St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Ethos Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Head with support from the Chaplain.

Last review: May 26

Next review: May 27

Overview

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy.

Context

St Mary's School, Cambridge (the School) is a Catholic, Christian school which welcomes young people of all faiths and those who come from a secular background. It is situated in the parish of Our Lady and the English Martyrs and the Diocese of East Anglia.

The School is founded on the educational vision of the Venerable Mary Ward who founded establishments for the education of women so that they might be liberated to follow their Christian calling into whatever walk of life that might lead them. She said, 'Cherish God's vocation in you. Let it be constant, efficacious, and loving.'

Mary Ward believed that people became fully human and fully alive when they were able to recognise that they were loved by God, called by God and able to freely choose a close relationship with God. Therein, she believed, lay deep, real and enduring happiness. She sought to encourage her pupils to live lives of integrity: 'We should be such as we appear and appear such as we are.'

Philosophical and theological basis of the ethos.

A Catholic school is a school which is based on 'Gospel values':

- Faithfulness and Integrity
- Dignity and Compassion
- Humility and Gentleness
- Truth and Justice
- Forgiveness and Mercy
- Purity and Holiness
- Tolerance and Peace
- Service and Sacrifice

The curriculum is broad and includes personal, physical, social, religious, and spiritual education as well as academic.

'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education. It is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. We are clear that the specific contribution to the life of the Catholic school of classroom RE is primarily educational.' (Catholic Bishops of England and Wales)

"Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects — because development is the result of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on… …If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.

(Pope Francis - May 10, 2014)

Mission and Values

As a Christian school, underpinned by our Catholic heritage and the life of Mary Ward, our mission is to develop curious, creative and compassionate young women with the aspiration, confidence and integrity to shape a better world for the common good.

Core Values:

- Freedom
- Joy
- Justice
- Love
- Truth

(These are based on the core CJ/IBVM values and are used by Loreto schools in the UK, Australia and across the world. Original IBVM values 'Verity' and 'Felicity' are renamed 'Truth' and 'Joy' to reflect more modern language usage.)

These values are aspired to and expressed in all aspects of school life – our work, our planning and our community life. They are prominently displayed around the School and are reflected on in assemblies, in meetings and at INSET. They serve as a reminder of our founding purpose and charism.

Ethos Aims

As a Catholic school, we aim to:

- Provide an environment within which pupils can feel sufficiently happy and secure to explore the world in which they live, become fully engaged in their education and develop their exploration and practice of their faith and their understanding of themselves and their place in the world.
- Provide an environment in which pupils can learn more about, as well as value, their strengths, develop their gifts and discern their vocation.

- Provide an environment in which pupils can learn to risk and fail as well as succeed and develop their self-esteem and their knowledge that they are loved and cherished by God and the community.
- Provide an enjoyable and joyful educational and community experience
- Support parents in their sharing of their Christian faith, other faith or secular concepts relating to the meaning of life and values, with their children.
- Develop the partnership between the School and home, the diocese, parish, or religious community.
- Be a service to society by working for the common good.
- Contribute to the spreading of the 'Good News' and gospel values in the world through enabling pupils to develop as whole people and make a significant contribution.

Expression, maintenance, and development of the ethos

The ethos is expressed in all aspects of school life, for example, in liturgy and prayer; the curriculum; extra-curricular activities; chaplaincy and pastoral care; charitable outreach; relationships with the local parish and diocese; the CJ community; other faith communities; governance, leadership and management.

The ethos is maintained through all aspects of school life but particularly in Religious Education and the liturgical and prayer life of the School, in chaplaincy, and in the engagement of pupils and teachers with issues of social justice.

Each pupil and each teacher contribute to the development of the ethos as the School is a living and growing community of people seeking the truth and having a great deal of fun in the process. The pupils of St Mary's School, Cambridge, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the Sixth Form and Boarders, are the cornerstone of our ethos: the gifts that each individual brings to our community helps to make the vision of Mary Ward live today.

Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils

Our ethos as outlined above:

- Enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence
- Enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong, to respect the civil and criminal law and act consistently with their beliefs
- Encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions
- Encourages pupils to show initiative and understand how they can contribute confidently and positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the School is situated and to society more widely
- Leads pupils to become effective users of community services and facilities according to their maturity
- Assists pupils to acquire an appreciation of, and respect for, the origins and practices of their own and other cultures in a way that ensures pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity, avoid and resist racism and promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions
- Encourages pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

In addition, we undertake to provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England so that they can become effective users of community services and facilities according to their maturity.

We teach all pupils about respect for all and pay particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Moreover, our teaching precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in school and takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils during school, whilst taking part in extra-curricular activities provided or organised by or on behalf of the School and in the promotion of external activities, including promotional material, that pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.