

# BRITISH VALUES

## What are British values?

**The Department for Education published guidance on promoting British values in 2014 to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools and early years settings 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.”**

### **Democracy**

Think of democracy as a situation where everyone is treated equally and has equal rights. We support children’s personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) by giving them opportunities to develop their self-confidence and self-awareness, to make choices and decisions about what they want to explore and how they are going to use the resources you have made accessible to them. Example: Child has filled up a bucket with water and is using a paintbrush which she has been painting the fence with. Does she mind another child dipping in with a brush of his own? No, she allows him dip away and instructs him, in fact, to paint the decking for her- They are taking turns, sharing, collaborating, and making decisions together - Skills that are essential if we are to get on in the adult world.

There is just one cardboard box and two explorers, one wants it for their rocket. Who goes first? What will we each do while we are in the box and out of the box? Now we are negotiating setting rules for how long we can each spend in the box before we must let somebody else

have a turn. Negotiating who will pass over the construction pieces and what is to be done with them exactly. Now we are trusting that our friend, our collaborator, will be fair and stick to the plan.

### **Rule of law**

This is about understanding that rules matter, and you have seen this too in PSED - This is about learning to manage our own feelings and behaviour: about learning right from wrong: about behaving within agreed and clearly defined boundaries: about dealing with the consequences.

## The fundamental British values are:

**Democracy:** making decisions together, for example giving opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

**Rule of law:** understanding rules matter as in Personal Social and Emotional development for example collaborating with children to create rules and codes of behaviour.

**Individual liberty:** freedom for all, for example reflecting on their differences and understanding we are free to have different opinions.

**Mutual respect and tolerance:** treat others as you want to be treated, for example sharing and respecting others’ opinions.

- As a child I have the right to be heard.
- I have the right to learn.
- I have the right to be safe and healthy.
- I have the right to make friends.
- I need to keep myself as well as others safe.
- I need to be kind and listen to others.
- I need to respect others and their differences.

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## **Individual liberty**

The remaining two values are both embedded within PSED and Understanding the World. For individual liberty we focus on children's self-confidence, self-awareness, people, and communities.

We help children to develop a positive sense of themselves. Every time we provide opportunities for children to gather flowers, mix colours independently for leaf painting or take part in a race we are helping them to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. Every time we share a favourite book with a child, splash in rock pools or build an enclosure for our dinosaurs together we are giving children the time and space to explore the language of feelings and responsibility; reflect on their differences and understand that we are all free to have different opinions.

## **Mutual respect and tolerance**

Finally, mutual respect and tolerance: where we learn to treat others as we want to be treated. How to be part of a community, manage our feelings and behaviour, and form relationships with others. "You push, I pull" - figuring it out together. Naturally, we should have an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance in our settings, where views, faiths, cultures, and races are valued and where we encourage children to engage with their wider community.

It is our job to help children to appreciate and respect their own culture and the culture of others. We can help them explore similarities and differences between themselves and others; among families, faiths, communities, cultures, and traditions; and to share and discuss practices, celebrations, and experiences.

Wherever possible, it is good to share special moments with our children's families. When we see children becoming close friends and we encourage their parents to arrange play dates beyond the setting, we are giving parents and children opportunities to learn the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.

## **Sharing the experience of caring.**

If children see and hear the adults they love respecting other cultures, religions, and values then this will have a significant, positive impact upon their own behaviour and overall development. By being good role models.

This means that for children to truly learn the importance tolerance, they need to be given lots of opportunities to practice tolerance and to challenge stereotypes. For example, through sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

What everyday practice do you do in your setting which promotes British Values?

## **The Early Years inspection handbook states: Personal Development: Good:**

Practitioners value and promote equality and diversity and prepare children for life in modern Britain. They do this in an age-appropriate way to help children to reflect on their differences and understand what makes them unique. Practitioners do this by:

- Teaching children to be respectful and to recognise those who help us, and contribute positively to society;
- Developing children's understanding of fundamental British values;
- Developing children's understanding and appreciation of diversity;
- Celebrating what we have in common;
- Routinely challenging stereotypical behaviours and promoting respect for different people.

## With thanks to Michelle Hinder – Castle Kindergarten

### For more information

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[Promoting fundamental British values through SMSC - GOV.UK](#)  
([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

[Guidance on promoting British values in schools published - GOV.UK](#)  
([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

[Fundamental British Values in the Early Years | PACEY](#)

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