



How to develop your school's values, beliefs, vision statement and culture?

Acknowledgements

This resource has been written for this programme by John Khan.

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How to develop your schools' values, beliefs, vision statement and culture?

Outcomes

- The whole school community inform the core values of the school
- The whole school community engage in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process to develop the core values of their school.
- Core values inform vision and mission statement

The school's core values and beliefs about learning, respect, celebrating difference and diversity should shape the culture and determine the priorities of the school, serving as the guiding force behind decision-making related to the school's curriculum, instruction, assessment, policies, and procedures.

Before you start

If you are thinking about revisiting your school values think about who needs to be involved and how you are going to work collaboratively to include everyone in all stages of the process.

Does a group already exist in your school who are representative of the whole school community?

Alternatively, think about bringing one together or can School Council undertake this activity?

Checklist

- Does the school's vision or mission statement express the core values and beliefs about learning about which the school is passionate about?
- Have your core values and beliefs been developed collaboratively with pupils, parents, teachers and school governors.
- Does your school have a process for the regular review and revision of its core values and beliefs?

To be clear

Vision statement: A one-sentence statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from the school's work.

Mission statement: A mission statement about HOW you will get to where you want to be.

Values: Is about what we/you stand for i.e. your/our principles and beliefs

Activity

Identifying your core values

Start by providing the group with the schools' existing vision statement and core values. Do they already include values around: respect for difference, diversity and equality?

Provide the group with the core values of other schools and organisation or you may wish to set this as a task for the group.

Then ask the members of the larger group to brainstorm their core values. Can the core values be distilled down into one single word or short sentence?

Write those core values on a post it note and stick these on a flip chart for everyone to see.

Have a group discussion about each of the core values.

Then give each person 5 green and 5 red post-it notes and ask them to place the green ones next to the core values which they agree with the most and red post-it notes against the core values they agree the least.

The top 5 core values with the most green post-it notes should be the ones advocated for by the group. There may be to be further discussion within the group if someone objects any of those chosen.

The object of this activity is not to have group members copy another school's core values but rather to give them an opportunity to see different styles of presenting them.

Identifying your core beliefs

Once you have identified the core values, you can go through a similar process for identifying the beliefs of the school in relations learning and wellbeing.

Developing your vision and mission statements

The next step is to get the group to come up with a vision and mission statement by incorporating all of the core values and beliefs into one single statement.

You can do this by placing each core value and belief on a post-it and then arrange the post-its to make sentences.

Write in the necessary connecting words to form the sentence.

Create the sentence that best captures the core values and beliefs.

You can have two groups working on this last part of the activity simultaneously and then bring together or merge their sentence.

Case Study

The school values outlined below were developed by the School Council with support from other pupils, parents, governors and staff who all contributed their thoughts and ideas.

Respect – for one another and for ourselves.

Equality - we understand that we are all equal and that we should always treat everyone equally, regardless of race, ability, appearance, sexuality or belief.

Friendship – we try to be a good friend by caring for one another.

Learn – we will do our best to learn in school

Empathy – we understand and care about how others might be feeling

Caring – we care about and value others

Trust – we tell the truth and we value the truth.

The first letters of our values spell the word **REFLECT**. Children and young people should be regularly encouraged to reflect and take responsibility for learning and on their behaviour towards each other.

This part of the process can take some time – people will need to pay attention every word.

Once the process has been completed a formal process needs to be undertaken to get approval from other pupils, senior leaders (if they have not already been involved) and parents, before final approval is given.

Remember to think about a process for helping new teachers and pupils and others new to the school to learn about the core values and beliefs

Finally, begin the process of sharing the school's newly developed core values and beliefs and vision statement so that they become embedded within the school. Set a launch date with poster competition making sure the values and beliefs are displayed all around the school.

Help us improve this resource

If you have ideas or suggestions that would improve this resource, such as alternative statements, or adaptations to make activities more affective with younger/older learners, or in the context of specific learning difficulties, we would really welcome your suggestions and comments:

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ABA Information Hub: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/1198

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