

## Parent reflective statement

Grow. Discover. Dream. As parents, we believe that the school's Vision Statement effectively encapsulates the hopes and aspirations that parents have for their children, and students have for themselves. It serves to inspire and guide all members of the Discovery College community, promoting a learning and working environment that strives towards universal acceptance and empowerment.

Guiding Statements are an essential element in the conscious evolution of institutional and individual values, beliefs and behaviours that reflect the underlying principles and intentions of founding bodies. As such, it is vital that they be thorough, clear, focused and attainable, and informed by the environment in which they seek to function. In our opinion, the learning and mission statements developed to reflect the core values of Discovery College meet all of these criteria, providing an excellent starting point from which to develop a school ethos and culture that benefits not only students and staff but also the wider community.

However meticulously crafted, no guiding statement is of value without effective and consistent implementation at every level of an organisation. A wide range of strategies are employed throughout the school in order to achieve this, and great efforts are made to ensure that the curriculum reflects and promotes key components of the foundational vision for Discovery College. It has been noted by a number of parties that this curricular integration is perhaps more effective during the earlier years, becoming less apparent as students move into later grades. It may be of value to review and re-assess ways in which this issue is addressed, to provide a more consistent approach throughout the education process.

Outside of the curricular setting, students are given many and diverse opportunities to contribute on both a local and global scale; CE, Action, CAS, MUN, No Boundaries, peer support and other programmes allow students of all ages to interact with one another and with the wider world. Our student body as a whole is respectful, helpful, committed and compassionate, suggesting that these measures are both appropriate and effective. A particularly moving example of the coherence and unity of our student community is the enthusiastic and joyful participation of all year groups in the school's annual Book Parade. It is clearly apparent that our 16-year-olds are as inspired by and invested in this event as our six-year-olds, and all efforts are greeted with encouragement and appreciation.

All schools face challenges, some which are universal and others that are more specific to particular circumstances. Our school benefits enormously from its prominent position in a supportive, affluent and tight-knit community which plays an enthusiastic role in the growth and development of our students. However, this fortuitous location also gives rise to a significant challenge: that of creating an environment that is able to welcome and embrace a diverse population. As an international school, we are fortunate to have a community composed of students, parents and staff from all over the world, resulting in a broad and enlightening global perspective. Further, students are exhorted to explore and respect the ideas and viewpoints of others, and to acknowledge and cite sources at a very early stage in their education.

However, whilst some scholarship places are available, financial constraints still present a considerable barrier to attending Discovery College for many families in Hong Kong, resulting in a student body that is largely homogeneous in socioeconomic terms. This limitation is recognised and acknowledged at all levels within the school and governing bodies, and extensive efforts are made to address it through exploration, discussion, education and community outreach.

A further limitation to the school achieving full diversity are the limited options for students in post-16 education. The school recognises this is an issue, and has begun to address it by offering a few students an alternative pathway of IB Courses, taking five rather than six of the IB subjects. The inclusion of more alternative pathways, particularly for students who want to specialise or pursue a more vocational route, may be beneficial and allow for much greater diversity in terms of academic achievement.

A more universal difficulty is posed by the ubiquitous presence of technology, internet access and social media in the lives of young people in today's society. Parental concerns regarding safety issues, academic interruptions, bullying, and exposure to inappropriate materials are often exacerbated by a lack of knowledge and familiarity on the part of older generations. At Discovery College, these challenges are met head-on and taken as an opportunity to teach and guide students in developing a well-rounded and thorough foundation in digital literacy. Specialist staff ensure that that this guidance is age appropriate, continuous and up-to-date.

Challenges notwithstanding, Discovery College is able to provide a dynamic, demanding and supportive educational and social environment which is strongly underpinned by the values, beliefs and principles on which it was founded.