

KS5 BRIDGES Policy

'We live in a globally connected, information saturated world. To thrive, our students need to learn in and out of school, in person and online, together and independently. Students need learning experiences that meet them where they are, engage them deeply, let them progress at a pace that meets their individual needs, and help them master the skills for today and tomorrow.'

Bill and Melinda Gates, Gates Foundation

'The purposes of education include more than (academic) achievement. Among the most important is the development of citizens with challenging minds and dispositions who become active, competent and thoughtfully critical in our complex world.'

John Hattie, Visible Learning for Teachers

'Schools should aim to develop confident and compassionate students who are effective contributors to society, successful learners and responsible citizens.'

A Framework for Character Education in Schools

Isaac Newton Academy's BRIDGES programme for character development and building learning power is uniquely placed to support KS5 students in ensuring that they leave INA sixth form equipped with the character traits necessary for success at university and beyond and to ensure fulfilment in life. This includes developing a scholarly thirst for enquiry, the skills to be an effective, independent and resilient learner, a strong moral purpose, the will to contribute positively to society and the capacity to survive and thrive in a complex world.

The importance of developing the dispositions which enable a person to bounce back from difficulty and challenges is highlighted in the quotes below:

'There is good evidence that high achievers often develop an anxious attitude towards their own performance that makes them go to pieces in the face of unexpected difficulty, and avoid new kinds of challenges in case they 'look stupid'. This failure to develop resilience, curiosity and independence at school stores up trouble for them later on. They know how to succeed, but they have yet learned how to fail, or how to struggle. Many of them fear they are imposters – significantly less capable than they appear.'

Guy Claxton, The Learning Powered School

'The students who persisted in college were not necessarily the ones who had excelled academically at KIPP. Instead they seemed to be the ones who possessed certain other gifts, skills like optimism and resilience, and social agility. They were the students who were able to recover from bad grades and resolve to do better next time; who could bounce back from unhappy breakups or fights with their parents; who could persuade professors to give them extra help after class; who could resist the urge to go out to the movies and instead stay home and study.'

David Levin, Founder of KIPP Schools.

There has been a wealth of research into the value of character education. The Jubilee Centre for Character Education at the University of Birmingham categorises character into four 'virtues' that it suggests are vital for success and fulfilment in life: intellectual, moral, civic and learning virtues. INA's well-established BRIDGES programme of learning power and character development places emphasis on all of these inter-dependent dispositions, some examples of which are given below:

Moral *Those which enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience.*

BRIDGES examples: Courage, Empathy, Justice, Honesty; Humility, Self Discipline, Understanding; Fairness Integrity

Civic *Those necessary for engaged and responsible citizenship that help young people understand their ties to society and their responsibilities within it.*

BRIDGES examples: Citizenship; Humanity, Justice. This includes developing community spirit and engaging in volunteering activities

Performance *The behavioural skills and psychological capacities that enable us to put the other virtues into practice*

BRIDGES examples: Resilience, Perseverance, Grit, Determination, Leadership, Collaboration, Motivation, Hard work, Independence

Intellectual *Those required for the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding*

BRIDGES examples: Reflectiveness, Reasoning, Questioning, Curiosity, Experimentation, Resourcefulness, Open-mindedness, including critical thinking

The development of character and learning power permeates everything we do at KS5 at Isaac Newton Academy and is central to our ethos and values. BRIDGES can be seen in:

- the relationships we form and our everyday interactions
- the cohesiveness of our school and sixth form community
- our approach to teaching and learning
- the growth mindset language we use
- formal events such as assemblies and awards ceremonies
- the emphasis on student mentoring and coaching
- the value we place on enrichment, super-curricular activities and volunteering
- tutorial time
- break and lunch times.

KS5 students develop their learning power by experiencing and engaging with a wide range of learning activities, including Harkness learning, lectures, flipped learning and independent research. Harkness learning is intrinsic to our BRIDGES programme and it creates a culture of enquiry and collaborative discussion which goes way beyond the lesson.

The KS5 pastoral, Speakers', super-curricular and enrichment programmes also contribute towards students' personal growth and BRIDGES development. All KS5 students follow a tutorial programme delivered by the KS5 pastoral team that encompasses a programme of PSHE & SRE, internal and external speakers, and university preparation. This includes opportunities to volunteer both at INA and in the wider community through the Giveback programme and to organise and engage with visiting guest speakers. Engaging meaningfully with super curricular learning will support our students in becoming outstanding KS5 learners. It will ensure that they develop skills around independence, rigour of thinking and openness to new experiences.

The Student Leadership Team (SLT) support Year 10 students by acting as BRIDGES mentors. The 1:1 Diploma review meetings in January and May include an opportunity for each student to reflect upon their BRIDGES development. 'Clear evidence of BRIDGES development' is one of the nine categories that contribute to the INA Diploma award. BRIDGES development is also a regular item (at least half termly) at tutor mentoring sessions and is a key component of the UCAS process, including the writing the personal statement and interview practice.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the INA KS5 policies for Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Harkness, Super Curricular and Enrichment.

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