

# Values Guide for Schools

**What's important to you as a school?**

**Values are the things that are important to us as individuals, as members of our school community, and as part of the wider community that the school belongs to.**

World Values Day challenges us to think about our own values and the values held by the school community we belong to, and encourages us to act on those values. **This year our focus is on putting our values into action.** By putting them into action each and every day we will improve our own wellbeing, the wellbeing of our school and its wider community, and the wellbeing of the whole world.

This is the World Values Day call to action!

**World Values Day – 15th October 2020**

**[www.worldvaluesday.com](http://www.worldvaluesday.com)**

**#WorldValuesDay**

## 1. What are Values?

Values are the things that are important to us, the foundation of our lives. They guide our choices and behaviours and influence our emotions.

Values are what make us who we are. They are the compass guiding everything we do - our choices and our actions. When we lose touch with that compass, we can take the wrong turn. It's the same for our families, for our school communities, for the wider community around the school, and for society as a whole. Our values show us the way.

Values are at the heart of all schools and communities of every kind. They are the glue that binds them together. Values define their culture, the way they operate and the impact they have on their communities and the world. They are our motivators, our guides, and they keep us all focused and on track.

Values are immensely powerful. They underpin the collective wellbeing of the school and its wider community, and all the individuals within it.



## **2. Why are Values so important for schools?**

Every school community will inevitably be based on certain values. But often those values are not held completely consciously, and are often taken for granted and forgotten about.

If any organization or community is not clear about what values hold them together and motivate them to do what they do together, their wellbeing will suffer. They will fall prey to lack of cohesion, lack of direction, and lack of motivation. They will struggle to attract and retain members (staff and students), make good decisions, and agree effective priorities and goals.

School communities who don't consistently practice their values will be less able to stand the stresses and strains that affect any group of individuals who spend time with each other. Whether it's tackling external problems or internal disputes, or planning ahead, or getting things done - everything is more difficult without shared values to rely upon.

Individual members of the school community – teachers, governors, parents, pupils, or administrators – whose personal values are not in alignment with their experience at school, are likely to suffer from anxiety and stress, affecting their motivation, productivity, and mental health.

Communities that are clear about their values, where those values are aligned with their members' values, and where people make a consistent effort to practice those values, will tend to produce a culture which is collaborative and resilient and where members are well motivated, happy and productive.

### 3. Can Values really change the world?

We can all sometimes forget our values or just ignore them – often when we need them most. Then we find ourselves somewhere we really don't want to be. This is as true for organisations as it is for individuals.

But there is a wider impact when individuals and organisations forget their values. If those values are not lived to the full in our lives, at home, at work and in the community, then our communities won't live those values either and our individual and collective wellbeing will suffer. If our communities don't reflect our values, then the wider world won't reflect them either and its wellbeing will suffer. It won't be a world we want to live in, where we can be fulfilled and happy.

So if we want to change for the better our own lives, our families' lives, the organization we work for and the communities we live in, so ultimately changing the world itself, then we have to change the behaviours that currently create the problems in our world. And the only way to do that is for all of us to live our values to the full every day in everything we do.



#### **4. Our school doesn't have official Values. How do we go about identifying them?**

Here is one way to find your values and decide which are the most important ones *that you would like to see* in your school (these will not necessarily be the same ones that you see there now). Try to get as many of the school's staff as possible take part in this exercise. You could also consider involving at least some of the students and parents in this exercise too – this is a judgement for each school to make depending on factors such as the age of the students, the extent to which they have already done some thinking on values etc.

Each person taking part in the exercise should have a copy of the list on the next page and follow these simple instructions.

Reflect first about the activities you all normally take part in, and what it looks like when it goes well and what it looks like when it sometimes doesn't go so well.

Then look down the list and tick the box opposite the 10 words in the following table that best describe the values that you consider need to be reflected in your school to support its success.

Once you have selected 10, then you should next reduce these to your top 5. This two-step process will help you to appreciate how some values may be more essential to you than others. Then put the 5 values in order of importance from 1 to 5, with 1 being the value which is most important to you.

Collect the lists from everyone and by adding up the number of times a value is included in participants' "Top 5", you will discover the overall top 5 values that have been voted as being the most important values for the school. This way of identifying the school's core values should ensure that the school's values are aligned with those of its members, and that the members "buy into" the values of the school and really take them to heart.

## School Values

acceptance		creativity		initiative		respect	
accessibility		dependability		innovation		responsibility	
accountability		democracy		integrity		reward	
achievement		development				safety	
adaptability		diversity		justice		security	
appreciation		efficiency		kindness		sense of purpose	
authenticity		empowerment		leadership		service	
awareness		enthusiasm		learning		simplicity	
beauty		environmental awareness		listening		social responsibility	
calmness		equality		loyalty		success	
caution		ethics		making a difference		support	
caring		excellence		openness		teamwork	
celebration		fairness		order		trust	
challenge		financial stability		partnership		truth	
cleanliness		forgiveness		patience		variety	
coaching/mentoring		freedom		perseverance		wellbeing	
collaboration		fun		positivity		willingness	
commitment		growth		pride		wisdom	
community involvement		harmony		productivity		willingness	
competence		helpfulness		professionalism		add here*	
continuous improvement		inclusivity		quality		add here*	
contribution to society		independence		recognition		add here*	
cooperation		sharing		reliability		add here*	

\* If a value is important to you and it is not on the list, add it here.

The most important values: 1.....  
 2.....  
 3.....  
 4.....  
 5.....

## 5. Now put those values into action!

Try your best to involve staff and students, governors and parents, so that the whole school community is involved.

The process should involve two steps:

### **Staff session.**

Try to get together as many of the staff as possible and, if you can, some representative students and parents. Identify one of your school values that you all feel needs extra attention, and discuss how you can go about putting it more completely into action. You will need to devise a simple and practical plan of action to do this. Some ideas are given on the next page.

One way to do this is to use our **Values Challenge for Schools** which is a ready-to-use workshop which will help you to look at one of your school values and decide how you can put it into action more effectively across the whole school community. It is just one hour long, is simple to run, and we have had great feedback on it in previous years from all kinds of organisations, big and small. To get the Values Challenge for Schools free resource pack including a Facilitator Manual and set of slides to use in the session, go to [this page](#) of the World Values Day website and click the Take the Challenge button at the bottom of the page.

**Involve the students.** If you have not already done this, the next step will be to involve all the students in putting the value into action in the school community. If appropriate they can participate in the same action as the staff so that everyone in the school gets involved in the same activity.

Or they can be asked to come up with their own ideas for putting that value into practice – something challenging, creative, fun, something that can make a difference. There could be some sort of recognition for the best/most effective actions.

Finally, the students themselves can be asked to think about which actions worked the best, and why, and then that action can be repeated and become a way that the school regularly supports and interacts with its local community.

**Here are some ideas** that could be used to prompt both staff and students:

You could hold a **Values Day/ Values Week** where staff and students discuss values (this can be incorporated with planned autumn term topics) including how they can put them into action in school, at home and in the community.

**Starting the discussion** – you could kick-start discussion among the students by delivering an assembly around a particular value (the one chosen by the staff maybe). You could give examples about how they could put the value into action – for instance if the value is **Environmental Awareness, Teamwork, Responsibility, or Respect** (for the environment) the suggestion could involve picking up rubbish around the school or in a local litter black spot. They could adopt a local monument and keep it clean. They might also agree a plan to reduce their own use of single-use plastics at school and outside school.

If the value is **Creativity, or Making a Difference** or similar, they might like to help organise a “Values Fair” at the school with students and parents/carers bringing in cakes, biscuits and other prepared or fresh food and produce to be sold in aid of a local charity (or given to a local foodbank), and some fun activities with values theme are arranged.

Or if the value is **Caring** you could suggest or visit a retirement home and talk to residents or do a short performance of a song or skit, or read poems and short stories. Get them to come up with their own ideas.

## **6. Please share what you have done**

Please then **share** what you have done with us and with the world on social media, telling us about the value you chose, what action you decided to take, and how the action went by posting on our Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or Instagram using #WorldValuesDay and @ValuesDay or by emailing us at [info@worldvaluesday.com](mailto:info@worldvaluesday.com)

**Remember not to publish any photographs or personal information about children without receiving the appropriate parental permissions.**

Use words, photos, video clips. Whatever works best.

Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ValuesDay](http://www.facebook.com/ValuesDay)

Find us on Twitter [www.twitter.com/ValuesDay](http://www.twitter.com/ValuesDay)

Find us on Instagram [www.instagram.com/valuesday/](http://www.instagram.com/valuesday/)

Find us on YouTube <http://bit.ly/2uANxYp>

To help you do this you can download the [‘We Value’ template](#) at, fill in your chosen value and the action taken, and then use it in a group selfie. Share what you’ve done with the world!

**Let’s do this together!**



**Why not join other schools, groups, organisations,  
and individuals from all around the world in other  
World Values Day activities?**

**Please have a look at the many values-related events  
and activities that will be taking place from 1<sup>st</sup>  
October up to World Values Day  
on 15th October 2020 on our website  
[https://www.worldvaluesday.com/events-and-  
activities/](https://www.worldvaluesday.com/events-and-activities/)**

**Get involved!**

**#WorldValuesDay**

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