

06 March 2023

Dear Parent

Character Education

Last year, I wrote to ask you to take part in some essential research to support our character education development. Since then, we have been working hard behind the scenes with the help of our Character Strategy Group (13 members of teaching and support staff) to develop our strategy for next academic year and beyond. The research showed that we are already providing opportunities to develop students' character across the board. However, whilst these opportunities are vast, they are not necessarily recognised and as such reduce the capacity for students to self-regulate and reason with their own character behaviours. The conscious awareness and reflection of these behaviours are key to nurturing the full character development of our students and allowing them to flourish when they leave RGS.

All of the educational research emphasises that whilst explicit character development is essential, the context and how it is delivered needs to match the school. It is for this reason we haven't wanted to rush into a framework, but continue to consult with all stakeholders. What is clear, is that there is a real need for a shared language and this is why I am writing to you today. It is important that the language we use is synonymous with the language students are familiar with at home. As a school, our Character Education is centred around our 3 values:

Respect

Integrity

Aspiration

We have hosted two staff training sessions on Respect and Integrity with another planned for April on Aspiration; these have had specific focuses over the past few months. For example, the week just past has had a host of thought-provoking assemblies focusing on Integrity.

However, there are many attributes and behaviours (often referred to as virtues) that underpin the full character of a person which can be categorised into four character types: Civic, Moral, Intellectual and Performance. The language within each of these categories is the focus of this part of the consultation. Please could you score the importance of the behaviours and attributes listed in [this survey](#). There is no right answer to this, and the data will help us form a framework that is specific to the RGS community.

With the rapid advancements of AI, employers are looking more and more at the character of their employees and this goes far beyond learning and attainment. It is more important than ever that we nurture the development of the whole student with an exceptional all-round education; Character Education is our vehicle to ensure that we achieve this. In a world where equity and fairness, respect, sustainability and belonging are so vital, it is essential we prepare our students beyond the academic curriculum. Our aim is to develop the practical wisdom of our students; students who are successful learners whilst being confident and compassionate; students who are responsible citizens, who are effective contributors to society; students who flourish in all that they do allowing them to be fully prepared for a world and career that may not exist yet.

To leave on a less well known, but pertinent quote:

“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.” — Martin Luther King Jr.

I look forward to updating you on our progress.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain Wilson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Iain Wilson
Deputy Headmaster