pupils elect representatives and make decisions about school life
- Pupil voice surveys and feedback mechanisms where pupils' opinions are sought and acted upon
- Classroom discussions and debates on current issues
- Understanding of the UK parliamentary system through 'The Society I Live In' Learning Area
- Opportunities to vote and make decisions about their learning and school environment
- Participation in classroom management and pupil leadership
- Active encouragement of different political viewpoints and prevention of political indoctrination
- Balanced presentation of opposing views when political issues are brought to pupils' attention

Rule of Law

What pupils learn:

- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- The ability to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary
- Understanding that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- The consequences of breaking laws

How rule of law is promoted:

- Clear behaviour expectations and consequences that are consistently applied
- Understanding of English civil and criminal law through the curriculum
- Visits from police and other public services to explain their roles
- Discussion of laws and why they exist to protect citizens
- Teaching that any teachings of religious law will not disregard the requirements of English civil or criminal law
- Restorative approaches that help pupils understand the impact of their actions
- Implementation of the updated statutory guidance on reasonable force, including recording of all 'significant incidents' where a member of staff uses force on a pupil, and reporting the incidents to each parent or carer
- Respect for the legal system modelled by all staff

Individual Liberty

What pupils learn:

- The freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- They have rights and responsibilities
- They can make choices and decisions
- They are responsible for their own behaviour
- They have the right to be safe and respected

How individual liberty is promoted:

- Opportunities for choice and decision-making in learning and school life
- Respect for individual differences and personal identity
- Freedom of expression within appropriate boundaries (respecting the rights of others)
- Personal responsibility and accountability for behaviour
- Understanding of rights and responsibilities through PSHE
- Protection from discrimination based on protected characteristics
- Pupils' wishes to keep some matters confidential respected wherever possible and in line with child protection guidance
- Safe spaces for pupils to express themselves
- Therapeutic support that respects pupils' individual needs and choices

Mutual Respect and Tolerance

What pupils learn:

- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (including those people who leave their faith or those who hold no faith) should be accepted and respected, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- Respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting unfair or illegal discrimination
- Tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions
- That any gender can fulfil almost any role in society, with very few exceptions (such as ministers in some religions)

How mutual respect and tolerance is promoted:

- Celebration of diversity through assemblies, displays and curriculum content
- Zero tolerance of discrimination and prejudice, with all incidents addressed swiftly and appropriately
- Understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs through Religious Education
- Opportunities to learn about different cultures through educational visits, theme days, and cultural celebrations
- Challenging stereotypes and prejudice through discussion and education
- Teaching about the protected characteristics to ensure pupils respect all those with those characteristics
- Resources that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by all staff
- Strategies to ensure that pupils do not form a negative or restrictive view of the role of any gender
- Preparation for engagement with communities where gender mixing is common
- Links with other schools and organisations from different backgrounds
- Discussion of current events that promote understanding of diversity
- Restorative approaches to conflict that promote empathy and understanding
- Teaching that does not unlawfully discriminate against the protected characteristics

PREVENTING EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

As part of promoting British values and SMSC development, the school has a duty to prevent pupils from being drawn into extremism and radicalisation.

How the school prevents extremism:

- **Awareness of risks:** Pupils are taught to be aware of the risks of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories online as outlined in KCSIE 2025/26
- **Critical thinking:** Pupils are taught to critically evaluate information they encounter and to question sources
- **Balanced views:** Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views
- **Reporting concerns:** All staff are trained to recognise signs of radicalisation and extremism and to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Safe environment:** The school provides a safe environment where pupils can discuss controversial issues

- **Positive values:** The school actively promotes the fundamental British values which counter extremist narratives
- **Filtering and monitoring:** Effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place, with awareness of the DfE's guidance on generative AI
- **Partnerships:** The school works with external agencies including the police and local authority to prevent extremism

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the SMSC programme is monitored and evaluated through:

Termly Monitoring by Senior Leadership Team

- Lesson observations to check SMSC is embedded across the curriculum
- Learning walks to observe SMSC in action
- Work scrutiny to check coverage of SMSC themes
- Review of schemes of work to ensure SMSC is planned
- Analysis of behaviour and incident data
- Review of pupil voice surveys
- Review of parent/carers voice surveys
- Monitoring of pupil leadership activities

Termly Reporting to Trustees

- Summary report on SMSC provision and impact
- Evidence of how British values are promoted
- Analysis of pupil outcomes related to SMSC
- Identification of strengths and areas for development
- Action plan for improvement

Annual Review

- Full review of SMSC statement and provision
- Consultation with staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Review against statutory requirements
- Update of action plan
- Approval by Trust Board

Evidence of Impact

The impact of the SMSC programme is evidenced through:

- **Pupil voice:** 100% of pupils stating that they feel safe at school; average termly satisfaction rating of over 95%

- **Parent/carers voice:** Average termly satisfaction rating of over 90% where parents/carers consider the school is responding well to their child's personal development, safety and well-being
- **Behaviour data:** Good management of behaviour in and out of lessons; low exclusion rates
- **Attendance data:** Improving attendance for pupils with school refusal issues
- **Pupil progress:** 100% of pupils improve in their levels of confidence and self-esteem using rating scales
- **Pupil leadership:** 100% of pupils hold a pupil leadership/ambassadorial post
- **Transitions:** Successful transitions to post-16 destinations
- **Observations:** Evidence of SMSC in lesson observations and learning walks
- **Work samples:** Evidence of SMSC in pupils' work
- **Pupil discussions:** Pupils can articulate their understanding of British values and SMSC concepts

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This statement links to the following policies and procedures:

- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Attendance Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure the school promotes SMSC development and British values
- Monitor the effectiveness of this statement through termly reports
- Ensure the school meets statutory requirements

The Deputy Head will:

- Ensure this statement is implemented effectively
- Lead the monitoring and evaluation of SMSC provision

- Report to the Trust Board on SMSC provision and impact
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities

All Staff will:

- Promote SMSC development and British values in all interactions with pupils
- Embed SMSC across the curriculum
- Model positive values and behaviours
- Challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Report safeguarding concerns including extremism and radicalisation

Pupils will:

- Engage with SMSC learning opportunities
- Respect the rights and beliefs of others
- Participate in democratic processes
- Take responsibility for their behaviour
- Contribute positively to the school community

Parents/Carers will:

- Support the school's promotion of SMSC and British values
- Engage with SMSC-related communications and workshops
- Discuss SMSC themes with their children at home
- Raise any concerns with the school