



CURRICULUM POLICY – APPENDIX 2 BRITISH VALUES AT MTS

Merchant Taylors' School was founded in 1561, 3 years in to the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth. Now, in the reign of the second monarch of that name, we have been asked by the Government to show how we promote '*fundamental British values*'. These '*fundamental British values*' are defined by the Department for Education as '*democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.*'

The Times, in 1926 wrote that this school is a '*majestic blend of the old and the new... which has its roots deep in our national character and our national history.*' This definition still holds true. The school predates the existence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and has always been at the heart of the state's sense of itself. The school was founded, not in Britain, but in an England struggling to come to terms with its own identity in the face of struggles within the state and with religiously inspired conflict raging across the world. Britain in a, similarly turbulent, early 21st Century has struggled to come up with a uniquely 'British' set of values. It is then appropriate that the school looks to its history to show that the values above have, to an extent, always been part of what we do and will continue to inform our sense of self.

The school has, for centuries, recognised the importance of the constitution of the land and has sought to defend it. In the context of the violent upheavals of the French Revolution, the school responded strongly when a pupil raised a Tricolour on the Tower of London in 1796. The school declared that '*principles against the constitution ought to be immediately discountenanced*'. Today, we promote democracy by a variety of means. From our elected and vibrant School Council, to the mock elections we run in parallel to our national, parliamentary polls, we are a school in which democracy is seen functioning effectively. It is also a school where we are never afraid to challenge perceptions of democracy through discussion and debate. In our tutorial system, our PSHE programme, and our Enrichment lessons, we discuss the issues of the rule of law and how effectively it holds sway across Britain today. In many subjects, such as History or Politics, we look at how our laws have developed and have been implemented – holding the very concept of 'the rule of law' up to scrutiny. The school's founder, Richard Hilles fled England for over a decade, due to persecution for his religious beliefs. As such, it is hardly surprising that Statute XXV of the School is '*There shall be taught in the said school children of all nations and countries.*' Today, the school continues to promote respect and tolerance for all different faiths, through faith rooms, religious societies and our teaching of Religious Education. Given the wide variety of religious beliefs in our school community, we encourage ecumenical discussion and dialogue and celebrate the diversity in our community.

We are a 'London school' and have been since our creation. As London has changed over the centuries, so too Merchant Taylors' School has changed. From a school that resided at the heart of the old city for nearly 400 years, we have, since our move to Sandy Lodge, become a school that embodies the more cosmopolitan nature of modern London. The capital today is more multi-cultural, multiethnic and multi-faith that it has ever been. It is hardly surprising that Merchant Taylors' reflects that change and is now one of the most diverse independent schools in London. That diversity is our strength, and is allied to our core values. Our values are based on that Sixteenth Century humanism at the heart of public life in the Tudor age. A humanism which still underpins the values we are now tasked to promote; we will promote them, because we always have.

Deputy Head (Academic)