



The Values of the Junior School





Our own commitment to our shared values is equally crucial:

'A hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of house we lived in, what kind of car we drove, or what our bank account balance was. But the world may be a better place because we made a difference in the life of a child.'

The Mary Erskine and Stewart's Melville Junior School

The nine core values of the Junior School are -

- 1 Appreciation
- 2 Commitment
- 3 Confidence
- 4 Enthusiasm
- 5 Grace
- 6 Integrity
- 7 Kindness
- 8 Respect
- 9 Responsibility

All girls and boys in the Junior School are helped to develop their understanding of the absolute importance of accepting that a commitment to our shared values is crucial to their growth as children who realise that very high personal standards are essential in every area of their lives.



① Appreciation

Appreciation of the natural world, as well as of man-made wonders, is an important aspect of the values we seek to develop in our children. So too is an appreciation of others. Almost all the girls and boys in school are very good at thanking people who have helped them. The very act of saying 'thank you' reflects appreciation and is always welcomed by the recipient but appreciation implies something deeper than this.

We help our children to understand that almost everything they achieve in their lives will have benefited in some way from the support of others. Children learn to thank everyone who has helped them in any way and it is also important to develop a deep sense of appreciation for all the support they receive. They should understand that many adults devote their lives, whether as parents or teachers, to helping to provide them with opportunities to enjoy their childhood, to set high expectations for themselves and to fulfil their potential.



'Appreciate the little things, for one day you may look back and realise they were the big things.'



② Commitment

Girls and boys often think that commitment means nothing more than making a decision to take part in an activity or an event. We help children to understand that true commitment implies sticking with something and not dropping out if a more attractive alternative suddenly appears. True commitment can mean that children find that they are unable to take up an opportunity which suddenly arises because they are already committed to something else. We help them to learn to accept that without question rather than trying to find a way to back out or withdraw. It is not easy to be committed in that sense of the word but it is very important for children to learn the nature and value of true commitment.



'Commitment turns dreams into reality.'



③ Confidence

The word confidence is often considered to refer solely to what can be observed externally, for instance when children speak with confidence, when they look confident, when they are happy to sing in public or to take the lead in class discussions. However, it is possible for children to be perceived as confident when in fact they are covering up insecurities by being outwardly loud. It is equally possible for a child to be very confident and yet to be naturally quiet. Confidence is internal and reflects children's sense of well-being about themselves.

Confidence is not the same as brashness or arrogance. We help children to understand that we do not expect them to be externally confident all the time but we do want them to be sufficiently proud of who they are that they develop an inner confidence which will stand them in good stead throughout their lives whenever they face problems or whenever opportunities present themselves.

'Wear your confidence like an invisible crown.'





'Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes.'

④ Enthusiasm

ένθουσιασμός is a difficult word to decipher but it is in fact the word ENTHUSIASM. The classical Greek spelling of the word is important as it emphasises that the values which are so important to us have been important for thousands of years. The word enthusiasm has not changed in meaning or spelling for over 2,500 years and Greek school children would have understood the meaning of the word in the same way as our own children do. Fashions change but values do not.

We regularly speak with all of the children about the importance of being enthusiastic in their approach to every aspect of their lives, including their school work, homework and all the other activities which are provided for them in school. Boys and girls gradually learn to understand that the more enthusiasm they display the more likely they are to be successful.





5

Grace

Grace is not a word in common use. One of the best definitions for grace is 'undeserved pardon' and that is a concept which we help our children to understand in a manner appropriate to their age. When a child acts in an inappropriate manner towards another child, whether by deed or word, and then apologises we expect the other child to accept the apology. Children, however, can superficially accept an apology but let it be known by body language that they do not forgive what has happened. To have the confidence and maturity to accept an apology with good grace or graciously is a very clear sign of inner strength and emotional maturity.

Another aspect of grace which we believe to be very important is an understanding of the importance of accepting both victory and defeat graciously. It is natural for many children to be competitive and to want to be successful and, if they are, it is very important that they are gracious in the way they behave and react to their success. It is equally important, perhaps even more so, that when children are not successful or are not selected for a particular activity they behave graciously and congratulate their friends or opponents.



'To be dignified in defeat and humble in victory - these are the marks of grace.'



6 Integrity

We believe that integrity has a much deeper meaning than honesty and for that reason selected integrity as one of our values. We expect all of our children to be honest in the sense that they should tell the truth, should not cheat and should own up to their mistakes. However, the word integrity reflects more deeply the value which we would like to instil in our children as it assumes that their every thought and every deed reflect an inner commitment to truth and not just an outward manifestation of honesty. We want our children to realise that everything they do in life comes from inside their hearts and souls, in other words it is integral to their being. We want them to understand that integrity is a crucial element in being a good person.





7 Kindness

We help all our girls and boys to understand that kindness always means thinking of someone else before yourself, putting someone else's feelings first and acting in a manner which helps someone else to feel happy and valued. Kindness is a very unselfish value and we work with our children to help them appreciate that although individual kind acts are important they should be a reflection of a much deeper commitment to kindness as an element of their personality.



*'No act of kindness,
no matter how small,
is ever wasted.'*



*'Respect for ourselves guides our values;
respect for others guides our manners.'*

8 Respect

A Spanish proverb states that 'if you want to be respected, you must respect yourself first.' That is the key message which we want children to understand when they think about the meaning of respect. Children who respect themselves will set such high personal standards that they will respect everyone else as well, understanding that 'everyone' means exactly that and not just those to whom they feel they ought to show respect.

It is also important for children to learn to respect their environment in its widest sense by learning to take care of the world in which they are growing up. This includes learning to respect their own environment by treating it properly.

Self-respect is a key value which we regard as essential for all children. All our other values build on the bedrock of self-respect.





9

Responsibility

As children move up through the Junior School we increasingly expect them to accept more responsibility for their actions. The earlier that children understand that almost all that they do in school or at home is as a result of decisions which they have made, the more likely they are to understand the nature of responsibility. When children forget their homework it is all too easy for them to blame parents or the cat or the fact that their homework was left in Granny's house. All of these excuses may well be true but in the end, as children grow up, it increasingly becomes their responsibility not to blame others but to accept that they have a duty to themselves to take responsibility for their own actions and words.



*'Your greatest responsibility
is to be true to yourself.'*

'To show respect for someone who can do nothing for you is what marks you out as a good person.'

'Showing appreciation can make someone's day, can change someone's life.'

'You have not lived a perfect day until you have shown kindness to someone who will never be able to repay you.'

'I stopped being afraid when my first venture failed and the sky didn't fall down.'

'It is easy to avoid our responsibilities but it is not easy to avoid the consequences of avoiding our responsibilities.'

'Enthusiasm allows you to keep smiling even when you are exhausted.'

'Self-respect means that you understand you are better than no-one and no-one is better than you!'

'To show commitment is to promise a lot and give even more.'

'If my mind thinks it and my heart believes it I know I can achieve it.'

'The willingness to accept responsibility is the source of self-respect.'

'Show enthusiasm by acting as if what you do makes a difference. It does.'

'Courage is grace under pressure.'

'The little unremembered acts of kindness and love are the best parts of a person's life.'

'Feeling appreciation and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.'

'If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you do not have integrity, nothing else matters'

'Take personal responsibility for your life – you cannot change the seasons or the wind but you can change yourself.'

'A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.'

'It is equally important to display grace in victory as it is in defeat.'

'Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody is going to know whether you did it or not.'

'Confidence comes not from always being right but from not fearing to be wrong.'

'Success does not mean doing the best, it means doing our best.'

'The willingness to accept responsibility for your own life is the source from which self-respect springs.'

'To finish one worthwhile task is better than to half-finish one hundred others.'

'Integrity is telling myself the truth and honesty is telling the truth to other people.'

'Dare to be what you are and learn to accept with good grace all that you are not.'



www.esms.edin.sch.uk

0131 311 1111

admissions@esmgc.com

Queensferry Rd, Edinburgh EH4 3EZ

