

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL

Statements of School Policy & Practice (2009/2010)

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Section D: The Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development of Students

D.1 The Commitment of UCS

UCS is fundamentally committed to the personal development of individual students. Our aim is that, when students leave the school, they will not only be well-qualified and well-informed in the subjects of the academic curriculum, but also that they will be well-balanced, emotionally secure individuals with the confidence and strength of mind to identify and pursue their own ambitions, mindful of the needs of others and conscious of the value and complexity of inter-personal relationships.

This commitment colours all aspects of UCS life. It should be evident in the manner in which teachers reveal their personal concern for the progress of each pupil in their teaching groups. It should be particularly evident in the manner in which form-teachers and senior pastoral staff seek to establish reliable and trusting relationships with the pupils in their care. It is certainly characterised by the manner in which students are encouraged to take genuine responsibility for many aspects of their school life and to learn from the mistakes that they will inevitably make. It is equally supported by an ethos that places breadth of experience at the heart of a UCS education and which, therefore, seeks always to extend and develop the extra-curricular lives of UCS pupils.

The school seeks to foster a strong sense of community, particularly through its programme of school and year assemblies. We aim also, through the medium of Personal, Social and Health Education, to build our pupils' awareness of many of the challenges that they do and shall face in their personal and social lives, and to develop the values to be able to face these challenges with strength and rigour.

We are conscious also that, for such initiatives to be truly successful, it is necessary for students to gain a sense of themselves within a community wider than simply that of the school. We are, therefore, committed to developing a programme of charitable and outreach activities (both locally and further afield) that will go some way towards achieving this end.

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D.2 Assemblies

UCS is bound by its founding statutes to permit no religious observance nor religious education.

Most days begin with full school assemblies, and the content of these assemblies is non-denominational. These occasions are very important to the school's communal life. Attendance is compulsory for all pupils, and staff are asked to make every effort to attend regularly. Responsibility for assemblies is shared amongst the entire teaching staff. Regular opportunities are also planned for pupils to lead and to deliver assemblies. The content of assemblies lies within the judgement of the staff and no attempt is made to co-ordinate this centrally. The aim is to provide interest and variety at the start of the school day and, most importantly, to bring the school together for a genuinely communal experience. Assemblies offer an important opportunity to reaffirm the values and shared morality of the school community. This is entirely consistent with assemblies being provocative, controversial or amusing, rather than predictable or repetitive..

In addition to the full school assembly programme, there are further programmes of assemblies for pupils in Years 7 & 8 and Years 12 & 13. These also run according to the principles outlined above.

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D.3 Personal, Social & Health Education

Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) is a most important element of a UCS education. All students, from Year 7 to Year 13 will participate in PSHE, though the manner of its integration into the curriculum varies from year-group to year-group. PSHE is an integral part of the school's Pastoral system and reflects and promotes the school's ethos. It remains a significant element of pastoral care as pupils grow older, with input from Form Teachers, Deme Wardens, Senior Tutors and visiting speakers.

In the Lower School and Lower Remove, PSHE is provided within the formal taught curriculum. The aim is to promote personal, social and moral responsibility. PSHE helps to give the pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. It is taught in a climate of mutual trust and respect which values all individuals and their cultures and demands good communication between staff and pupils.

In the Remove, Upper Remove there are Tutor periods which include elements of PSHE such as coping with pressure, sexual responsibility and drugs, with a planned programme of speakers. This programme continues in the Transitus T7 periods, and is delivered to small groups of students by a number of pastoral staff.

Responsibility for the sort of issues raised in PSHE lessons must be shared between school and home. The role of the school is to raise pupils' awareness, to provide accurate and proper information and to encourage full and personal consideration of these important and complex issues. We hope that this will be backed up at home and we have no desire to trespass on the proper responsibility of parents for their children's moral education. This shared approach is best characterised by the discussion evenings that we hold for parents of pupils in the Entry, Shell and Lower Remove. Parents are invited to discuss with one another their approaches to matters of particular concern in the upbringing of adolescents - topics may range from pocket money and bed-times to parties and attitudes towards alcohol and drugs. Guest speakers are also invited to address parents on matters of particular interest. Parents may be invited to sessions during the school day. It is hoped that all these meetings will promote further discussion of these issues at home. Parents are encouraged to give suggestions and recommendations for topics to be discussed in PSHE. Parents also have the occasional opportunity to discuss issues of street safety with the Police in meetings arranged by the school.

Changing concerns among parents, staff and pupils mean that the PSHE syllabus is flexible, and meetings may be organised to meet varying needs.

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D.4 Sex & Relationship Education

We believe that effective sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. The objective of sex and relationship education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development.

Parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and morality. The school's programme aims to complement and to support parents. We are, therefore, keen that parents should contribute to and comment upon the school's policy.

Sex and relationship education at UCS is delivered as part of our programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). We make every effort to deliver sex and relationship education within a framework of values and of personal and social morality.

The programme aims to cover the following areas of understanding, attitudes and skills:

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Learning to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and morality.
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as an aspect of decision-making.

Teaching will be conducted by the school's team of PSHE teachers. Outside professionals are also invited to give helpful support. They are aware of the planned curriculum and are clear about the boundaries of their input. The school doctors and nurse are also involved. Much teaching involves class and group discussion. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality.

All parents have the right to withdraw their son from lessons in sex and relationship education. More information regarding the timing of particular sessions and topics is available from the Co-ordinator of PSHE (Mr Tom Jenkin) to whom all enquiries regarding this aspect of the school's curriculum should be addressed.

We recognise that formal lessons are only a part of the way in which students learn about Sex and Relationship Education. All members of staff have implicit responsibility for Sex and Relationship Education, as is the case with moral education.

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D.5 The School Counsellor

UCS benefits from the work of a professional school counsellor who is available for consultation by pupils or their parents in complete confidence. The counsellor is not a member of the UCS staff but is an outside specialist. This makes her particularly helpful when delicate or complicated matters arise. Pastoral staff will sometimes recommend that a boy visit the counsellor. The final choice always rests with the pupil. Parents concerned by the necessary confidentiality of the counsellor's work may choose to withhold these services from their son/daughter.

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D.6 Safe Use of Online and Mobile Technologies

Note

This policy contains advice about the safe use of the Internet and mobile technology for pupils and parents. This is part of our commitment to safeguarding and child protection. Specific rules about the use of the internet and mobile technology in school are contained in section C.10.

Introduction

The Internet gives children and young people an immense range of opportunities, not just in terms of the information it provides, but also for leisure and social activities. Young people have access to MSN, chatrooms, multi-user games and social networking sites such as Myspace, Bebo and Facebook – Myspace alone has over 200 million profiles. These sites are attractive because they are immediate, instantaneous and in most cases free. The online world is an active medium, always available, and gives young people a voice. Young people want to be part of a network which can give them identity and status.

Parents rate the internet as the media platform that is of most benefit to their child. There are however risks associated with the use of online and mobile technologies which fall into three categories:

Commerce: is the information you provide secure? Can you distinguish between content and advertising online? What are the effects of invasive software and spam?

Content: How accurate is the information you see on a web page? How authentic is the material to which you have access? How accessible are adult websites and illegal content?

Contact: What are the potential dangers of grooming and cyberbullying?

Guidelines for Pupils – Online & Mobile Technologies

- Always make up usernames which are not linked to your real name.
- Passwords should be made up of a random mixture of numbers and letters. Do not use obvious passwords like your birth date or the name of a pet. Do not share passwords. Try to avoid using the same password on different sites.
- Remember that many people in chatrooms are not who they say they are. Never agree to meet anyone that you have met online unless you are sure they are who

they say they are, you have discussed it with your parents, and you meet them in a public place in daylight.

- Avoid posting personal information on websites such as Bebo or MySpace and in blogs. Information such as your real name, address, phone number, email address, the name of your school, postcode, and photos may be used to trace you or use your identity.
- Never put photos of yourself or friends on websites. Do not post photos or videos that you wouldn't be happy for your parents or teachers to see. Once they are online they are in the public domain and can be copied, altered or distributed in ways over which you have no control. Never send photos to someone you have met online.
- If you wish to have something removed from a website, contact the administrators of the site. Sites such as Facebook and Bebo have regulators.
- Learn how to block people on email or websites. If someone sends you inappropriate mail, block them.
- Do not respond to emails from people you do not know. Do not send any personal information in response to an email unless you are sure that you know who sent the email. Do not click on a web link contained in an email from someone you don't know. This could be damaging to your computer, inviting the risk of viruses or downloading programmes to copy and use personal information without your knowledge.
- Remember that email is not secure. Emails pass through a variety of points and many can be read very easily.
- Do not respond to abusive or bullying emails. If you receive such emails copy them into a separate folder and retain them. They will provide evidence in the event of needing to contact the police.
- Do not post or forward any material which could be construed by others as offensive or bullying. You run the risk of seriously damaging relationships with others and also of breaking the law.
- If you receive unwanted communication, ask for help from a parent, your Form teacher, your Deme Warden, the School Nurse, the School counsellor or any other trusted adult.

Guidelines for Pupils – Mobile Phone Safety

- Keep your phone with you at all times. On the way to and from school, try not to use it on the street or in public places, as this might draw unwanted attention to you. At school, hand it in to your Patron when you are doing Games. Don't lend

your phone to someone you don't know or leave it in a place where someone else could get hold of it. If you can lock it using a PIN code, do so.

- Be careful who you give your mobile phone number to. Do not make it public knowledge, ie. by posting it on a website. If someone is pressuring you to give them your number, speak to a parent or another trusted adult about this.
- Don't answer calls from a withheld number. Never return a call or text message to someone you don't know.
- Do not reply to texts saying that you have won prizes. These will often involve very expensive calls to premium rate numbers.
- If you are using text chat, do not use your real name, and ensure that your username does not give a clue to your real name.
- If you receive unwanted, abusive or bullying communication, do not reply to it. If possible, record evidence of such messages. Save messages and voicemails. Keep a diary containing dates, times and types of communication. These will provide evidence in the event of needing to contact the police. You may also wish to contact your mobile phone provider. They may be able to show you how to block messages on your phone.
- If you receive unwanted communication, ask for help from a parent, your Form teacher, your Deme Warden, the School Nurse, the School counsellor or any other trusted adult.
- There may be risks involved in forwarding texts, emails, photos, videos or other material.

Some useful sites:

www.iwf.org.uk

online reporting of illegal content

www.phonepayplus.org.uk

regulator for premium phone lines

www.ceop.gov.uk

child exploitation and online protection centre

www.thinkyouknow.co.uk

raising awareness of the internet for children and adults.

Also produces training on the issue of internet safety.

www.kidsmart.org.uk

Information on internet use for young people

www.childnet-int.org

Information on safe use of the internet

www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview

Government sponsored review of impact of the internet on children and about the needs of children and young people

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D.7 Cultural Awareness & Social Responsibility

We believe that a full education should encourage students to develop an awareness and a sense of responsibility towards communities beyond that of their own school.

This may be achieved in a number of ways. The PSHE programme at UCS encourages students to understand and to appreciate the diversity of backgrounds reflected within the society of the UK. Programmes of study in other subjects – most notably Geography – also aim to develop in our students an awareness of social and cultural diversity, of global inequalities and of the responsibilities that such factors can place upon each of us.

In addition to these initiatives within the taught curriculum, students and staff are encouraged to become more actively and personally involved through charitable initiatives, a programme of partnership & outreach, through our sustainability programme and through a variety of international links for older pupils.

Charitable Initiatives

UCS runs an annual Community Action Programme whose aim is to involve all students in activities and projects that will benefit causes outside the specific community of the school. Whilst focused in the second half of the Autumn Term, Community Action is a strong feature of school life and of the school's values throughout the academic year.

A small group of staff take responsibility for the co-ordination of Community Action and much responsibility is placed upon students of all ages to develop new initiatives and to carry them through successfully. Students are invited to champion particular charitable causes each year; the final chosen group is the result of a student vote. It will normally comprise a variety of local, national and international causes. Time is provided within the Assembly programme to publicise fund-raising events and to learn more about the causes that students are encouraged to support.

Outreach & Partnership

UCS has always been keen to be a full part of its local community. We believe that this has specific educational benefits both for pupils and for staff. Since 2007, this has been actively developed as a programme of outreach and partnership, fostered by a committee of volunteer staff and led by the Partnerships Coordinator (a new post, created in 2008).

A number of specific initiatives are currently in place, of which these serve as examples:

Many students in Years 12 and 13 may spend an afternoon per week working in a local Primary School.

Others work in local charity shops or as volunteer conservation helpers on Hampstead Heath.

Working with the Borough of Camden, UCS has delivered a day course to support teachers of KS2 Modern Languages.

UCS has also organised sporting opportunities for pupils at Camden Primary schools. Working with the Boroughs of Haringey and Camden, UCS and Highgate School have delivered a Summer School for Gifted and Talented Year 4 pupils since 2008. In 2009, UCS initiated a formal Partnership Scheme with the Westminster Academy.

Sustainability Programme

In 2009 UCS launched a Sustainability Programme with the aim of making all students fully aware of the implications of their own decisions (both individually and collectively) upon the use of resources, locally, nationally and globally.

Whilst launched and led by a committee of volunteer staff from all three Foundation Schools, there is a strong desire to involve students directly in a process of auditing the school's use of resources and of prioritising efforts to alter school resourcing policies and to affect the behaviour of individual members of the school community.

This initiative has the full support of the school's governors, managers, Bursary Department and Catering Department.

International Links

In addition to raising awareness of global and cultural issues, we are able to help some older UCS students to learn more about such issues first-hand (and to contribute in a small way to their resolution).

UCS has a close relationship with Equatorial College School in Uganda. Not only do we raise funds for ECS each year, but a number of students are able to work at ECS as part of their gap year programmes.

We have also worked closely with an international charity that provides places for UCS students to work at an orphanage in Romania and at a school in Goa, India.