

Personal Development at St Thomas More

Our school mission statement affirms our desire ‘to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships’ and embodies our attitude and intentions towards the importance of a truly holistic Personal Development curriculum.

The Personal Development Curriculum at St Thomas More Catholic High School covers the following areas:

- Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic and Relationships and Sex Education
- British Values and Citizenship Education
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
- Character Development

Our Personal Development provision is outstanding with a high quality and well-structured curriculum which aims to help our children grow into confident, open, resourceful young people with a sense of responsibility and of service. All our pupils are encouraged and challenged to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences across and beyond the curriculum, contributing fully to the life of the school and the wider community. In doing so, pupils develop their potential as human beings, recognise their own worth, develop a sense of their own identity and learn to value and respect both themselves and others.

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC)

At St Thomas More we recognise and firmly believe that the development of students, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally plays a significant part in their ability to learn, achieve and access the world they live in. The school is a community of faith based on common Christian values and worship which can find expression in every aspect of daily life. These principles underpin education at St Thomas More and are expressed through the rich curriculum experiences that take place both within and outside the classroom.

The values and ethos of St Thomas More Catholic High School are central to our Personal Development education and SMSC provision. It is evident in a number of ways, several examples include:

- All pupils at St Thomas More receive one discrete one-hour PSHE lesson per week.
- Personal Development education is also a cross curricular subject with all curriculum areas contributing, in a variety of ways, and are highlighted in their Schemes of Work.
- Collective Worship is practised every day with a weekly theme and all pupils will experience one assembly per week.
- There is a wealth of extra-curricular activities at St Thomas More. We have a tradition of trips, retreats and visits to heritage sites, which introduce our pupils to a wide and

varied experience. We have a very healthy extra-curricular sports programme and the Performing Arts Department that attracts sell-out crowds for their yearly performances which allows all pupils at St Thomas More to develop a rich cultural capital.

- Our charitable work supports people locally and across the world and is mainly co-ordinated by our Chaplain.
- Our pastoral enrichment sessions are an opportunity to enhance and deepen our curriculum by inviting visiting speakers and theatre groups into school to deliver key safety topics.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and to recognise how they are developing personally and socially, addressing the spiritual, social, moral and cultural and health issues that form an intrinsic part of growing up.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education

Whilst all aspects of the curriculum are important in supporting Personal Development it is through the appropriate teaching of PSHE (including RSE) that this can be truly nurtured. Catholic education is centred on the formation of the whole child and age appropriate PSHE is crucial in helping to create well-rounded young people who are equipped to make suitable and safe lifestyle choices.

Our PSHE curriculum is ambitious because:

- We endeavour to teach a wide range of topics in a developmental spiralled format that will help students become fully equipped with knowledge to make responsible lifestyle choices in their future lives.
- We are sensitive to the fact that many students have a different lived experience at home and therefore we never dismiss their views but instead encourage an environment where they feel safe and respected in expressing them.
- We believe our role is paramount in providing safe spaces for dialogue and discussion, whilst recognising the status of the Church's teachings.
- We understand the need for all students to be able to access the curriculum and therefore lessons are designed in such a way that there are levels of differentiation and opportunities for all learners to participate in some form.
- PSHE encourages students to expand their worldviews and empathise with others, through in-depth discussions and an exploration of a variety of sensitive topics. This enables us to address the values and virtues that support the school ethos.
- Students are able to foster tolerance and understanding of the differences between people and further develop their own opinions.

- We help students to overcome barriers when talking about personal or sensitive issues and encourage them to improve personal resilience by reflecting on positives and finding their own solutions to problems.
- We equip students with knowledge which enables them to become law-abiding, respectful and moral adults, who can continue to uphold and implement our school values in their daily lives.
- We aim to foster a genuine passion and desire to learn about new topics and make extensive links to real life and other subject areas. This helps to create a more meaningful and holistic learning experience for all students.
- We use a wide range of teaching methods to engage pupils and promote a greater level of critical thinking and evaluation.
- We regularly signpost students to additional internal and external support to extend opportunities to improve overall wellbeing.

Our PSHE curriculum allows progressively deeper learning to take place and is designed to cover the following three key strands:

- 1. Created and loved by God (Health and Wellbeing)**
- 2. Created to love others (Relationships)**
- 3. Created to serve and live in communities (Living in the Wider World - including Citizenship, Careers and Economic education)**

The PSHE programme helps our students to deal with critical issues they face every day such as friendships, emotional wellbeing and change. It provides them with a solid foundation for whatever challenging opportunities lie ahead, so they can face a world full of uncertainty with hope. At St Thomas More we believe that with better health and wellbeing students can achieve academically, and enjoy greater success.

[PSHE Learning Journey](#)

Supplementing PSHE provision at St Thomas More we use Ten Ten's RSE programme, Life to the Full. We teach 'Relationship, Sex and Health Education' (RSHE) within the context of a Christian understanding of human sexuality rooted in the wisdom and teaching of the Catholic Church. The programme is fully inclusive of all students and the content is age related. We deliver this teaching through the prism of Catholic RSHE. The framework of our programme is taken from the Model Catholic RSE Programme by the Catholic Education Service, which has been highlighted by the Department of Education as a work of good practice.

British Values and Citizenship Education

At St Thomas More High School we provide a Catholic curriculum, which is broad and balanced, recognising that every student is unique and is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27).

The promotion of 'British Values' is central to Catholic education because British values have their origin in the Christian values of our nation.

At St Thomas More we recognise, not only the importance of helping students to develop academically but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Within a framework of Catholic Christian Values, we teach the importance of British Values by going much deeper into the meaning of what it is to live a good life. We actively promote the values of democracy and tolerance through the example we set as teachers and the behaviour we expect from our students.

Our Mission statement embodies Catholic Ethos whilst promoting British Values;

“To be a prayerful community based on Christian Values, notably Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance and to encourage individuals in their commitment to these ideals”

“To provide a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others”

Our framework for understanding British values draws on the example of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all, which is developed in Catholic Social Teaching.

The link below gives an indication of some of the many ways we seek to embed British values and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

[British Values](#)

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

One of the key principles of our Personal Development Curriculum is that it enables pupils to acquire learning that will allow them to make their own choices in the real world.

At the forefront of the careers aspect of Personal Development is the implementation of the eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the need of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experience of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

At St Thomas More we aim to raise our students' aspirations, promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes and prepare them for their future careers. PSHE education, with our cohesive programme of careers education, plays a critical role in preparing all our young people for the next stage of their education or training and beyond. Expectations are high, including for our most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Students are challenged appropriately and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for lifelong learning so that they become more adaptable and resilient, make decisions and transitions, be more enterprising and be able to present themselves well with applications and interviews. This helps develop their full potential as human beings, striving for the highest standards that enhance their employability.

[St Thomas More Careers Map](#)

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

At St Thomas More Catholic High School we aim to promote and maintain a positive ethos of mutual respect and trust among all members of our school community where everyone feels valued and safe. Throughout our Personal Development provision and during PSHE and RE lessons supplemented by our assembly programme we explicitly teach respect, equal human rights and educate our students about equality. Specific units of study promote positive attitudes to, and a valuing of, the diversity of all individuals with due regard for their differences in ability, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, religion, sexuality and socio-economic background. At St Thomas More is blessed to have students and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and we strive to support all individuals and groups that have increased vulnerability or require something extra to meet their needs, whether these needs are social, academic, physical or emotional. The school is proud to celebrate our diversity with staff providing positive role models for challenging stereotypes and any attitudes that may lead to self-limiting aspirations, especially with regard to protected characteristics or increased vulnerability of the individual.

Character Development

“A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints....”

Pope Benedict XVI, 2010

Character development at St Thomas More seeks to foster the human formation of all members of the school community engaging them in our shared vision of life based on human flourishing in the pursuit of ***‘Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships’***. This shared vision, embodied in the ethos of the school from which all explicit and implicit educational activities ensue. Our aim at St Thomas More is to nurture and develop fully-rounded, compassionate, ethical and outward-looking young people who will make a significant positive contribution to society. Knowing how to choose the right course of action in difficult situations develops gradually out of the experience of making choices and the growth of practical and ethical insight.

At St Thomas More we seek to develop positive personal traits including our STRIVE learning behaviours that allows our students to *'learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others'*.

Through tutor-time, assemblies and daily interactions the following Christian values of love, justice, peace, truth and tolerance will be explicitly explored, promoted and brought to life which allows our students to develop the qualities they need to flourish in the communities they serve.