

British values and the curriculum – Maths A level

The Prevent duty requires providers and practitioners to exemplify British values in their practice and to use opportunities to explore British values and to challenge extremism.

British values are defined as including:

“democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.”

This includes complying with the Equality Act 2010 and preventing discrimination against those with protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The Prevent duty also includes an expectation that staff will encourage students to respect other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Behaviour in classrooms, workshops and workplaces

Effective learning and work takes place in classrooms where there is tolerance and mutual respect for different faiths and beliefs as well as respect for people with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act.

By maintaining high standards of behaviour, including mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs and encouraging learners to respect the protected characteristics, class teachers, lecturers and trainers will be promoting British values.

The law and democracy

Maths provides many opportunities to explore democracy and the rule of law. This may take the form of studying general or local election results. This might include the relationship between the number of votes and the number of seats that parties win. There are also opportunities to study how local or national funding is spent. There are always opportunities to review government data and study how data can influence decision-making and legislation. One particular example is the annual budget that, through financial allocations, shows where government priorities lie.

Individual liberty

Students can explore individual liberty through a study of numerical constraints on behaviour, such as paying tax once they earn a certain income, speed limits in cars and how these are arrived at.

Learners will usually have considered what their options were and used their individual liberty to select from them before they chose their course or apprenticeship. They will also have choices to make while they take their current qualification and they will often have choices to make as they consider further education, training or careers after completing their apprenticeship or course.

Preventing extremism

There may be opportunities to challenge ideas that can lead to extremism. This may be through supporting students to think critically and not simply accept what they are told. Use of statistics can be a very valuable way to show that claims and assertions should be critically analysed before being accepted. Equally there may be times when discussions with students can broaden their outlook to develop their resilience and help them to challenge extremist ideas.

Challenging extremism

The Prevent duty is not intended to stop students or apprentices debating controversial ideas.

If students or apprentices make comments that could be regarded as extremist, staff should encourage the students or apprentices to consider:

- what they have said
- where the views they are expressing came from
- whether the evidence they have is accurate and full
- whether they have received a partial or incorrect interpretation of evidence
- alternative interpretations and views
- whether they need to make a referral to the designated safeguarding lead.

Staff should use opportunities to challenge extremist narratives through discussions with students or apprentices. If staff do not feel confident in challenging extremist ideas with their students or apprentices, they should ask for support.

If student or apprentices behave in a way that contravenes the equality and diversity aspects of the code of conduct that they have signed, then this is a disciplinary issue, e.g., refusing to work with a gay student or apprentice or a student or apprentice of a different ethnicity.

Applying British values to maths:

Example	
British values	Maths – all levels
Rule of law	Within maths there are opportunities to study areas where numerical data is part of the rule of law. Examples to teach different aspects of maths can come directly from statistics used in law. This might include taxation or calculations that need to be made to make sure that industry complies with health and safety legislation. Statistics can also be used to identify the impact of legislative change. The Office of National Statistics may be helpful. The level of analysis will obviously vary according to the level of maths being taught. In A Level maths, there is the opportunity to understand how statistics are calculated and used.
Democracy	Maths and the use of data have a significant role in democratic decision-making and influencing change. Students will hear statistics quoted to justify and argue for particular positions. Within maths, again using varied levels of complexity, the validity of these statistics can be explored. Staff may find the BBC Radio 4: More or Less programme helpful in this. The development of critical thinking skills using maths will help develop student resilience to being exploited by extremists.
Individual liberty	Students might explore the extent of individual liberty bearing in mind legal constraints that are numerical in nature, e.g., taxation of income; levels of alcohol in the blood when driving. Students will discuss choices in terms of future education choices and careers.
Tolerance and mutual respect of different faiths and beliefs and promotion of the Equality duty	Student code of conduct. Good working relationships in the classroom and around the college that promote effective learning. Ensuring that behaviour in the classroom demonstrates respect for those with different faiths and beliefs and those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality duty
Challenging extremism	Maths can be used to challenge extremism in particular through the use of statistics. This might include use of government migration figures to challenge inaccurate claims made about immigration levels in the UK.