**Steyning Grammar School**

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**FLOURISH@SGS**

 **Character Education and our Christian Ethos**



 **Introduction**

Character education at Steyning Grammar School is based on the work of the psychologist Dr Martin Seligman. Its overall aim is for students to flourish by developing 24 character strengths which have been proven by Seligman to increase the likelihood of lifelong well-being. These strengths can be categorised within 6 core virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance & transcendence.\*

We connect our character strength model to our Christian values. One connection can be found in the ‘fruit’ of the Spirit in the letter to the Galatians.

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*

These ‘fruits’, or character strengths, are crucial to well-being and of following a path of wisdom and union with Jesus.

Our approach to character growth as the development of positive character strengths is reflected in our teaching. We know that when a positive reason to change is supported by character strengths students are more likely to flourish and ‘Be the best they can be’. We focus on positive actions in our feedback to students and call this ‘positive responding’. Crucially, we feed back on character as well as academic matters with students. This provides the foundation of our Christian ethos of kindness, care and acceptance which is grounded in Micah 6:8.

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
    And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy,*

*and to walk humbly with your God.*

\* http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification

**Character Education and our Christian Values**

Walking with Jesus requires us to continually reflect on how we can be more like him. Through having a focus on character at SGS we give students the opportunity to become more reflective and understanding of both how they can act in a Christ like way and how they can develop their character to be more christ like.

*Students reflect on their own character strengths through their annual completion of our ‘Learning Characteristics Survey’ and the comparison of this with their teachers’ opinions of their attitudes and behaviours in lessons (TAACA score). This is done in mentoring sessions (such as tutor time) and during reflection time within Collective Worship.*

*Through reading scripture there are many examples which can be linked to the development of our character traits. Collective Worship, Religious Education, REMAP and PSHE make links between parables or verse and the character strengths. For example, The Parable of the Good Samaritan may be used to illustrate understanding others and self control with learning regarding life choices. The statement ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (Luke 10:27) may be explored and linked to the learning characteristic of self control with others.*

*Collective worship provides an excellent opportunity to link character and biblical principles. Scripture, prayer and reflection are used to give students understanding of how they can grow spiritually, academically and socially.*

*Through recent research we have decided recently to swap the character trait of understanding others with kindness. This is a fruit of the spirit and something that Christ develops in us, however it is also a biblical principle encouraged by the Apostle Paul to Chrsitians (colossians 3: 12).*

*Given the nature of character ever evolving, through recognising change we show that as a school we are consistently reflecting on what character traits impact our students and relaying them to our Chrisitan ethos.*

*At the centre of the Christian faith is Jesus Christ, through scripture we see examples of excellent examples of character in his teaching and actions. We see curiosity when he is left as a child at the temple (Luke 2:42-52). We see grit in his journey to the cross, despite knowing the pain that would come with it (Luke 22:42). We see an incredible understanding of others in his dealing with those seen as the lowest in society (Luke 19). Through our character education provision we can encourage students to focus on and develop character traits enabling them to be more Christ-like and have a positive impact on the school and their communities.*

**Learning Characteristics and their links with Bible verse.**

Our learning characteristics and some examples of their links with verse can be seen below:

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| **Learning Characteristic** | **Meaning** | **Verse** |
|  | Resilience to challenges accompanied by perseverance and passion for long term goals | *“The way is hard that leads to life.”* Matthew 7:14*“By your endurance you will gain your lives.”* Luke 21:19 |
|  | An understanding that character and intelligence can be developed by putting in effort and using feedback. | *“Run in such a way as to get the prize.”* Corinthians 9:25*“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”* Matthew 7:24  |
|  | Controlling one’s own behaviours so that is supports our short and long term goals | *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* Galatians 5:22*“A fool loses his temper. But a wise man holds it back.”* Proverbs 29:11 |
|  | Understanding others means thinking about other people’s feelings and using what we know to act appropriately | *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* Matthew 25:40*“Blessed are the merciful.”* Matthew 7:12 |
|  | The appreciation of the benefits we receive and a desire give thanks. | So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2: 6-7*“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:18 |
|  | A strong desire to learn or know something. | *“Ask, and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.”* (Matthew 7:7)*“It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.”* Proverbs 25:2 |
|  | Zest is an approach to life filled with excitement and energy | *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,”* Colossians 3:23*“Light, space, zest – that’s God! So with Him on my side I’m fearless, afraid of no one and nothing.” – Psalm 27:1* ***(MSG)*** |