

Bedford College Academies Trust

British Values Policy

Status: Statutory	Member of staff responsible: Assistant Principal	Implementation date: April 2021
Issue No: 2	Approved by: Wixams Academy Local Advisory Body	Next Review Date: June 2023

Our Vision

“The BCAT vision is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. We aim to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.”

Ofsted consider ‘British Values’ to comprise of:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty

Our Values

Student focus - We will seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student

High performance - We will strive for consistently high levels of performance in all aspects of our work

Respect, openness and honesty - We will treat everyone with respect, encourage openness and honesty, and recognise each other’s contribution and achievements.

Aims

This policy sets out the ways in which Bedford Academies Trust (BCAT) encourages pupils at each of its Academies to develop their understanding of the four key areas defined by DfE British values, through the curriculum, extracurricular and other opportunities.

Ethos

At BCAT Academies we ensure that through our vision, values, relationships and teaching promote tolerance and respect for all cultures, faiths and lifestyles.

The Local Advisory Body also ensure that this ethos is reflected and implemented effectively through Academy policy and practice and that there are safeguarding policies in place to safeguard and promote pupils’ welfare.

We have a duty to prepare our pupils for life in modern Britain and to keep them safe. At each BCAT Academy everyone has the right to learn and work in safety. We do not tolerate bullying of any kind and will challenge derogatory language and behaviour towards others.

British Values

British values are promoted in much of what we do, during school assemblies, Religious Education, and Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) sessions. The values are also integral to our vision and values.

As well as actively promoting British values, the opposite also applies: we would actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values, including 'extremist' views.

The British values we embrace are not unique to Britain. We acknowledge that they differ in no way from values of the many countries and the cultural backgrounds represented by families.

Below are just a few examples of how we promote British values. The first section is a general overview; the others are specific expectations set out by Ofsted.

Being part of Britain

As an Academy, we value and celebrate the diverse heritages of everybody at Wixams. Alongside this, we value and celebrate being part of Britain. In general terms, this means that we celebrate traditions and customs in the course of the year; for example, Easter, Bonfire Night, and trips to the pantomime at Christmas. We also value and remember national events such as Remembrance Day.

Students learn about being part of Britain from different perspectives:

Geography: our rivers, coasts and seaside holiday topics ensure that children have a better understanding of what Britain is, learning more about:

- its coasts, rivers and mountains
- where Britain is in relation to the rest of Europe and other countries in the world.

History: key moments in British history are studied in the topics such as 'London's burning' and significant historical figures. The actual topic depends on the interests of the children (and teacher), but might include inventions and discoveries, or medicine.

Democracy

Children, parents and staff have many opportunities for their voices to be heard at the Academy. Democracy is central to how we operate.

An obvious example is our Academy Council. The election of the Academy Council members reflects our British electoral system and demonstrates democracy in action: candidates make speeches, pupils consider characteristics important for an elected representative, pupils vote in secret using ballot boxes etc. Made up of two representatives from each class, the Academy Council meets regularly to discuss issues raised by the different classes. The Council are actively involved in staff recruitment and in providing teachers with feedback.

Pupils are always listened to by adults and are taught to listen carefully and with concern to each other, respecting the right of every individual to have their opinions and voices heard. We encourage pupils to take ownership of not only their Academy but also of their own learning and progress. This encourages

a heightened sense of both personal and social responsibility and is demonstrated on a daily basis by our pupils.

Parents' opinions are welcomed at the Academy through methods such as questionnaires, surveys at parents' evenings, and opportunities to comment on newsletters.

Rules and Laws

The importance of rules and laws, whether they be those that govern our Academy or our country, are referred to and often reinforced, such as in assemblies and when reflecting on behaviour choices. At the start of the school year, each class discusses the school rules and class routines; principles that are clearly understood by all, and seen to be necessary to ensure that every class member is able to learn in a safe and ordered environment.

Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws; that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves, and the consequences when laws are broken. These values can be reinforced in different ways:

- visits from authorities such as the police and fire service
- during Religious Education, when rules for particular faiths are thought about
- during other school subjects, where there is respect and appreciation for different rules.

Individual Liberty

Alongside rules and laws, we promote freedom of choice and the right to respectfully express views and beliefs. Through the provision of a safe, supportive environment, we provide boundaries for our pupils to make choices safely; for example:

- choices about what learning or activity they follow
- choices about how they record their learning
- choices around the participation in extra-curricular activities

Our pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are taught how to exercise these safely, such as in our PSHCE lessons.

Mutual respect and tolerance

Wixams Academy serves an area which is culturally diverse and we are proud to promote and celebrate our different backgrounds and beliefs. Tolerance, politeness and mutual respect are at the heart of our aims and ethos.

Our central aim for our '...pupils by the time they leave us, to be fully qualified, motivated and personally equipped to succeed in life and contribute to a rapidly changing world' drives us towards ensuring that our pupils are able to live and work alongside people from all backgrounds and cultures. This will be particularly necessary in a future where technological advances will make the 'world a smaller place.'

Our pupils know and understand that respect is shown to everyone and to everything, whatever differences we may have. Children learn that their behaviour choices have an effect on their own rights and those of others. All members of the Academy community are encouraged to treat each other with respect.

Specific examples of how we at Wixams Academy enhance pupils' understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs are:

- through Religious Education, PSHCE and other lessons where we develop awareness and appreciation of other cultures – in English through fiction and in art and music by considering cultures from other parts of the world.
- celebrating cultural differences through assemblies, themed weeks, noticeboards and displays.

Whilst instances contrary to our values are relatively rare, no school or academy can guarantee that there will never be instances which are contrary to our values. Each is treated seriously in line with our policies and expectations.

Extremism

Something, which is clearly not part of any British or European value, is extremism. It is important to remember that whilst the threat from so-called Islamic State has been a focus in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, the Prevent Duty is clear that extremism of all kinds should be tackled too. In England, far right groups such as Britain First and the English Defence League need to be tackled, too. Extremism is not a new topic in education, but schools have a relatively new statutory duty to pay “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

The Trust is aware of the ‘Prevent Strategy’ and has written two policies, Prevent – Staff Guidance, and Prevent – Visiting Speakers and Events, which should be read in conjunction with this British Values policy.

Misinformation, propaganda and ‘fake news’.

Propaganda, misinformation and fake news have the potential to polarise public opinion, to promote violent extremism and hate speech and, ultimately, to undermine democracies and reduce trust in the democratic processes.

Wixams Academy will endeavour to provide students with a solid education on media and information literacy as part of the curriculum and within assemblies. Our assemblies will reinforce the Academy’s ethos, its values and will tackle the issue of truth and misinformation.

Teachers will be trained in the subject to empower students with the necessary competences to critically understand and assess information reported by all forms of media.

Projects in partnership with national bodies such as the Anne Frank Trust, and local authorities and media organisations are encouraged and will support this drive to tackle extremism, discrimination and misinformation.