

**MAKING BRITISH VALUES
MEANINGFUL FOR LEARNERS
WITH AUTISM**

TEACHERS' GUIDE 2019

ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

Making British Values Meaningful for Learners with Autism

This guidance has been developed to help teachers working with learners with autism, or other types of SEND, introduce British values into the curriculum in an accessible way. Our thanks to Derwen College, Henshaws Specialist College, Homefield College, Orchard Hill College and Trinity Specialist College for their support in putting this guidance together.

WHAT TO TEACH

When you are working with learners with autism, or other types of SEND, it may not always be appropriate to launch straight into the abstract concepts of democracy, individual liberties, rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance. Learners may need to start by developing an understanding or awareness of some underpinning concepts. The 'I, You, We' model below has been developed by a group of specialist FE providers, and is based on an appreciation that for many learners with autism, their understanding of the world is very much centred on the self, and they may need explicit teaching to support their understanding of other people and society more generally. The same model may also be helpful for learners with other types of SEND.

The table below gives some suggestions of suitable learning that will help learners to move towards a more developed understanding of each of the four British values. Content builds from the bottom row upwards. The aspects you choose to address, and where you begin with your learners, will depend on learners' existing level of understanding and their cognitive ability. The 'I, You, We' model is intended for use with learners who have not yet developed the level of understanding expressed in the top row of the table. If your learners already have a secure understanding of the concepts in the top row, then you will find a wealth of existing material to support you in developing your curriculum.

“Learners may need to start by developing an understanding or awareness of some underpinning concepts.”

The I, You, We Model: developing awareness of self and others to underpin understanding of British values

Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberties	Mutual respect and tolerance
I understand that...			
<p>There are lots of different ways to run a country; democracy is one way, the way the UK is run. In a democracy, the people decide who is in charge. We do this through voting for our MPs and in other local elections.</p> <p>We can also use democratic methods, like voting, to make other decisions, like choosing a student counsellor or deciding on which film to watch as a group.</p>	<p>In the UK, we are all expected to follow a national set of rules, known as 'the law'. Laws are made by the government.</p> <p>Laws apply to lots of different aspects of our lives (e.g. driving; what age you can do certain things; how you treat other people).</p> <p>If we are caught breaking the law, we will get some form of punishment (e.g. a fine, a prison sentence).</p>	<p>In the UK, we have rights to do a range of different things – these are protected by law.</p> <p>When we exercise our rights we are expected to do so in a way that does not harm other people or the place we live in. In other words, we are expected to balance our rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>We do not have the right to do absolutely anything we like; in particular we do not have the right to break the law.</p>	<p>People have different faiths; and some people have no faith. In the UK, we believe that people have a right to practise their own religion. We have laws against discriminating against people because of their faith/lack of faith.</p> <p>As individuals we can show mutual respect and tolerance; this can also be an expectation of society/ written into law.</p>
<p>We need a fair way to make decisions that affect more than one person/ groups/a whole college/a country.</p> <p>A fair way might involve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to tell people what I think • listening to different people's views • having a vote • accepting the decision of the majority which might not be what I wanted. 	<p>We take part in lots of activities or find ourselves in situations where there are rules (games/sport, school/college).</p> <p>Rules are usually there to keep things fair, make things safe or keep things running smoothly. That is why it is important that we follow the rules.</p>	<p>We all have rights. Sometimes my rights might get in the way of your rights.</p> <p>I also have responsibilities, and so do you. Having responsibilities helps make sure that I don't stop you having your rights and you don't stop me having mine.</p>	<p>We all have different thoughts, views and opinions. You have a right to think differently from me and from each other. It's okay for me to have my own views; I don't have to change them to please someone else.</p> <p>We can show that we respect other people's views in the ways we behave, e.g. through listening without interrupting.</p>
<p>Sometimes I need to make choices (e.g. about what I want to do in relation to work, living options, health, socialising)</p> <p>You also make choices. Your choices might be different from mine.</p>	<p>I do some activities or go to some places where I am expected to do certain things/ behave in a certain way.</p> <p>If you are with me, what I do/the way I behave affects you. What you do affects me.</p>	<p>I have rights, e.g. to ask for help, to say what I think, to go to college</p> <p>You also have rights.</p>	<p>I have certain features and characteristics (e.g. gender, race, height), wants, needs and likes.</p> <p>You have your own particular wants, needs, likes, strengths.</p> <p>Your features, characteristics, wants, needs may be different from mine.</p>
<p>I am I (an individual with my own identity), you are you (a separate individual with your own identity) and we are we (a group made up of myself and others, each with our own identities, but all coming together in some way).</p>			

HOW TO TEACH

Learners with autism are individuals, so it is not possible to provide a definitive 'how to teach' guide that would be successful in every case. However, there is a set of characteristics associated with autism worth considering when planning teaching and learning. These characteristics sometimes represent barriers to learning, while at other times they can give teachers a useful 'route in'. They are also shared by many learners with different types of SEND and therefore equally useful in planning an approach to teaching British values for a wide range of students.

Learners with autism MAY:

- be non-verbal/non-literate or struggle with the written word
- have difficulty in understanding abstract concepts
- have difficulty in transferring learning between contexts
- need extra time to process information
- lack theory of mind
- have some misconceptions/gaps in knowledge not common amongst their neurotypical peers
- struggle with group work
- have a particular area of deep interest.

These characteristics mean that teachers may find it useful to:

1. adopt visual, practical, kinaesthetic, or technology-based approaches, such as using dot-voting to demonstrate which of a set of options attracted most or least votes, or using a click and drag function within an interactive worksheet to differentiate between democratic and non-democratic activities.
2. situate learning in contexts that are familiar to learners, building out from there to introduce new contexts and situations, such as exploring how their own place of learning shows that it welcomes and values people of different faiths.
3. be responsive to 'real life' situations, which offer an opportunity to make the abstract concrete, whether they are incidents involving an individual, group, your whole setting or on the news, for example introducing 'rights and responsibilities' by unpacking a situation where one learner is enjoying giving a running commentary on a film that the group is watching, simultaneously impairing the experience of other group members.
4. embed learning on the same topic across the curriculum so that learners have the chance to revisit it in different contexts, considering the same ideas in different situations and from different perspectives, e.g. thinking about which laws are relevant to the learning going on in each session – health and safety in relation to their work placement preparation; age of consent in sex and relationships education
5. unpack underpinning concepts before moving on to more complex ideas, such as exploring the differences between people in a group before introducing the idea of mutual respect and tolerance of difference

6. allow learners more time than you might normally to respond to questions or volunteer ideas; give them a chance to think through information shared before checking learning or moving on
7. avoid making assumptions about prior knowledge (e.g. 'surely all teenagers know...'); learners with autism can have surprising gaps including things that what would be considered general knowledge by their neurotypical peers
8. personalise learning, based on an understanding of the individual's starting point and any identified gaps in knowledge or misconceptions
9. build in opportunities for 'parallel learning', where learners are engaged in similar activities, able to work side-by-side rather than as part of a formalised group but with the possibility of re-connecting with others through a group plenary session, if appropriate
10. take advantage of learners' passions, using them as a way of making the learning engaging and meaningful to the individual, e.g. for a learner fascinated by road signs, you could look at the way the law applies to driving, the consequences of breaking the rules, and the need for a system of rules to prevent accidents and traffic chaos.

TEACHING RESOURCES

There is a resource folder, accompanying this guidance, which includes materials that can be used to explore British values with learners with autism, while at the same time giving them an opportunity to practise their English skills.

“Take advantage of learners' passions, using them as a way of making the learning engaging.”

Developed in association with Natspec and member colleges

