Newton International School West Bay

An international community of learners whoa are striving for excellence and celebrating success

SMSC Policy 2025-2026

Introduction

As a proud member of the Newton Group, our institution is dedicated to nurturing the holistic development of each student. The primary purpose of this SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural) Policy is to elucidate the guiding principles, methodologies, and strategies through which our school advocates for comprehensive student development—integrated with a focus on Character Education. This policy is firmly rooted not only in local Qatari expectations, including adherence to the guidance set by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) and core Islamic values but also in the British values and the internationally recognised best practices, informed by the extensive experience and established policies of the Newton Group and similar esteemed institutions within Qatar and globally.

This document aims to provide clear guidance for all stakeholders involved—leaders, educators, support staff, students, and parents—by methodically addressing each dimension of SMSC. It details the rationale behind our approaches, outlines strategic implementation methods, and delineates monitoring and assessment procedures, while ensuring alignment with the ethos and values integral to NIS West Bay.

At NIS West Bay, we are driven by a vision of fostering an international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success. It is our mission to pursue not only academic achievement but also a profound path of personal growth and responsible citizenship for every student. Our commitment to diversity, critical inquiry, and lifelong learning encourages students to nurture their individuality while embracing their roles as engaged members of the broader community—both in Qatar and beyond.

As part of our SMSC Policy, we delineate a clear set of core values that underpin our educational ethos:

- Respect: For oneself, others, and all components of the school and wider community.
- Honesty: Exemplifying integrity in actions, speech, and intentions.
- Empathy: Cultivating understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and feelings.
- Support: Encouraging the development of each individual's potential.
- Diversity: Valuing differences and enthusiastically embracing multiculturalism.
- Social Responsibility: Engaging in civic engagement and service.
- Personal Accountability: Taking ownership of actions and their consequences.
- Environmental Awareness: Promoting stewardship of our surroundings.
- Transparent Communication: Fostering an open, respectful dialogue.

These values permeate all dimensions of school life and serve as the foundation for our commitment to SMSC.

Our overarching goals for this SMSC Policy involve several key aims:

1. To ensure a consistent and high-quality provision for SMSC development for every pupil.
2. To accurately reflect and promote the school's ethos and values, which are integrated with Character Education.
3. To align with the requirements and cultural expectations set forth by the Qatar MOEHE, embedding Islamic values alongside international benchmarks.
4. To prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences awaiting them in later life—both locally and globally.
5. To cultivate partnerships with parents and the wider community, thereby maximising the positive impact of SMSC on all learners.

With a keen understanding of the local and international educational landscapes, NIS West Bay approaches SMSC development in compliance with both local regulations and broader educational standards:

Our Values: Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Support, Diversity, Transparent Communication, Social Responsibility, Personal Accountability, Environmental Awareness
Brotherhood, Aseel, Safe Surfing, Fitera, Your Well-being is a Trust

- The Qatar MOEHE mandates an emphasis on values, national identity, Islamic studies, and the development of 21st-century skills aimed at equipping pupils for citizenship and employability.
- The British Curriculum Frameworks designate SMSC development as a core statutory requirement, directly linked to the promotion of British values, which include democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance.
- Global Best Practices from UNESCO guidelines, international character education models, and leading institutional policies guide our approach.

This convergence of frameworks creates a contextually robust, relevant, and effective SMSC policy.

Scope of SMSC and Character Education

It is essential to understand that SMSC is not restricted to isolated lessons or specific subjects; rather, it permeates every aspect of school life. This includes daily classroom interactions, school assemblies, extra-curricular activities, curriculum content, behaviour expectations, and engagement between school and community. The components of Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural development are inherently interconnected, with Character Education serving as the vital thread that weaves together the values we seek to promote.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is defined as the process through which learners explore values and beliefs—including, but not limited to, religious convictions—that shape their understanding of life. This component encourages pupils to reflect on fundamental questions about existence, purpose, and their relationships with diverse perspectives and beliefs. The objective of spiritual development at NIS West Bay is to enable pupils to:

- Reflect on personal beliefs and consider essential questions about life and meaning.
- Cultivate curiosity, creativity, and imagination.
- Experience opportunities for reflection and engagement with awe and wonder through various mediums, such as nature, the arts, sciences, and literature.
- Respect and appreciate different worldviews, with special attention to Islamic principles and Qatari traditions.
- Comprehend and value the intangible aspects of human experience.

Strategies employed to foster spiritual development at NIS West Bay include:

- Islamic Studies: Mandatory Islamic Studies for Muslim students as stipulated by the MOEHE, focusing on the teachings and principles integral to Islamic faith.
- Whole-School Assemblies: Regular gatherings that encourage reflection on values and recognition of Islamic festivals, as well as exploration of universal human themes.
- Classroom Practices: Engaging students in inquiry-based learning and fostering dialogue around profound questions (e.g., "Who am I?" "What is my purpose?"). Our teaching of Philosophy for Children (P4C) underpins this.
- Creative Curriculum: Utilising art, music, drama, and literature as mediums to inspire spiritual exploration.
- Nature and Science Education: Promoting outdoor learning experiences and environmental stewardship projects, fostering appreciation of the natural world.

In practice, the school incorporates designated reflective spaces (e.g., colour monster or zones of regulation spaces within classrooms), emotional check-ins, and mental well-being support systems, enabling students to develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Activities designed to nurture belonging and connection to the local community and the world are also essential to our approach.

In addressing cultural and contextual needs, the spiritual development programme at NIS West Bay celebrates Qatar's rich Islamic heritage, ensuring respect for religious customs while fostering an appreciation for diversity.

Moral Development

Newton International School West Bay

An international community of learners whoa are striving for excellence and celebrating success

Moral development centres on the ability of pupils to discern right from wrong, comprehend the consequences of their actions, and engage in discussions around moral and ethical dilemmas. It involves forming and acting upon a personal moral code informed by both local and universal values. At NIS West Bay, our objectives for moral development include:

- Distinguishing between right and wrong, applying this understanding practically.
- Cultivating respect for laws and authority, both within the school and in the broader community.
- Engaging with moral dilemmas, fostering an understanding and respect for differing viewpoints.
- Developing virtues such as honesty, fairness, empathy, self-control, and responsibility.
- Reflecting on the impact of personal decisions on oneself and others, taking into account local and global contexts.

Strategies for moral development at NIS West Bay encompass:

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education and Character Education Lessons: Targeted sessions that address moral themes such as integrity, justice, and respect.
- Facilitated Class Discussions and Exploration of Moral Dilemmas: Regular dialogue to encourage reflection on moral issues and challenges.
- Role Modelling by Educators and Peers: Staff and student behaviour serves to exemplify expected virtues and conduct within the school community.
- Clear Behaviour Policies and School Rules: Transparent expectations that promote justice and personal accountability.
- Community Involvement through Service Learning Projects: Engaging pupils in acts of kindness and social responsibility.

Engaging activities and resources for moral development may include storytelling that highlights ethical choices, role-playing scenarios, and co-constructed behavioural contracts.

In the context of Qatar, our moral education aligns closely with Islamic principles while also integrating British moral standards—ensuring sensitive handling of topics while remaining committed to international best practices.

Social Development

Social development concerns fostering interpersonal and group skills that empower pupils to function effectively within diverse communities. It encompasses areas such as communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, leadership, and an understanding of societal norms. At NIS West Bay, we are dedicated to helping students achieve the following objectives in social development:

- Developing effective communication and teamwork skills.
- Forming positive relationships with peers, educators, and the wider community.
- Exercising responsible behaviour as members of the school and society.
- Valuing diversity and engaging constructively with individuals from various backgrounds.
- Participating actively and confidently in local, national, and global contexts.

Strategies to bolster social development include:

- Group Projects and Collaborative Activities: Encouraging team dynamics across subjects, with students taking on various roles and responsibilities in projects.
- Encouraging Student Voice and Leadership: Promoting initiatives such as Student Councils, classroom monitor programmes, and peer mentoring for active engagement in decision-making.
- Extra- and Co-Curricular Activities: Including sports, arts, and service clubs designed to foster teamwork and community spirit.
- Social Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Programmes: Equipping pupils with constructive conflict resolution strategies.

Our Values: Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Support, Diversity, Transparent Communication, Social Responsibility, Personal Accountability, Environmental Awareness
Brotherhood, Aseel, Safe Surfing, Fitera, Your Well-being is a Trust

- Assemblies and Special Events: Celebrating national commemorations, international events, and social causes that strengthen community bonds.

Illustrative activities supporting social development could entail peer teaching initiatives, buddy systems across year groups, and participation in community service projects such as charity drives and environmental campaigns.

In relation to the Islamic context of Qatar, social development programmes are tailored to promote behaviours that align with local customs, fostering social interactions that respect the principles inherent in Qatari society.

Cultural Development

Cultural development equips students to understand, appreciate, and contribute to the cultural life of their school, country, and the global community. It necessitates acquiring knowledge and respect for cultural diversity, including one's own cultural heritage and those of others. The objectives for cultural development at NIS West Bay entail:

- Understanding and appreciating Qatar's cultural heritage and its Islamic foundations.

- Recognising and valuing the diversity of global cultures and perspectives.

- Developing a confident sense of personal identity and beliefs, promoting respect for others.

- Actively participating in cultural activities that celebrate both differences and similarities.

- Preparing for life in a rapidly evolving, multicultural world.

Strategies supporting cultural development include:

- Curriculum Integration of Multicultural Content: Ensuring that lessons across subjects—be they literature, history, geography, or the arts—reflect a diversity of cultural perspectives.
- Thematic Days and Cultural Celebrations: Regular events celebrating Qatari, Arab, and international cultural contributions (e.g., Qatar National Day, International Day).
- Language and Heritage Education: Offering Arabic language instruction and an understanding of Islamic studies, whilst providing insights into local customs and etiquette for non-Arabic speakers.
- Exchange and Awareness Initiatives: Facilitating cultural ambassador programmes, and hosting visiting speakers or collaborative activities with other institutions in the region.
- Inclusive Displays and Resources: Diverse library collections to reflect and honour the varied heritage of our student body.

The practical implementation of cultural development can encompass inviting parents and community members to share their traditions and showcasing students' diverse heritages through art, music, or culinary festivals.

We view the policy as fully consistent with Qatari standards, addressing the need for cultural identity and social inclusion while reflecting a commitment to global citizenship.

Integration of Character Education

Character Education represents a cornerstone of our SMSC approach. At NIS West Bay, we seek to cultivate well-rounded individuals who flourish academically, ethically, and socially. Drawing from the UK Department for Education's Character Education Framework and insights from the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, we emphasise the importance of integrating character principles into the educational experience.

Key Components
Utilising these benchmarks and best practices, our character education focuses on:

- Key Virtues: Such as honesty, integrity, resilience, respect, responsibility, compassion, and curiosity.
- Character Development Approaches: Enabling virtues to be modelled (often referred to as 'caught') through the environment and school culture, explicitly taught in the curriculum and assemblies, and actively practised (or 'sought') by pupils through service and self-reflection.

Character Education in Practice

Our Values: Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Support, Diversity, Transparent Communication, Social Responsibility, Personal Accountability, Environmental Awareness
Brotherhood, Aseel, Safe Surfing, Fitera, Your Well-being is a Trust

Newton International School West Bay

An international community of learners whoa are striving for excellence and celebrating success

At NIS West Bay, we instil the concept of character traits within the school culture. Each term highlights specific traits, such as resilience, ambition, respect, and community spirit, through assemblies, classroom lessons, and robust reward systems. Character themes are integrated into all subjects rather than being confined to isolated lessons, enabling a holistic approach toward character development.

Recognition methods include awarding house points, certificates, and public acknowledgements for embodying character traits. All staff members are expected to act as character role models for our students. Through our house system, we promote collective responsibility, leadership, and constructive competition, while service learning opportunities create avenues for applying these virtues in real-world contexts.

Character education benchmarks set by current educational guidance inform our provisions, focusing on explicit virtue definitions, embedding character values in school culture, promoting student leadership, and assessing character development regularly.

Integration of Islamic Values, British Values, and Qatari Identity
At NIS West Bay, we recognise that nurturing student identity is paramount for their well-being and future success. Our curriculum and wider provision align with the following priorities:

1. Conformity with Qatar MOEHE Mandates: Prioritising the promotion of Islamic values and national identity while ensuring that our policies and activities reflect culturally relevant expectations.
2. Embedding Fundamental British Values: Enshrining principles such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance as foundational to our citizenship education—serving as a bridge for our students to transition into a global context.
3. Leveraging International Best Practices: Incorporating principles of inclusion, equity, and multiculturalism consistent with UNESCO objectives and globally recognised educational standards.
4. Celebration of Diversity: With a diverse student body representing over 60 nationalities, we strive to foster open-mindedness and intercultural dialogue within our school community.

Curriculum, Extra-Curricular, and 'Whole School Life' Integration
The principles of SMSC and Character Education are embedded throughout every aspect of school life:

- These principles inform lesson planning through established curriculum links, classroom dialogues, and explicit learning objectives.
- Co-curricular activities such as sports, arts, community service, and school trips are designed to promote SMSC values.
- Behavioural expectations, rewards, and disciplinary measures reflect our commitment to the SMSC framework and actively promote a positive school atmosphere.
- Dedicated resources include assemblies centred around SMSC and character education themes, alongside school displays, reading materials, and digital content reinforcing these principles.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation
Monitoring of SMSC Provision
Effective monitoring and evaluation processes are essential in assessing the implementation and impact of our SMSC provision:

- Leadership: The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) conducts regular audits and progress reviews.
- Lesson Observations and Curriculum Reviews: Evaluating planning, teaching methods, and student work to track SMSC and Character Education engagement.
- Student Voice: Surveys, focus groups, and student councils serve as platforms for gathering feedback on the SMSC experience, offering ideas for enhancement.
- Recognition and Awards Data: Trends observed regarding awards, house points, and disciplinary actions inform our understanding of SMSC strengths and areas necessitating improvement.
- Reflective Practice: Encouraging a culture of continuous self-evaluation and peer review among staff.

Our Values: Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Support, Diversity, Transparent Communication, Social Responsibility, Personal Accountability, Environmental Awareness
Brotherhood, Aseel, Safe Surfing, Fitera, Your Well-being is a Trust

External Accountability

As we adhere to the standards set by the Qatar National School Accreditation (QNSA) and anticipate external inspections, great emphasis is placed on SMSC, well-being, and citizenship education. Regular compliance reports to the MOEHE ensure alignment with value-based educational initiatives. As a British Schools Overseas (BSO) accredited school we must also ensure we adhere to expectations set out for British Primary schools.

Evidence and Impact

Our evaluation strategy focuses on both qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure impact.

Parental and Community Engagement

Rationale

Extensive research indicates that active parental involvement in the educational journey significantly enhances SMSC development and overall academic achievement. Therefore, NIS West Bay is dedicated to fostering strong home-school partnerships through various strategies:

Strategies for Engagement

- Communication and Dialogue: Maintaining regular updates through newsletters, parent meetings, digital platforms, and specific SMSC-focused communications.
- Workshops and Information Sessions: Informing parents about the school's approach to SMSC and character education, reinforcing the value of collaborative partnerships.
- Community Events: Actively inviting parents to participate in school events, including cultural celebrations, themed activities, and service projects.
- Volunteering Opportunities: Encouraging parental involvement in classroom support, cultural presentations, and feedback forums designed to guide school improvement.
- Support for At-Home Learning: Offering guidance to parents on reinforcing school values and character traits within their home environments.

Cultural Sensitivity

We remain committed to establishing engagement strategies that respect Qatari customs and traditions, honouring family dynamics while promoting inclusivity and openness in all communication efforts.

Roles and Responsibilities

The successful execution of our SMSC Policy necessitates collaboration among various stakeholders:

- Principal and SLT: Establish the strategic vision and ensure alignment between policies and SMSC goals set forth in the policy framework.
- Key Stage Coordinators and Team Leaders: Lead in the implementation, monitoring, and ongoing evaluation of SMSC practices.
- Teachers and Support Staff: Embed SMSC themes and character education into their instructional practices, serving as exemplary role models for students.
- Students: Proactively engage in personal development, demonstrate leadership, and contribute to community initiatives.
- Parents and Community Partners: Collaborate with the school to reinforce SMSC priorities at home.

Training and Staff Development

Comprehensive professional development opportunities are essential. All staff members—including newcomers—receive ongoing training on SMSC principles, contextual Qatari considerations, safeguarding practices, fostering multicultural competence, and weaving character education into daily lessons and interactions.

Policy Monitoring, Review, and Accountability

The SMSC Policy is subject to regular review and assessment:

- Annual reviews evaluate compliance and effectiveness, ensuring the policy remains current with evolving educational research, local or national policy changes, and internal self-evaluations.
- The policy is publicly shared with stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and governors, via the school website and relevant handbooks.
- It is audited in conjunction with policies upheld by the Newton Group to ensure cohesive practices across all campuses.

Conclusion

The SMSC Policy at Newton International School West Bay serves as both a comprehensive statement of intent and a practical framework guiding daily school operations. By integrating spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education alongside a focus on character development throughout the diverse landscape of student experience, we prepare our pupils to become principled, compassionate, and confident contributors to Qatari society and the global community. Our commitment to ongoing reflection and enhancement ensures that our provision is well-aligned with the evolving needs of our students and the rapidly changing world they will encounter.

Reviewed Date: August 2025
Next Review Date: June 2026
Reviewed by: M Stuart; A Strydom; K Dower

Principal's Signature	Head of Primary's Signature	EYFS Coordinator