

Character Education at The Castle School

Our personal development curriculum intent is clear that we as leaders and staff at The Castle School want every student to access the quality of experiences that we expect for our own children. Every child has their future pathways shaped by us, ready to tackle the opportunities life will offer. We go far beyond the NC and use the curriculum time to shape kindness, compassion and empathy, celebrate equality and diversity, delivering rich and broad experiences, securing belonging and participation, in order to achieve in the broadest sense. Students leave The Castle School having the strongest sense of right and wrong, ambitious for themselves and with the knowledge of how to navigate the world and their responsibilities within it. Personal development is not a bolt on to a rigorous academic experience – they are truly aligned at The Castle School.

Research evidence, taken from DfE non-statutory guidance Character Education, November 2019: High self-belief is associated with better performance, good self-regulation is associated with better attainment levels, and having good coping skills is associated with better wellbeing (Education Endowment Foundation, 2013). Access to character development opportunities can lead to increased motivation (OECD Skills Studies, 2015), fewer absences (Bavarian et al, 2013) and lower levels of emotional distress (Taylor et al, 2017).

The Castle School believes character education is vital to empower students, giving them the knowledge they need to make sense of the world and grow into citizens who make a difference.

The building blocks of building character:

Achieve: Determination, perseverance, motivation, resilience, confidence, teamwork, ambition

Belong: Integrity, kindness, compassion, empathy, humility

Participate: Community awareness, volunteering, service, neighbourliness

How is character taught at The Castle School? We believe that character education is best taught through whole school expectations, ethos and culture, alongside planned curricular opportunities, that all students will experience universally. There are targeted and optional opportunities running alongside the universal provision.

The Castle School: Every child Achieves, Belongs, and Participates in learning, enrichment and the community.

The Castle School is very special place, steeped in history and legacy, all about people, family and the community. Families know their children are joining a successful organisation, with a strong reputation across the local area.

Students and their families once they join TCS are part of the school forever. The core value of 'belong' is held strongly and with true meaning.

Students are proud to belong to an aspirational school and enjoy being part of the shared, collegiate identity of The Castle School.

The first question asked of former pupils is "What House were you in?" Parents keen for children go into their House they were in, which we facilitate - shows how it matters many years later.

- The Castle School's ethos is embedded in all aspects of school life – everywhere – shared vision with staff, students, families and the community
- Students learn about this history as part of their year 6 transition – high aspirations are set the moment they join the school as part of transition – House and cohort photos (since the year 2000) in main corridor – tutor group photo to take home on their transition days
- Wearing the green blazer with pride showing they belong to the school is a core value
- The House system holds families within the school family – from the school's opening in 1968, six royal residences as Houses permeate everything about the school
- The House Trophy pulls together achievement, belonging and participation – ensuring every child has a part to play within their team
- History is signposted through building names of previous Headteachers, House competitions (including the Pooley trophy for sport)
- Awards Evenings and Presentation Evenings publicly recognise achievements – awards and trophies are all named after people and groups with special links to TCS. Celebrate progress and attainment to ensure greater numbers of students are recognised.
- All school won trophies in the Main Entrance, inc. inter school competitions
- Family photos are taken at events and proudly displayed in the main entrance – even in lockdown we asked families to take and send these in - signifies the relationships, support we respect and enjoy from families
- Honours boards displayed proudly in the Main Hall keep aspirations high for current students. Colours full and half colours in The Arts and Sports, worn with pride even if baking hot day.
- Speakers at events and within the taught curriculum are often ex-students who are proud to return and share their messages. Always ex-students at the Awards for years 7-10
- Year 11 students earn privileges, as a cohort – black jumper, queues, main entrance, Senior toilets, free time spaces – ambitious for all and visible focus for younger years – rite of passage
- Sports/health day and parallel games (inclusivity at the heart), and other legacy events like the staff vs students football and tug o' war. Andy Parker trophy – football.
- Regular family events, like study evening, curriculum focus, meet tutor Yr 7, safeguarding
- Outcomes above national averages – ambitious – open future doors and enable choice

Wider opportunities are planned in as part of the school's universal offer, so all students experience character building and teaching within the taught curriculum.

We take our duty incredibly seriously - to go above and beyond for disadvantaged pupils and their families, shaping futures and potentially changing lives.

Students know that they have a voice in the school and contribute effectively.

There are many platforms to secure student leadership and give opportunities for students to shape their school, leaving a legacy for the next cohort.

- Rich, broad and varied enrichment programme, including trips – expectation of participation, with optional and targeted opportunities, including, ski trip, Ardeche, New York, China, Cambodia
- Participation is tracked rigorously to ensure all take part, esp. those disadvantaged – where we absolutely plan for take up and success – this includes planned residentials, planned first place on all trips, and always a conversation if this is not taken up. Regular meetings with DS lead, so all systemic and all tied up so links with progress, behaviour, attendance and other vulnerabilities.
- Tutor time curriculum includes metacognition and self-regulation, linked to faculties
- Reading for enjoyment programme in tutor time – developing confidence, responsibility, oracy, as well cultural capital and literacy
- Careers programme (including work experience Summer 2023) – full, sequenced and universal in terms of provision – ambitious for futures and all about character, responsibility, aspirations. Full time careers advisor, trained to level 6, because it is important that students have skilled and knowledgeable support
- Senior Students in Year 11 shape the school – leading year councils and representing others – close work with Deputy Headteacher, to give profile and platform – assemblies & feedback
- Whole school democratic processes in place to elect Senior Students – everyone votes. Applications, hustings, promotions.
- Leadership opportunities: Year 11 Prefects, faculty Prefects, House Captains, Sports Captains, Arts Captains, Form Captains, student groups for change (eco-group, Librarians, Pride). Primary festivals with year 8 and 9 leaders. Year 6 induction days Sports Festival.
- Student surveys completed as per school calendar, all students – specialist foci when needed, inc. harmful sexual behaviour. Sent from CEO, Directors and Governors = important. This has influenced support in school, reviewing bullying processes, curriculum & T&L.
- Students are involved in all recruitment – use House points to purchase the opportunity within ClassCharts – tours of the school and student panels. Language in recruitment of 'adults working for the children' - we talk to students about their money so they buy into the school and feel part of the decision making.

Students are taught the high expectations we have of them and how to meet them from the moment they get their place at TCS.

There is an insistence on good behaviour and excellent standards in and out of lessons, as well as in the community. This includes manners, kindness and respect.

Adults model the way and are skilled in building strong relationships, understanding SEMH and attachment well, setting standards for students to follow. We talk about “no adult weapons” at TCS.

Our whole approach is to sanction the behaviour, support the child. We believe in a ‘warm-strict’ approach – care through expectations. We talk about “no child invisible” at TCS.

- Students positively recognised with House points, feeding into the House trophy – accessible on ClassCharts app, so readily available to ensure pride in learning
- Public celebration of upholding school and House values through rewards system – including celebration assemblies held half termly with SLT
- ClassCharts rewards store enables students to ‘purchase’, encouraging ambition – this includes a target for Prom invitation in Year 11
- Clear and simple Behaviour for Learning policy, with no tolerance for low level disruption. Learning focus is an absolute priority and students are taught this, shown this.
- Students are empowered to take responsibility for their actions, so need to track their detentions and attend without reminders or collection
- Every half term, students return to an expectations tutor time, where they are reminded and retaught of what we expect at TCS – with updates/review/reactive focus where needed. All colleagues read this, to understand their part in the team’s consistent upholding of standards.
- SEMH strategy shifted during and post-COVID with recovery focus
- Raising achievement plans (RAPs) – every student reviewed – relentless with expectations
- RTL situated in the heart of the school, message want them to be with us, learn from mistakes and move on, every day a new day, a fresh start.
- Our provision for vulnerable pupils because they are our family, absolute belief that their best place is with us – RTL, Willow, Qdos – very expensive but very important.
- Significant and planned focus on mental health (SEMH AHT)
- Student focussed meetings and graduated responses - all strategic, planned & systemic.

Individuals take responsibility for their behaviours and actions, taught very clearly what is right and wrong, sitting under our equality focus of #NotAtOurSchool.

We proudly celebrate diversity, rather than have tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We use tolerance to describe what we do not accept at TCS – we do not tolerate abuse, discrimination or harm.

Students have the knowledge of how to behave considerately towards others, with particular understanding of protected characteristics and why these are important.

- British Values and protected characteristics taught within a clear programme, revisited and reworked – proactively and reactively, dependent on school culture and behaviour data
- Students have the knowledge to make good moral decisions – and are empowered to call out other who break rules – school culture is one of a shared and collective responsibility
- Big messages through assemblies programme – House, year, half school
- PSHE, SMSC, citizenship, equality and diversity curriculum opportunities are explicitly planned and mapped
- Students who make mistakes and need more support work through targeted programmes, addressing the cause and reflecting on not repeating the issue. The Gift work for risky sexual behaviour or vulnerability. RETRACE programme for discrimination – colleagues trained and set up with an individual thoughtfully matched. Provision within RTL and Willow.

Specific opportunities where character is taught within our curriculum, by year group: *inc. curriculum enrichment days, faculty curricula, tutor time programme, PSHE, careers, PSHE, citizenship*

<p>Year 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinkery residential – all students, in the first 8 weeks of joining TCS. Overnight stay, team building activities, resilience tasks, embodying House values • Enrichment activities including trips to Weymouth, watch a play in a theatre (musical at Bristol Hippodrome), places of Worship, Chepstow Castle • Achieve your Ambition programme • Buddying – being supported by an older student in the House • Gamalan music performances
<p>Year 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Aerospace Bristol or Bletchley Park • PE leadership programme – developing skills and building knowledge to run Yr 6 transition event • First aid training – for all students, including learning how to use a defibrillator. Self-defence training. • See a Shakespeare production (and workshop) in Stratford-upon-Avon • Science Bloodhound Project • Achieve your Ambition Programme completion
<p>Year 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exmoor expedition – all students, out on the moor, navigating and solving route challenges together • Outdoor education (Blackrock) – team building and working together, pushing limits outside comfort zone • Visit an art gallery (Cardiff or Bristol) • The Castle School Challenge – participate in sustained enrichment, volunteering/community service, expedition. Universal Bronze, optional/targeted Silver & Gold • Yr 9 PSHE programme – hearing from recovering addicts and harmful sexual behaviour specialists
<p>Year 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colours - arts and sports – public recognition and celebration of significant commitment and participation – working towards a goal • Team building and outdoor education (Go Ape) • Visit to Shepton Mallet prison • House enterprise project – fundraising for a chosen charity, working together to plan and volunteer, presentation skills within team to cohort and Governors • Visits and work linked to Holocaust survivors and the Samaritans • Work experience • Mock interviews with local employers • Visit to Bath University
<p>Year 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Students and Prefects – significant roles, for both those in them and those around them in terms of responsibility and opportunity • National Citizen Service (NCS) - volunteering – project-based, giving back



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• College visits• Watersports and high ropes at Wimbleball Lake – near Pinkery (where they began their time at The Castle School)• First aid training• Whole year group visit GCSE Poetry Live in Oxford |
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