

Principles and Ethos of Newtown School

The School Principles

The fundamental principle which Friends stress, that in every person there is something of God, capable of direct illumination from God, must apply equally to young people as to adults and must therefore set the tone for the whole life of the School.

Teachers and students make a community living and working together under discipline in friendship and mutual respect. The whole community should live together in friendship, each one recognising the special position held by the others and the contribution required from each for the perfection of the common life.

Each and every member of the school community enjoys the right as a member of the community to participate fully in and to contribute positively to the life and work of the school community without let or hindrance from others.

To work towards this ideal we must:

- Talk to the appropriate people about difficulties as they arise
- Share our enthusiasms with others and support each other in becoming involved because those who contribute most benefit best and the community sustains a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities which offers ample opportunity for individual recognition across the spectrum of ability and aptitude
- Place our emphasis on positive and healthy living.

Our Ethos

Quakers believe that there is that of God in every person and this belief impacts on the way we approach the education of our students in Newtown School.

Based on Quaker ethos our core beliefs include:

- That each individual's educational needs should be recognised and equal value given to them
- That the purpose of education is to help students to discover their own potential
- That learning is a lifelong experience and is a part of living rather than a preparation for it
- That the contribution of each individual in the learning process deserves respect and encouragement
- That each individual is equal whatever their gender, race, culture, sexual orientation or circumstances and we actively reject, and work to eliminate, discrimination of any sort
- That relationships based on mutual respect creates the ideal learning environment
- The discipline must be based on trust and mutual support and must seek to promote the positive

At Newtown School we teach a set of values that reflects a balance between the spiritual and material aspects of life. In such an environment encouragement is more desirable than negative criticism. All members of our school community are of value and worthy of respect and the school tries to convey this, hoping that all both realise this and behave accordingly.

Every student is empowered to achieve his or her academic potential and is encouraged to uphold a sense of caring for others extending to the wider community. Within this caring community the school provides a sound liberal education for life, preparing our students for the environment they will meet in their future lives and careers.

At Newtown School we are committed to a mixed ability intake and to fostering adaptability, self-motivation, confidence and a sense of responsibility among all our students and staff.

Attitudes to discipline, work, games and general school life all arise from the central aims of caring for one another. School rules need to be seen to be relevant to the harmonious development of everyone and yet allow some flexibility. Encouragement to act responsibly is of the greatest importance and it is valuable for all children to be given responsibility appropriate to their maturity.

The intention is that staff find their work rewarding and despite the growing pressures of modern school life there should always be time for staff and students to talk together and work together, inside and outside the classroom. The individual attention that is required if we are to care for all our students implies the personal interest of the staff and recognition must be made for the demands that this makes on them.

As an extension of our care for the individual, the school should also have a commitment to the community. In this area of service, as in many other areas within school and outside it, the involvement of parents is of enormous benefit to the school.

In a rapidly changing world, education must concern itself more and more with the type of student it is producing rather than the actual content to be studied. Adaptability, confidence, the courage to make changes where they are necessary and above all the ability to get on with other people are amongst the qualities that Newtown School fosters in its students. Where our teaching is becoming irrelevant we must work to change it, always remembering that children thirst for experience and learn through it. All too often the classroom is a containing exercise. We must move increasingly towards an education that is based upon practical experience. While good examination results are always desirable and offer students paths into the future, they are of little use unless the students have gained the qualities necessary to explore those paths with independence and courage. Therefore we should prepare our leavers for all aspects of life and not concentrate exclusively upon their academic requirements.