

Dear Parents

Throughout my teaching career I had always held an ideal of what a school should be like. Although fortunate to have worked in many wonderful schools across 3 different countries during my years in education, I had always dreamt about a close-knit community in a beautiful, traditional setting with the children at its heart, and at Abbey Gate College, I found it.

When you walk into our College you understand what I am referring to - it is hard to put into words but that special something is there. We can all feel it, it's why we are here, but how to actually define it is more of a challenge. So, when Mr Jenkinson presented the reworked version of our Vision, Mission and Aims we all knew that was it – who we are and what we are about, represented in words.

As a staff at the Infant and Junior School, we embraced the newly presented Aims as something we could immediately relate to and embed with the children. The first thing we did was to look at our Code of Conduct. This is a child friendly version of the aims of the College and is displayed in every area of the school. At the moment it looks like this.

### Code of Conduct

To make our school a happy place, we always try to....

Do our best
Treat other people and their possessions with care and respect
Listen and be tolerant towards each other
Care for the environment we share
Be sensible and careful in everything we do
Look for ways to help and make life enjoyable for everyone

As you can see, our Code of Conduct already sat well with our Aims, and why wouldn't it? This is what we aspire to for our children. We did however feel we could rework it slightly, so we put our heads together and developed this:

### Code of Conduct

To make our school a happy place, we always try to....

Self - Care for our wellbeing.
Self - Do our best.
Self - Be content, comfortable and confident with ourselves.
Service - Treat other people and their possessions with care and respect.
Service - Make a positive difference to others.
Sustainability - Care for the environment we share.

Now, anyone who knows anything about a primary school, knows we like a bit of colour coding, and, to our excitement, we had 3 aims and 3 school colours – perfect!

We then turned our attention to our Houses and their identities. As Mr Jenkinson has shared, the Senior School will be developing the aims through 3 agencies, led by a Head of Self, a Head of Service, and a Head of Sustainability. We wondered how we, at the Infant and Junior School could achieve something similar.

A discussion ensued and our conclusion was that our well-established Houses should continue, as should their associated colours of red, blue, and yellow. Our House system has been developed over the last few years with regular meetings taking place to strengthen pupil voice and, the appointment this year of 3 elected class members who represent both their Class and each House at Pupil Parliament meetings with the Deputy Head of the Infant and Junior School, Mrs Travis.

It did not take us too long therefore to formulate the idea that, as from September, each House would take responsibility for the development of one of our College Aims. Douglas, for example, may take responsibility for Self, Abbott for Service and Talbot for Sustainability. Our House and Pupil Parliament meetings will therefore have a further focus and the children will help to drive forward our identity. The Aims will also alternate annually, so that all the children will take responsibility for all the Aims as they move through the school.

So how will we decide which House will have which Aim? Well, that was easy – we won't - the Sorting Hat will! At the beginning of the year, the new House Captains will be given their responsibility by the Sorting Hat in our special assembly and will receive a new badge to wear on their blazers, representing the colour of their Aim for the year. All the children will, therefore, have 2 badges – their House badge and their Aims badge – wonderfully colour coded as only a Primary School can!

And so, the conclusion, Abbey Gate College has the children at its heart and is why we are all here. Our Vision, Mission and Aims clearly define the reason the College was established and why we are still thriving over 40 years later; but they also allow us to move forward and look to the future with that special something clear for all to see, but more importantly feel.

With kind regards

Mrs Marie Hickey

Head of the Infant and Junior School.