

ACE WEEKLY Newsletter



Dear Ace Member,

Whilst on a Quality Mark assessment at Christ's College in Sunderland, I asked a pupil what extracurricular activities he did outside of school. He replied with;

"I do drama classes because I really enjoy acting. But when I step onto a stage I know it develops my levels of 'courage.' And when I don't get the parts in the play I really want, I have to practice 'self-regulation.'"

This pupil could clearly see that the extracurricular activities he participated in didn't just allow him to pursue hobbies and interests he is passionate about. He understood that they also developed his character. Furthermore, he knew which virtues the experience helped him practice and forge.

For this pupil character development was something he 'sought.'

It is essential that students actively 'seek out' opportunities to develop their character. And that they do this off their own volition. And done enough times, this then becomes a habit. A habit that continues to serve their individual flourishing into adulthood.

To develop virtues such as 'compassion,' 'empathy,' 'perseverance' or 'confidence' (for example) we need to put ourselves in situations where we can actively practice them. The development of a virtue is like learning to ride a bike or play an instrument. We need practice developing it.

But pupils won't automatically make the link between character development and pursuing drama, volunteering or sport, for instance. Character education involves helping students understand this connection. It can't be left to happenstance. It needs to be intentionally cultivated.

Some schools do this through their character-based rewards programme. Henley Bank High School (ACE Regional Character Hub) do this to great effect.

Their character-badge scheme outlines the kind of activities which support the development of specific virtues. This does 2 things;

- i) it incentivises pupils to pursue activities which will help them actively develop the school's virtues in their own life
- ii) it supports pupils to understand the important link between 'what you do' and 'who you become.' The link between participation in certain activities and the virtues that this then helps cultivate.

Furthermore, their character-badge scheme is run for both student and staff. This allows staff and pupils to simultaneously embark on a journey to develop their character, in line with the school's values. See below.

Best Wishes,

Tom



ACE CEO - TOM HAIGH

Best Practice Resource



**HAYLEY BENFIELD
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER,
HENLEY BANK HIGH SCHOOL**

"Our Legacy Colour journey asks both staff and students to work on their own character and challenge themselves to show our 5 values of Ambition, Confidence, Creativity, Determination and Respect. Every member of staff and student that joins Henley Bank High School is placed at the bottom of the ladder so there is a real team spirit amongst the whole school. We run events for both staff and students to ensure that every student has the ability to achieve a colour in each value.

We have completely removed set tasks and instead share examples of what staff and students have done to get the reward. These are live rewards which means staff and students can speak to each other to get ideas on how to complete the journey."

RESOURCE FROM HENLEY BANK HIGH SCHOOL