

BRITISH VALUES STATEMENT

The DfE have reinforced the need “to create and enforce 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.” The school follows the guidance given in the document *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools* DfE November 2014. These principles have been reiterated in the *Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance for Schools (DfE)*.

At Annan these 5 strands are woven into our curriculum from kindergarten upwards, to ensure that all our children develop a strong, instinctive sense of what these values are, and why they are essential to a fair and progressive society.

Strand 1: Democracy

Democratic values and processes are promoted throughout Annan School. Our topic based approach to learning always takes the views of both the children and the adults at school as a starting point. The children know that their views are important, and that we structure learning activities to take into account the wishes of all members of the Annan community. Daily candle time sessions reinforce many democratic ideals.

Any large changes for the school always take into consideration the views of the children. For example, landscaping the grounds around the junior classrooms. All children were given the opportunity to put their ideas forward to the landscape designers and help them come up with the final design. Children were also consulted on their ideas for the new KS2 building design and the way the playground equipment is organised.

Democracy on a national level is covered where appropriate in our topics, ensuring that when children move onto secondary school they have a good understanding of how our country is run and how democratic process allows them to be politically active citizens.

Strand 2: The Rule of Law

The importance of Laws and rules, whether they are those that govern the class, the school, or the country, are consistently reinforced. At Annan, we consider it to be of the utmost importance that our children understand the rationale behind laws and rules, so that they see them as guides to be followed for the benefits they offer rather than through fear of punishment. Children and teachers discuss and set clear ‘rules’ of acceptable behaviour. The school also sets clear boundaries and behaviour expectations.

Regular use is made of circle time as an opportunity to talk about feelings, to discuss expectations of behaviour and resolve problems as a group. The rules that facilitate the smooth running of the school are talked about regularly so that the children develop a keen sense of why rules and laws are needed. There are clear consequences when rules are not followed which children are very clear on.

Children are taught the value of (and reasons behind) laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken.

Strand 3: Individual Liberty

At Annan, our Froebelian ethos puts emphasis on the importance of developing a sense of individual liberty in a child’s education. From early beginnings in the Kindergarten, children are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Froebel emphasised that the freedom to make choices brings responsibility in both how materials are used but also the need to return them and take responsibility for clearing up and restoring a sense of order to the environment. From the kindergarten upwards children learn to leave equipment and areas of the kindergarten “ready for the next person”.

As a school we work hard to help our children develop a sense of their own rights and freedoms. Rather than trying to control every aspect of their environment, we allow them where appropriate the space to assess their own needs, especially with regard to assessing risk. Children are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advise them how to exercise these safely.

Our Froebelian ethos has a deep respect for children as powerful learners and communicators. Children are given many opportunities to pursue their curiosity, to engage in open-ended exploration, speculation and “possibility thinking”. Children grow to expect that their ideas will be treated with interest and respect.

Strand 4: Mutual Respect

A core element in our how we create the environment needed for children to develop and learn is respectful communication. All adults at school are trained in positive communication strategies, modelling at all times how to interact with others in a respectful manner. Our children grow within this framework of respectful communication and develop their own communication strategies along these lines. Our school ethos encourages a deep sense of respect not only for other people but also for the natural environment. In a Froebelian context this is called “Freedom with Responsibility promoting interdependence as well as independence, community as well as individuality and responsibility as well as freedom.

We do not use a system of extrinsic rewards or punishments and believe that through the strong emotional intelligence model children learn to respect each other and the adults around them and learn to communicate their needs and feelings appropriately.

Strand 5: Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:

Throughout their time at Annan our children are given time to explore and learn from all world faiths, and different cultures around the world. Through stories, songs and bespoke lessons we aim to broaden their understanding of religious ideas. Through gatherings and celebrations (Diwali, Chinese New Year, and sukkot for example) the children learn what makes belief systems similar/different, and also importantly how wisdom and universal truth can be discovered in all. As a small rural school in a less multi-cultural area we work hard to take every opportunity to explore other faiths and beliefs. Where possible we give the children practical experiences (visits to a synagogue, Buddhist temple etc.) to enrich their understanding of different faiths. We are developing links with schools in other parts of the UK and globally.

Forest School is central in fostering the spiritual development of the children, giving opportunities for the children to develop their ‘spirit’ and their understanding of ‘God’ (like spirituality, in its widest sense) “to discover nature is to discover God” (Froebel). Stories from many cultures are shared in the forest and children also learn to be connected with the world around them. Forest School gives a context for children to develop a set of values, principles and beliefs, with a readiness to question and to consider moral and ethical issues; to show a respect for, and a deeper understanding of, living things, the environment and the universe. It enables the children to work together to develop their sense of ‘community’ and an understanding and tolerance of others with different opinions and points of view.

Actively promoting British Values also means challenging children, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including ‘extremist’ views.

Monitoring and review

This statement is monitored by the Principals and staff of the school and will be reviewed in line with the school’s review cycle and any changes in Government legislation and statutory guidance.