

British Values at Sir Harry Smith Community College

At Sir Harry Smith Community College we pride ourselves in creating an ethos of respect, equality, tolerance and inclusiveness and therefore when the DfE announced the need “to create a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs”, we saw this as an opportunity to state how we are meeting these objectives.

Democracy

We have at the College both a student council (which focuses on new initiatives and ideas proposed by the College enabling students to have a say in them) and a student voice group (which focuses on existing College policies and practices allowing students to have a say in how they can be improved).

We held a mock general election on election day for four student parties, allowing students to vote and have a say on new initiatives students wanted to implement in the school. These were passed by SLT and are in the process of being implemented. In addition, prior to the referendum on the EU, we had a whole school vote on Brexit which involved all year groups. This followed some important discussions during tutor time.

Democracy is taught across a range of subjects in the curriculum including Skills for Life lessons, History and English, giving students an understanding of democracy at all levels from local to global initiatives.

Assemblies cover a wide range of topics including democracy and the ability for people to have their say.

Surveys and questionnaires are used to gain feedback from both students and parents on their views of the College. These have been overwhelmingly positive for the college in all aspects.

The College has good links to local elected officials with visits and talks from these officials to a range of students.

Rule of Law

The importance of rules and laws is discussed in many areas of the curriculum, including Skills for Life, RE and Sociology where an understanding of rules, laws, rights and responsibilities along with social injustice, crime and punishment are all examined.

We have good links with local police and PCSO's with them both giving talks in the college and taking part in student voice meetings where students discuss with the police on areas for improvement locally. They also regularly attend school council meetings.

Our behaviour policy promotes a good understanding of the roles of rules and responsibilities with a culture of students taking responsibility for their actions being encouraged.

Individual Liberty

At the College we encourage an inclusive right to a good education with an ethos of personalising learning and success for all. This enables students to develop as individuals and make good progress.

We encourage students to make well informed choices about their own learning and offer a wide range of subject choices to enable them to tailor their learning as much as possible.

We have a zero tolerance approach to bullying of any kind and look to create a safe and supportive environment where students feel they can achieve.

Through our curriculum we aim to empower students with knowledge and an understanding of the world, so they can become successful individuals within society.

We have a number of fundraising events run by students where they can raise money and choose charities of their choices to help.

Mutual Respect

We promote an ethos of mutual respect within the College through assemblies, Skills for Life lessons and tutor student relationships.

Ofsted (Nov 2014) commented on the excellent relationship the college has between staff and students creating an environment of inclusiveness where students arrived wanting to learn.

We are non-selective, encouraging all students within our local area to apply, and have an excellent reputation of dealing with students from all backgrounds and abilities. Within this we create an atmosphere of inclusiveness between students by actively encouraging older students to volunteer and help out with younger ones.

Our Skills for Life lessons teach students about diversity, equality, SEN, racism and homophobia to give students an understanding of all of these areas so they can become inclusive and well rounded individuals in society free of prejudice.

Our use of "Behaviour Watch" enables staff to praise students who do well, and enable parents to see that feedback and to gain an understanding of how well students are achieving.

We promote tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; assemblies give an insight into tolerance and the issues that intolerance can lead to. Older students mentor younger students in ideas such as tolerance and bullying to provide an inclusive society in the college.

Through our curriculum in Skills for Life, RE, Geography, History and English, people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures are examined with an approach of tolerance and inclusivity.

A zero tolerance approach in the school is taken to prejudice and statements or behaviour that are seen as offensive in any way.

Discussion and debates are encouraged, with student led debating societies; tolerance is promoted and intolerance discussed and discouraged.