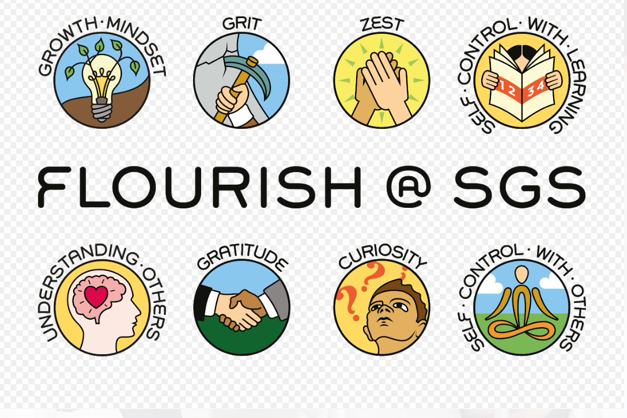
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**Character Education**

**Teachers Toolkit.**



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**Introduction: What Is Character Education?**

Steyning Grammar School wants ‘Every Person To Be The Best They Can Be’. Student results - although important - are not the only area in which we want students to be their best. We believe the development of character strengths is equally important if our students are to flourish both at school and in their ongoing lives.

Character education is the development of character virtues, this can be through deliberately teaching it, allowing it to be caught through experience and modelling both in lessons and the wider school experiences and community. It can also be sought through setting up tasks and experiences which will specifically develop character. The aim of this is to help develop moral, emotional, motivational competency and conduct which in turn will result in students better prepared for school itself, assessment outcomes and future aspirations.

Our approach to Character Education is completely research based. For more information on this research see the reading list on page (8).

Our model focuses on the eight character strengths that most strongly underpin progression towards happy, engaged, meaningful and successful lives. Here is a brief introduction to each of them:

**Curiosity** is a strong desire to learn or know something – it is the search for information for its own sake. We want our students to be 'curious' in their learning.

**Zest** is an approach to life filled with excitement and energy. We want our students to be 'zesty', showing enthusiasm in and for their learning, taking exciting opportunities and encouraging others’ enjoyment of school.

**Gratitude** is the appreciation of the benefits we receive from others and the desire to do something nice in return. We want our students to show 'gratitude' especially as through gratitude we also enjoy things more ourselves.

**Grit** is resilience to challenges accompanied by perseverance and passion for long term goals. Life requires grit, we want our students to be 'gritty' and when they are we notice that they:

Having a **Growth Mindset** means understanding that intelligence can be developed through purposeful practice. In order to be the best they can be students need to utilise feedback, ask for help and wish to improve, a growth mindset helps each of these.

**Self-Control with learning and with others**. Self control is controlling one’s own behaviour so that it supports both our short term and long term goals. This self control leads to good habits and good behaviours both with learning and with the interaction with others.

**Understanding others** means thinking about other peoples feelings and using what we know to act appropriately. This is important for interacting with others, seeing others view, handling conflict, developing strategies and developing friendships.

**How is Character used at Steyning Grammar School?**

Character is central to Steyning Grammar's ethos of ‘every person the best they can be’. We believe through making it central to all key decisions of the school, the character of our students will improve leading to better life outcomes post SGS and also better behaviours in schools and outcomes in assessments.

Character is specifically taught in our remap course at year 7 and 8 and it forms the centre of our assessment policies through TAACA grades (see section on page 8)

At steyning we want character to be central to all aspects of our practice through praising it, (ACE points), talking about it, modelling it and deliberately teaching it.

Character is shared in each week's Thought for the Week shared by tutors and Head of Years will have a character focus for their collective worship (assemblies).

SGS 10# is used in years 9 and 10. It sets a range of challenges that students can complete over the year to help improve character. An example of this is ‘attending a club’ and ‘having a digital detox’.

**Caught or taught?**

There is ongoing discussion in research as to if character is caught from the actions of others or it can be specifically taught as part of a curriculum. Within steyning we want to maximise the opportunities for both to occur. We believe through teaching character specifically and by having teachers who are aware and passionate about character this will

**A Basic Guide to How We Can Show Character in Lessons.**

Here are a few simple ways to begin using teaching character in each lesson:

**Model it:**

As mentioned above aspects of character can be caught, especially with zest, gratitude and growth mindset, we can actively impact the character of students by modelling this for them.

**Sign post it:**

A lot of the time we will be impacting character in lessons, by signposting students to the way their character is developing it can actively help their character improve. To aid this we will be introducing character learning objectives which will help to sign post students to the way character is being taught in a lesson.

**Be aware of it:**

Hopefully by having this teaching toolkit it will provide you a basic understanding of what character education is and some ways to implement it in your teaching. However there is a wealth of research on character education some of which we will place

**Use it:**

Within the toolkit there will be a number of ways to get character into your lesson. The next section of the booklet will focus on quick ways of getting character into lessons.

**Quick, Easy Ways to Developing Character in Lessons**

Character naturally fits into the school process as we expect students to develop during their time at school However here are some simple quick ways of incorporating character into everyday teaching.

**Encouraging a Growth Mindset in all lessons.**

Entering a class and expecting all students to reach the highest outcomes possible is much easier to say than do. However, having a understanding that all students can develop and achieve beyond what they are used to and expect is a way of maximising character development and fostering a culture of growth mindset within classes.

**Group work and Peer Teaching**

Effective group work challenges students to work together with others, this has a huge impact on their understanding of others, self control with others and self control with learning. Likewise peer teaching can impact curiosity and zest as students have to learn the content first and then share it.

**It’s ok to fail, as long as we learn from it.**

One of the constant findings of positive psychology research as one of the best ways to succeed is to harness and learn from failure. In today's education system failure is feared, by providing a learning atmosphere where failure is used as a clear tool to learn how we succeed, students' growth mindset, curiosity, gratitude and grit all develop.

**Competition**

Especially with disengaged boys, competition is a way of engaging them in lessons, (as long as the outcomes of the competition do not mean they lose face). Alongside this competition also strengthens grit, curiosity, gratitude for team members, self control with others and understanding of others.

**Thinking Time and challenge.**

Teachers often do not like students to fail to achieve a learning objective or to be unable to answer questions, the knee jerk reaction is to answer questions for students. If you are able to give ‘thinking time’ to students following questions or set extremely challenging learning objectives aware that some may not meet them, this hugely encourages and strengthens grit, growth mindset and self control with learning.

**Student leadership.**

Leadership develops students as a whole and has a massive impact on character especially curiosity, self control with learning, zest and grit.

**Taking students out of their comfort zone.**

Character is not fixed it can be developed and much like exercise by working beyond your usual limit your character will adapt and be enhanced. Challenging students with topics they are not familiar with, tasks they feel are difficult and culture or people they are not used to will help develop character

**Showing passion for your subject.**

It is often overlooked in teaching that students passion often comes from their teachers passion. If you want character to develop in your subject make sure you show students its somewhere where they want to be and where they can develop through the love and enjoyment you have for your subject.

**Assessment and TAACA**

TAACA stands for Teacher Assessed Achievement Characteristic Averages.

We assess these three times a year. To make these assessments you need to look at how students are demonstrating each of these characteristics in your subject.

The average TAACA for the school is 4.18 . Students with a TAACA over 4 are often found to have higher outcomes. TAACA is used to determine what our bottom 20% of a year group is and we believe it is also a very strong indicator of progress and development within school.

When assessing TAACA is given a score between 1 (the lowest and 5 the highest) To achieve a 5 a student should be consistently demonstrating this character at the highest level and actively developing it in their learning. A student on a 1 for TAACA is likely to show very little of this character trait in their classroom learning, they may well be behind the rest of their year in the development of this characteristic or may even go out of their way to not demonstrate it.

This information is then used to look at how students are performing and how they are likely to provide an overview of a student’s character and an accurate link to how school progress can be improved.

TAACA is fed back to parents who can then see how their students' character is developing.

**Research**

Steyning Grammar’s Character Education Framework is cemented in research, both psychological and educational. It is backed up by the field of ‘[Positive Psychology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_psychology)’.  [Dr. Martin Seligman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Seligman) and the late [Dr . Chris Peterson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Peterson_(psychologist)) realised that for people to become successful and happy - to flourish - they had to develop 24 character strengths. This work was adapted by the KIPP schools in the USA and Dr Angela Duckworth to form a model that can be used in schools, we have further adapted this to the eight sSome key texts used to develop the framework at steyning are:

How Children Succeed: P. Tough

Grit: A. Duckworth

Flourish: M. Seligman

Bounce: M. Syed

The Chimp Paradox: S. Peters

Thinking Fast and Slow: D. Kahneman

Flow: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi‎

We hope to have these texts available to teaching staff from the Steyning Grammar school library for staff who want to look into this.

**Character Education Learning Objectives (CELO’s)**

One way of addressing character in lessons is to provide a specific learning objective based on character. Here are a couple of examples for each aspect of character, and how they can be seen and assessed.

**Curiosity**

| **Type of lesson** | **Possible CE objective** |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where research is used. | CELO: To show curiosity in researching a topic. |
| A lesson where students present information. | CELO: To develop curiosity through sharing ideas through questioning. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will evidence curiosity through showing interest, asking questions about learning material to further their understanding and they may h further research of a topic studied in class.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

Students may crave an opportunity to question the learning matter presented to them. They may produce detailed home learning or independent research on a topic of interest.

**Zest**

| A lesson where a student has to give feedback to another student. | CELO: To encourage others zest. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where something is performed. | CELO: To enthusiastically demonstrate our work. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will apply a ‘zestful’ approach to their work, expressing enthusiasm and enjoyment. They will help others to do this also, through encouragement and engagement in group tasks.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

If the objective is being met a teacher will see students taking on the challenge of the lesson with enthusiasm, enjoyment, a meaningful focus on the learning and a positive work ethic.

## **Gratitude**

| A lesson where a student has to give feedback to another student. | CELO: To appreciate how others can help us. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where peer coaching/ feedback is used. | CELO: To be grateful for others’ help and instruction. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will show an appreciation of others’ perspectives, identifying their importance in a diverse, multicultural world. Thus, students will work well with others.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

Teachers will be able to identify expressions of gratitude in different forms. These may include; students saying ‘thank you’ after each lesson,being grateful for any feedback given, showing a positive attitude towards lessons taught.

**Grit**

| A lesson where there is a high level of challenge | CELO: To use grit to overcome challenging tasks. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where content from the KS above is introduced. | CELO: To use grit in addressing a GCSE/A level |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will take on the challenge of the work set, they will show perseverance with challenges, dedication and focus to the learning they are doing and a bravery in the way they address it.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

A student will be giving their best in the lesson, hard work, focus and perseverance will be identified. Even if the lesson is very challenging and students are struggling, grit will keep them focused and working even if they do not necessarily make the most progress.

**Growth Mindset**

| **Type of lesson** | **Possible CE objective** |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where feedback is given | CELO: To use feedback to enhance our growth mindset. |
| A lesson using peer coaching or feedback | CELO: To help others develop their growth mindset through coaching. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students understand their ability is not limited; they strive to perform the best they can in every set task, becoming autonomous in their approach to learning and foreseeing no barriers to their potential. and that tasks are never too hard.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

If the objective is being met, a teacher will see students striving to improve, willing to learn, pushing for their best and aiming to improve their ability within the subject.

## **Self-Control with Others**

| A lesson using peer coaching or feedback. , | CELO: To help others develop self control in my feedback of others. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson preparing for exams. | CELO: To use self control while helping others to prepare for assessment. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will show respect for others, work well alongside peers, encouraging and helping them in group tasks or partner work. Their discussions will include good listening skills and effective feedback.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

If the objective is being met a teacher will see students willing to work with others and also developing the core skills needed such as communication, listening, praise, discussion and feedback.

## **Self-Control with Learning**

| A lesson where excellence is expected. | To use self control in your learning to achieve excellent outcomes. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where there is a high level of challenge. | To show self control through remaining focused on the content of the lesson. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will meet the learning objectives if they engage well with the learning tasks showing focus on the task, restraint from any distractions while expressing a strong worth ethic

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

Students evidencing a proactive approach towards learning, they may show self control with learning by not only being focused on the task but by asking if they are stuck on a word or need help.

## **Understanding Others**

| A lesson where others' views and beliefs are shared. | To develop an understanding of others’ beliefs. |
| --- | --- |
| A lesson where someone else presents their findings. | To develop understanding of others by listening to others’ viewpoints. |

**How can a student meet these CELO’s?**

Students will show a willingness to learn about others, their culture, ideas, behaviour and identity.

**What may a teacher see if these CELO’s are being met?**

A teacher will see students questioning their own answers, thoughts and behaviours. They may see students asking questions to gain knowledge of others or encouraging others to see a different side to an argument or concept.