

Glossary

Work in values education needs so far as possible to avoid the misunderstandings and lack of clarity which can arise when the same terms suggest different ideas to different people. But it also has to use terms which are part of our ordinary language, so some imprecision is inescapable.

This glossary is intended to suggest core meanings of the main terms used in the Statement of Values produced by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, and of some others which often occur in discussions. The glossary may also help to give a sense of the interconnections between ideas in this area.

Autonomy has as its central notion *Thinking for oneself* Autonomous individuals will endorse those values that stand up to their critical thinking. They will recognise that autonomy is of value for others also, and so will have respect for it. Autonomous persons have sufficient independence to put their thinking into practice in their action.

Awe is a relatively passive emotion in the face of something perceived as vastly larger or more complex or more powerful than oneself, it can connect to an understanding of one's place within some larger reality. (See also spiritual development.)

To care for others is to have goodwill towards them and actively to promote their well-being.

To be a citizen is to be recognised as a member of a community, where that status involves responsibilities as well as rights.

The **common good** is not just what is good for each member of society individually, but what they can all recognise as being good for society as a whole.

We have **common values** when we share beliefs about what is right or wrong. This is compatible with there being also some diversity of values, or different priorities between values.

Core values are those values that a local community or school considers to be of primary importance.

Diversity can also refer to the existence of different cultures and religions, which involve different ways of life, different ways of making sense of the world, and often different beliefs about the nature of the world and about what is ultimately important. (See also plural society.) These different worldviews may offer different perspectives on shared values.

Environment refers to the world in its physical and biological (rather than social) aspects, including the built environment as well as landscape, plant and animal life, and climate.

Freedom is the possibility of doing what one decides or wishes.

To exercise **goodwill** towards others is to take a positive interest in their well-being.

Human rights are rights which all human beings have, independent of any rights conferred by membership of a community, society or group.

As a result of **inspiration** one does something one would not otherwise have done, or at least sees things differently. There is an etymological link between inspiration and spirit: a person inspired is in higher spirits and more motivated.

Justice is the state of equity between rights and deserts.

Knowledge is the possession of information, not necessarily accompanied by understanding of its significance.

A **plural society** is one in which there is a diversity of values, as well as of religions, lifestyles etc. **Pluralism** is a system in which it is possible for people to live together with mutual respect and tolerance while retaining their **diversity of values** (certain values are likely to be shared even in a plural society).

Principles are broad considerations which we should take into account at all times but which do not tell us exactly what to do or not to do in a particular situation.

Respect - to have respect for persons is to recognise the basic worth and hence the rights of every human being. To treat people with respect is to treat them as persons, not as 'numbers' or as a means to someone else's ends. In this sense, we can respect everyone. In a different sense, we respect particular persons when we esteem them for some particular quality or achievement.

We have **self-respect** when we respect ourselves as we should respect others; that is, we recognise that we have the same basic worth as everyone else.

Responsibilities as citizens include not only refraining from violating the rights of others, but also participating with fellow citizens in pursuing the common good.

To **act responsibly** is to act within the limits set by the rights and interests of others, in such a way that we can account reasonably for our actions.

Rights are entitlements to be treated in a particular way. Many rights are entitlements within a particular system of rules (for example, citizens of a particular country may have rights within the laws of that country which non-citizens do not have). Legal rights sometimes fall short of moral rights (for example, in some countries, there is no legal right to free speech, but the moral right is universal). **Rights and responsibilities** are reciprocal: a right creates the responsibility to see that the right is respected, though those who are not capable of carrying out responsibilities (such as infants or people in a coma) still have rights, which means that others can still have responsibilities towards them.

The rule of law is a system within which what we are free or not free to do is determined, not by the arbitrary decisions of particular persons, but by laws made in advance, publicly recognised, and subject to change through recognised processes. We can recognise the value of the rule of law without agreeing with every particular law. (Laws can be seen as rules, underpinned by principles.)

Rules are prescriptions telling anyone in a particular context, such as pupils in a school, what they are to do or not to do. They may be specific (pupils are not allowed in laboratories unless a teacher is present) or very broad ('don't tell lies'), but they leave relatively little room for individual discretion.

Tolerance is acceptance of another's values (and their attempts to live according to their values) even though one may disagree with them. The limits of toleration are set by common values, rights and responsibilities; we have a responsibility not to tolerate behaviour which violates either the legal or the moral rights of others.

To have **trust** is to believe that others will act with goodwill, take their responsibilities seriously, and generally seek to promote the common good.

We have **understanding** of something when we can make sense of it within a broader context, making connections between one piece of knowledge and another, making meaning out of information.

Our **values** are our beliefs about what is right (rather than wrong) or good (rather than bad) or important (rather than unimportant).

To have **wisdom** is to have experience, insight, practical understanding and a sense of priorities among values which enable one to make sound judgements.

Wonder involves curiosity: a wish to know and understand the larger reality.

This glossary has been adapted from QCA Guidance on whole school approaches to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, 1997.