

# Iqra Academy Values Statement

## Introduction

Iqra Academy's vision through the Peterborough Muslim Education Trust, is to raise the next generation of Muslims and Muslimahs, with a deep understanding of their social and religious responsibilities. Enabling them to be human beings of the highest moral standards benefiting society locally, nationally and internationally. Our students will leave Iqra Academy with all the tools required to be integrated and valued members of British society, being economically productive and socially responsible.

As part of our vision we look to meet the needs and aspirations of our young people and local community by raising the aspirations of our students and inspiring them to realise their potential. We understand that character education is every bit as crucial to our student's development as academic success.

We also understand the vital role we have in ensuring that groups or individuals within the School are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to pressurise or illegally influence them.

Our Iqra values of Integrity, Quality, Respect and Aspiration are designed to actively promote and complement the five fundamental British values identified by the Department for Education:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

We teach our students the importance of being kind, compassionate and respectful to everyone that they meet, irrespective of their faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class or any other perceived

differences. Through our community links, and interfaith alliances, our students meet inspirational people from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, beliefs and cultures, and are encouraged to embrace all that life in modern Britain has to offer.

We also consider it essential for our staff to lead by example and exemplify and model British values. British values are therefore built into our curriculum and reiterated in all staff training.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is promoted across the entire school curriculum and in all aspects of school life. All students have the opportunity to develop an understanding of right and wrong; an appreciation of the Arts in all their forms and practice the skills and attitudes required for them to participate fully in a democratic society. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is implicit within the school curriculum, school ethos and within the day to day life at Iqra Academy.

The examples provided below – whilst by no means exhaustive – serve to demonstrate how British values permeate our curriculum, ethos and a wide range of activities, along with our commitment to providing ample opportunities for our students to develop a strong moral foundation and a drive to make a positive impact in their local community, Britain and beyond.

## **Democracy**

Our students are introduced to the concept of “democracy” and “the majority vote” from a young age, participating in Student Council elections (where representatives are elected by way of a democratic process) and engaging in a wide range of discussions concerning issues that directly affect them. Student voice is considered to be of utmost importance, and members of the Student Council are encouraged to vote on key issues that are likely to affect their classmates, as well as bringing their own proposals to staff for consideration.

Students who are appointed to leadership roles are taught how to effectively represent their classmates and the importance of considering everybody’s viewpoint when making an informed decision and reaching a common consensus. Such students must demonstrate civic, moral and performance character in order to command the respect of – and act as an advocate for – their peers.

Students are encouraged to become politically aware from a young age and participate in debates concerning age-appropriate issues, developing arguments for and against carefully-chosen

topics. In doing so, they learn how to put forward a strong case for causes they believe in (an essential part of the democratic process), as well as how to employ both facts and emotion in order to resonate with other people. The Student Leadership team regularly present at the 'Schools of Tomorrow' National Forum.

Democracy is also studied as part of Citizenship, PSHE, and RE lessons, where clear contrasts are drawn between democratic and autocratic states, and the inextricable links between democracy, fairness and equality. These issues are also explored in English Literature, where the importance of democracy and/or freedom of speech often crops up as an explicit or underlying theme in texts studied by students.

## The Rule of Law

We believe it is important for students to understand why rules are in place, the purpose that they serve, and the consequences of breaking them. We are keen to create an environment where students are able to clearly distinguish between right and wrong; and do the right thing because they *want* to, not simply because they feel compelled to. A key part of achieving this is through helping students to understand that rules are essential in order to safeguard their wellbeing, protect the welfare of others, and ensure that everybody has the opportunity to fully achieve their potential. We also teach them to understand the relationship between cause and effect and the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions, which is vital to becoming a productive and upstanding member of society.

Students quickly grow to understand that the rules that govern their school are microcosms of the laws that govern the workplace and, ultimately, society. Clear correlations are drawn between school rules and the rules that students encounter in their day-to-day lives, so students are fully aware that there are actions and behaviours which are prohibited and punishable in all contexts.

In order to ensure that students respect our rules, we take care to apply them fairly and consistently so that boundaries – and the repercussions of overstepping them – are clearly defined. The students themselves have devised their own RESPECT campaign and the school has a robust Anti-Bullying, Attendance, and Behaviour for Learning Policies. Our high expectations with regard to behaviour are identified in our Home School Agreement and regularly reinforced during

assemblies and Tutorials. Students are rewarded and celebrated for exemplary behaviour, attendance and academic performance. Those who frequently break the rules, meanwhile, are subject to appropriate sanctions.

We also organise visits from individuals in the legal and judicial sectors, police officers, members of the Fire Service, and road safety officers to reinforce the importance of respecting rules and the repercussions of breaking them.

## **Individual Liberty**

We are committed to keeping our students safe, happy and well, and we empower them to make sensible and informed choices by providing guidance on a range of key topics, such as online safety, bullying, child sexual exploitation, physical and emotional abuse, radicalisation and extremism – all of which are built into the pastoral curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. These issues are also explored in assemblies, interactive workshops and during PSHE and Citizenship lessons.

Students are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are advised how to recognise when these are being violated, and what to do/who to approach if they are concerned about this.

We also understand that our students must make their own choices and learn from their own mistakes as part of establishing their identity as individuals, and we encourage them to do so within the context of a supportive, positive and non-judgmental environment, where developing their self-esteem and self-confidence is of primary importance. Students are encouraged to make independent choices, resist peer pressure, and take responsibility for their own actions.

All of our students are valued for their individual talents and contributions and are encouraged to pursue their specific areas of interest through a variety of enrichment activities. For example, the school excels in Sport, with the Football team being the National Muslim Schools Champions in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The School also runs a Combined Cadet Force to develop leadership, communication and team work skills. We encourage students to see themselves as unique individuals, able to make a unique contribution to society, whilst also emphasising the importance of teamwork in achieving their goals.

Lessons are differentiated to ensure that students are sufficiently challenged and they are encouraged to engage in independent learning during lesson time and as part of their homework activities.

## **Mutual Respect**

Respect is one of our core IQRA values, and we define this simply as “to respect and care, treating all others as you wish to be treated.” This is evidenced in the charity work and community service projects our students undertake for the benefit of people who are experiencing the effects of food poverty, loneliness and isolation; our zero-tolerance approach to bullying; the strong sense of community and camaraderie felt by all of our students; and the high standards that characterise our teaching and learning environments.

Students are encouraged to communicate openly and honestly, and to listen to – and respect – the views of others, even in instances where disagreements arise. We expect all students in leadership roles, as well as our staff members, to model exemplary behaviour and conduct themselves in a manner that commands the respect worthy of someone in a position of authority.

Assemblies and class work are designed to highlight the diverse nature of British society and the right for each person to be respected for their choices. We teach students that they should never judge a person, and encourage them to become compassionate, open-minded and accepting.

## **Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs**

We aim to promote not only tolerance, but also a genuine understanding of different faiths and beliefs by offering a culturally rich and diverse curriculum in which all major religions of the world are studied and respected. We encourage all students to embrace the culturally diverse society in which they live, and by giving students opportunities to experience this diversity first-hand – through organising a range of interfaith activities and providing opportunities for students to undertake civic projects in their local communities – students are able to meet and work alongside people from a range of backgrounds and beliefs. Our Religious Studies curriculum, which is compulsory for all students, provides a broad and balanced education on a range of faiths, religions and cultures. Our Students take an active role in the Interfaith Annual Celebrations at the Peterborough Cathedral. Members of different faiths or religions, including the Cathedral Dean are also invited to school to share their knowledge and enhance learning within assemblies and in class.

# Conclusion

British values are ingrained in everything we do and represent all that we strive to achieve in our vision to raise the aspirations of our young people and inspire them to realise their potential.

Iqra Academy's vision through the Peterborough Muslim Education Trust, is to raise the next generation of Muslims and Muslimahs, with a deep understanding of their social and religious responsibilities. Enabling them to be human beings of the highest moral standards benefiting society locally, nationally and internationally.

We understand that character education is every bit as crucial to our student's development as academic success.

We also understand the vital role we have in ensuring that groups or individuals within the School are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to pressurise or illegally influence them.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is promoted across the entire school curriculum and all aspects of school life. All students have the opportunity to develop an understanding of right and wrong; an appreciation of the Arts in all their forms and practise the skills and attitudes required for them to participate fully in a democratic society. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is implicit within the school curriculum, school ethos and within day to day life at the Iqra Academy.

The school fully supports the embedding of British Values both within Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development provision and across the whole curriculum.

We encourage our students to live a life characterised and enriched by the values of Integrity, Quality, Respect and Aspiration, and we hope that these tenets will continue to inform their choices, actions and behaviours long after they leave school, enabling them to make a positive impact on society.