British Values

St Laurence is committed to British Values, commonly expressed as follows:

Democracy: governments elected by the equal votes of citizens, so citizens can influence decisions about how a country is run.
Rule of law: every citizen is subject to the laws of the land, which can't just be ignored when convenient.
Individual freedom: the freedom for every citizen to choose and hold any faith and belief is protected in law.
Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith: an acceptance that other citizens having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and should not be the cause of prejudice or discrimination.

We see these values as growing from the Christian values which we hold as a school and which are explained in the accompanying document (School Values). We acknowledge and celebrate that such values are shared by many nations and faiths across the world. There are specific modules on British Values in the tutorial and the Sixth Form core programme. Furthermore, British values are explored and expressed in a variety of ways throughout our curriculum, for example:

Democracy: we have increasingly strong channels for giving students a voice in the way the school is run, for example:

- School Council and House Councils
- Sports Council
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

The promotion of democracy is supported through both the curriculum and wider enrichment opportunities at St Laurence School. Within the curriculum, students explore democratic principles, citizenship, political systems and participation through subjects such as History and Religious Education. The History curriculum examines the development of democracy in Britain and internationally, while Religious Education encourages students to consider issues of justice, rights, responsibilities and ethical decision-making within society.

Beyond the classroom, students have opportunities to engage actively in democratic processes through the School Council and House Councils, which provide student voice and leadership opportunities across the school. The councils play a key role in organising charity events and contributing to whole-school initiatives.

As part of our St Laurence Extra programme, students can also participate in the Politics Club, where they develop their understanding of debate, representation, global issues and democratic decision-making. This helps students gain first-hand experience of discussion, negotiation and civic engagement in a structured and respectful environment.

Rule of Law: acceptance of moral responsibility for our actions is the underlying ethos throughout the school. School rules and expectations are simple and clear. We have listened to the views of students and parents, for example about uniform, the sixth form dress code and the timings of the school day and have modified our rules accordingly. The importance of following instructions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of self and others is emphasised in all areas, including PE and Sport, Science, Design Technology, Outdoor Education and Trips and Visits.

Sixth Form students recently engaged in a "Live with the Lords" lesson where they were able to participate in a Q&A session with Lord Cookham about his work in the House of Lords. Y13 Criminology students study law making processes as part of their A level.

Individual freedom: The importance of individual freedom and freedom of conscience is promoted throughout our curriculum, particularly within PSHE, Religious Education and the Humanities. Students are encouraged to develop their own informed views, express them respectfully, and engage critically with a range of perspectives, beliefs and ethical issues.

Beyond the classroom, students are given opportunities to exercise leadership and pursue issues they are passionate about. This has led to students establishing and leading clubs and societies such as Feminista, providing forums for discussion, advocacy and active citizenship. Through these experiences, students learn to value personal liberty while recognising the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of others. As our SIAMS inspection states: 'students call us to action'.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance: Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and of those with no faith, are fundamental to life at St Laurence School. These values are embedded throughout our Religious Education curriculum, which is studied by all students throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, enabling them to develop an informed understanding of a wide range of worldviews, faith traditions and ethical perspectives.

St Laurence is a Holocaust Beacon School and each year relatives of holocaust survivors deliver a talk to Year 8 students preceded by Holocaust awareness lessons and activities. Sixth Form students visit Poland and Auschwitz as part of their Social Science and Philosophy studies.

A number of school trips are available to students, during which they consider and reflect on British Values through activities.

In addition, Year 13 Sociology students visit the town of Glastonbury and meet with the "Priestesses at the Goddess Temple" to discuss various religious and non-religious movements to enhance their understanding of "faith".

We have the St Laurence Reads programme where students are given the opportunity to vote on a novel to be read by the whole school during tutorials. The books chosen have strong links to British Values.

These principles are further reinforced through our Collective Worship programme which begins with 'whether we have faith or no faith', tutor time activities and wider pastoral curriculum. Students are encouraged to engage respectfully with differing viewpoints, challenge prejudice, and appreciate the diversity of modern British society. Opportunities to deepen this understanding are also provided through enrichment activities and educational visits that promote cultural awareness, empathy and inclusion.