



St. Stephen's R.C.
Primary School

The St. Stephen's Way

Where the: 'Word of God, and the service
and strength of St. Stephen, guides our
steps and leads us in learning.'



OUR VISION

Where the: 'Word of God, and the service and strength of St. Stephen, guides our steps and leads us in learning'

OUR MISSION

*We are a community where:
beauty and trust are treasured,
justice and tolerance are promoted,
compassion and charity are encouraged,
goodwill and loyalty are cherished,
resilience and determination are needed,
forgiveness and love are required,
friendliness and respect are reinforced,
faith and the Spirit are shared.*



YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The St. Stephen's way requires the community to:

Recognise the **beauty** of the world around us and in ourselves and **trust** that God has made us in his image and likeness - treasuring our every move.

Value social **justice** and work for the common good for all people on Earth and promote **tolerance** where there are differences.

Show **compassion** for those in need and encourage **charity** in our local and universal community.

Display **goodwill** in our actions and cherish **loyalty** in our relationships with others.

Support children in their studies - encouraging **resilience** and a **determination** to succeed.

Know the importance of **forgiveness** and understand that **love** needs to be free-flowing.

Advocate **friendliness** in our relationships and maintain **respect** between each other.

Uphold the **Catholic faith** – spreading and valuing the gift of the **Holy Spirit**.



BEAUTY

1 Peter
3:3-4

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

Too often, our children are drawn to superficial materialism and false beauty and fail to recognise the beauty around them or fully understand their worth as individuals. Within school, there are occasions where children are drawn to others because of the size of pencil cases, or the label on their bags or

jackets; consequently, a false sense of beauty is created and misguided adoration occurs. At St. Stephen's, we encourage children to see (like Peter) the worth of the inner self – discarding the cultural climate, that can be so damaging in shaping the young person's thinking.

TRUST

Proverbs
3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Trusting a friend, colleague, staff member or any member of our community is the path to harmony. Many children and adults alike adopt a cynical stance, often building barriers, suspicion and doubt. In a Christian community, trust is an imperative ingredient in all of our relationships. Even when the fullness of a situation has not been revealed – trust can overcome many of life's uncertainties. Just as Jesus trusted in the Father at the time of his crucifixion, we need to trust in each other and acknowledge that there is a greater power at work.

At St. Stephen's, we demonstrate trust in our faith journey with the church. The foundations in this relationship can only be sown, it is up to the individual to take ownership of their relationship and to be empowered to trust others and God in our daily interactions together. When seeds are sown; they take time to develop and blossom into new life and establish strong and powerful roots. Similarly our relationships with each other can only develop if they are given nourishment and time to evolve and flourish.

JUSTICE

Micah
6:8

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.

In Christian communities, there are many Gospel values which seek to bring us closer together. Justice is often confused with revenge and retribution and there are occasions where the latter has taken precedence over reconciliation.

Social justice allows the human dignity of every person to be respected and the resulting rights are safeguarded and championed without reservation. A society is not perfected by laws, only by the love of neighbours, which makes it possible for everyone to '**look upon his neighbour as another self**'. (Gaudium et Spes, 27:1).

TOLERANCE

Mark

10:13-14

Jesus Blesses Little Children.

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

Tolerance is the measure with which we attempt to absorb and celebrate differences. It is an acceptance of our imperfections and at St. Stephen's we work together with our community to understand the differences in society and the similarities we find in

each other. In a world where tolerance is often lacking and divisions are fuelling war, conflict and fear, there is a need to demonstrate tolerance. Children need to be taught tolerance, or they may become part of such conflicts.

COMPASSION

Matthew

9:35-38

The Harvest is Great, the Labourers Few.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

There are many times during the day when our community is called to demonstrate compassion towards one another. As Jesus so often demonstrated compassion towards the sick or the needy, we are the vehicle for recognising and teaching how to understand the sufferings of another being. At St. Stephen's, children learn the value of compassion

and its contribution to social good - empathising with those whom are suffering and are less fortunate than ourselves. Being compassionate does not only allow us to recognise the needy, it allows us to show empathy towards others; particularly during the difficult situations we may encounter personally.

CHARITY

Proverbs 22:9 *He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.*

The common good means assuming responsibility for others and this must be the business of everyone. Charitable thinking is the responsibility of all within St. Stephen's community, and such actions are part of the school's regular routine. Charity is not exclusively about raising money – it is about the giving of the little things to all peoples; be it money, materials, prayers, thoughts or time.



GOODWILL

Luke
2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill.

People of goodwill usually act through selflessness and a desire to help others. We need to exploit opportunities and appreciate that there are times where goodwill will need to occur in order to move a situation forward. When the spirit of generosity prevails, unity and communion overcome difficulties

and negative situations. Many positives are borne from goodwill and consequently goodwill is often seen as the prerequisite to a harmonious community. At St. Stephen's, we understand the importance and necessity of goodwill and how it can be the cornerstone for a successful relationship.

LOYALTY

John *There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*
15:13

Friendships require perseverance and determination. At St. Stephen's, we need to ensure that we remain loyal to our mission statement's virtues and values. When relationships are tested – loyalty is often found to be the missing component. Loyalty comes in different forms and may be used to describe the way

we demonstrate faithfulness and commitment to our school community. When loyalty is displayed, there is a strong feeling of support and allegiance to each other and our shared vision. Subsequently, the community feels positive when we are supportive of one another.

RESILIENCE

Isaiah *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*
41:10

Those who demonstrate resilience and tenacity often achieve more because they are not afraid of failure. With God's help, St. Stephen's pupils are beckoned to try new things, to learn new skills and to conquer the fear of failure. Within any relationship, learning or educational matter, there will always be ups and

downs, successes and failures, but without the capacity to bounce back, it would be impossible for technological, scientific and spiritual advances to occur. With this in mind, we seek to create resilient beings, who actively embrace mistakes and use failure to their advantage.

DETERMINATION

Philippians *I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.*
4:13

Positive role models with high self-esteem is an essential ingredient to any schooling or parenting. While it is a known fact that modern parenting is dictated by fear, adults must model determined behaviour so that they lead by example to the younger generations of our community.

For children to succeed, social and educational environments need to allow opportunities to develop self-determination and should give pupils an emotional connection to the goal that they wish to achieve. At St. Stephen's, pupils are encouraged to journey towards success, by setting realistic goals: they should display a strong sense of character and tenacity to accomplish their aims and objectives.

FORGIVENESS

Matthew *Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."*
18:21-22

In any community, there are likely to be times when we do not always agree with the actions of our peers; however, we strive to be a positive community that works together in unison. Naturally, there will be times when we say the wrong thing, or our actions are perceived as being hurtful – we take example from Jesus and recognise that he demonstrated forgiveness

even in his darkest moments. Where hurt has been caused, forgiveness and reconciliation can be hard to display and many often struggle to forgive. Our inner conscience may be at loggerheads with religious belief, but ultimately, forgiveness must prevail to ensure our community lives harmoniously together.



LOVE

1 Corinthians
13:4-8

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

In order for our community to give love to each other, we firstly need to love ourselves and accept ourselves for who we are. If one does not experience love, acceptance and support – it is impossible to understand how to outpour that love onto others; consequently, we would be empty and without feeling. At St. Stephen's, pupils are taught to: love each other;

show love through their actions; and love God's world. High priority is given to educating our young people about the importance of loving the universal church and its contents. In scripture, Paul describes love as the greatest commandment of all and we see love as the greatest gift – enabling us to create a culture of happiness within our school.

FRIENDLINESS

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

A friendly community is a happy community. Effective socialisation allows friendships to be built and sustained - between each member of the community. As Christ reached out to the poor, meek, the lowly and the rich, we too should reach out in friendship to form Christian fellowships with those in and outside of our everyday circles. When we demonstrate friendliness

to others, we create united relationships: sharing in one another's joys and sorrows - creating ideas and experiences. At St. Stephen's, we recognise that relationships blossom when time is given generously to each individual in the community. We have a moral obligation to support our peers and friendliness is the cornerstone to cementing positive relationships.

RESPECT

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 *But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.*

There are times in the bible when Jesus did not immediately command the respect of his followers and there are times when he did not get the admiration that he deserved. In school, there may be conflict or occasions when we do not always agree with the outcome or decision made, yet, we must remain respectful of the authoritative bodies. St. Stephen's believes that our community needs

to demonstrate self-respect in our interactions, discussion, sportsmanship and presentation. We teach the skills of negotiation, consideration and conviction. When respect is instilled in an individual, reverence for the holy and sacred can be taught.

CATHOLIC FAITH

Luke *But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."*
18:27

Hebrews (11:1) states: **"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."**

St. Stephen's is a faith-filled Catholic community, where high priority is given to: the evangelisation of the community; family catechesis; strong Religious Education; opportunities for collective worship and; the opportunity to live out the faith through the actions of our charitable works. As a community that works for the universal body of the world, we are summoned to be at service to God and to each other. Our duty is to allow access to high quality teaching and learning to ensure that 'faith' can be stretched, questioned, wrestled with and accepted by all who access our

provision. When one applies to become part of St. Stephen's community, they recognise that Catholic virtues and values are taught and are an integral and intrinsic part of our daily interactions – they are not exclusive to Religious Education or collective worship but are woven into our daily curriculum. Living by Gospel values, and upholding the faith, enables our community to grow stronger together.

In the words of St. Augustine, "I believe, in order to understand."

HOLY SPIRIT

Romans *More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*
5:3-5

God's work is committed to us through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's gifts (wisdom, understanding, right-judgement, courage, knowledge, piety and reverence) and fruits (love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) help us to ensure we receive God's love: they allow us to listen to his word and recognise where we can be an agent of change in today's world.

St. Stephen's requires the community to take ownership of the mission statement and abide by it - accepting its principles and living by its values.

Its virtues need to be upheld by all whom interact with the school to ensure that the community are able to live harmoniously together.

– for the good of future generations.



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