



WANSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Character Education Policy

Person Responsible	Mrs H Martin
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Committee	Behaviour, Attitudes & Personal Development
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This policy is communicated by the following means	School Website

Glossary

UNICEF RRSA	UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award
Jubilee Character Framework	University of Birmingham's Character Framework

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Related Policies

This Policy should be used in reference with the following documents:

- School Behaviour Policy
- The Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- The Equality Policy.
- Educational Visits Policy.
- Safeguarding Policy.
- Learning and Teaching Policy.

1. Introduction and Rationale

In today's rapidly changing world, academic achievement alone is not sufficient to prepare young people for the challenges and responsibilities of adult life. Schools play a vital role not only in developing intellectual capabilities but also in nurturing the personal qualities that underpin responsible citizenship, emotional resilience, and ethical decision-making. This is where **character education** becomes essential.

At Wanstead High School, we believe education is not only about academic excellence but also about developing the whole person. We are committed to nurturing character so that our pupils become compassionate, resilient, and responsible citizens who contribute positively to society.

Character education is not an add-on to the curriculum—it is a central component of holistic education. It supports the development of the whole child by:

- **Promoting positive behaviour:** Pupils learn to make thoughtful choices, resolve conflicts peacefully, and treat others with kindness and fairness.
- **Enhancing academic engagement:** Research shows that pupils with strong character traits such as self-discipline and perseverance are more likely to succeed academically.
- **Building emotional intelligence:** Character education fosters self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, which are essential for mental health and interpersonal relationships.
- **Creating a safe and inclusive school culture:** When character values are embedded in the school ethos, pupils feel respected, valued, and connected to their community.
- **Preparing pupils for life beyond school:** Whether in the workplace, in families, or in civic life, character traits are crucial for collaboration, leadership, and ethical decision-making.

Benefits to Young People

The long-term benefits of character education for young people are profound and far-reaching:

- **Improved self-esteem and confidence:** Pupils who understand and live by strong values develop a clearer sense of identity and purpose.
- **Greater resilience:** Character education equips pupils with the tools to cope with adversity and bounce back from setbacks.
- **Stronger relationships:** Empathy, respect, and communication skills foster healthier friendships and reduce bullying and exclusion.
- **Increased civic engagement:** Pupils are more likely to contribute positively to their communities and take responsibility for their actions.
- **Better life outcomes:** Character traits such as grit, integrity, and responsibility are linked to success in higher education, employment, and personal fulfilment.

This policy aligns with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues'

Framework for Character Education in Schools

<https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/The-Jubilee-Centre-Framework-for-Character-Education-in-Schools.pdf>

2. Aims

‘We will provide high quality education with character: inspiring our young people, keeping them safe and preparing them fully for life in the modern world as active and considerate citizens’.

All school staff, school leaders, pupils and parents/carers have a key role and shared responsibility in promoting and sustaining the highest standards of behaviour and character. In partnership with parents and carers we aim to support pupils in the development of desirable behaviours and character traits which will support their success whilst at school and beyond, as they become adults.

Through our character education provision, we aim to:

- Equip pupils with the virtues necessary for personal growth, wellbeing, and success.
- Develop pupils’ intellectual, moral, civic, and performance virtues
- Encourage pupils to reflect on the kind of person they want to become and develop towards that.
- Enable pupils to make wise, ethical choices in their lives.
- Strengthen a culture of belonging, service, and leadership across the school.

3. Defining Character Education

Character education is all about helping children grow into kind, responsible, and thoughtful individuals. It focuses on developing positive personal traits—called virtues—such as honesty, respect, courage, and empathy.

These virtues guide how children feel, what motivates them, and how they behave. Character education isn’t just a school subject—it’s part of everyday life at home, in the classroom, and in the wider community. Through planned lessons and everyday experiences, children learn to understand what’s right, make good choices, and act with integrity. They begin to reflect on the kind of person they want to become and learn how to make wise decisions—even when faced with difficult choices.

The ultimate goal of character education is to help children develop practical wisdom—the ability to know what’s right and to do it, not just because they’re told to, but because they truly understand why it matters.

At its core, character education is embedded in the ethos and culture of the school. It is reflected in the way staff model behaviour, how pupils interact with one another, and the values promoted through the curriculum, assemblies, and extracurricular activities. Through consistent reinforcement and opportunities for reflection, Pupils learn to make ethical decisions, build healthy relationships, and understand the impact of their actions on others.

Character education is not a standalone subject but a whole-school commitment. It involves collaboration between staff, pupils, families, and the wider community to create an environment where character development is prioritised and celebrated. By fostering a shared understanding of what it means to be a person of good character, the school aims to prepare pupils not only for academic success but for life beyond the classroom as thoughtful, principled, and active citizens.

At Wanstead High School, this means:

- Character Caught: building character through school culture, ethos, role models, and relationships.
- Character Taught: embedding explicit teaching of character through the curriculum, assemblies, and PSHE.

- Character Sought: encouraging pupils to actively pursue their own character development through enrichment, leadership, and service opportunities

Each of these are pillars of implementation and are explained in more detail in Section 6.

4. Priority Virtues at Wanstead High School

The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education outlines a broad set of virtues under the following categories

- **Intellectual virtues: “How we think and learn”**

Intellectual virtues are traits that help us discern, think well, and pursue knowledge, truth, and understanding. They are not simply about being clever or having lots of information. They are habits of mind that guide us in how we think, reason, and learn. These virtues help pupils to *know the good* — forming the foundation for wise and ethical decisions. They are important for young people because:

- **They strengthen learning.** Curiosity and reflection help pupils engage deeply with subjects and enjoy discovery.
- **They prepare for wise choices.** Critical thinking and judgement guide pupils when faced with dilemmas or conflicting information (including online).
- **They develop independence.** Intellectual virtues help young people think for themselves, rather than simply following others.
- **They connect knowledge to character.** Knowledge alone is not enough — young people need the wisdom to apply it responsibly in real life.
- **They prepare pupils for life beyond school.** Intellectual virtues are highly valued in further education, work, and citizenship, where problem-solving and critical thinking are essential.

Intellectual virtues help us become thoughtful and independent lifelong learners.

Intellectual virtues: curiosity, critical thinking, reflection.

- **Moral virtues: “How we choose to act”**

Moral virtues are the character traits that enable us to act well in situations that require us to make a decision about what is right and what is wrong. Moral virtues are central to human flourishing — living a good life and contributing to the common good. For young people, they are particularly important because:

- **They guide decision-making.** Young people today face many choices about friendships, learning, behaviour, and digital life. Moral virtues help them act wisely and fairly.
- **They build trust and relationships.** Respect, honesty, and compassion allow young people to form healthy friendships and work positively with others.
- **They develop personal integrity.** Learning to do the right thing (even when no one is watching) helps pupils become reliable and principled individuals.
- **They prepare young people for society.** Civic life depends on people being just, fair, and considerate. Moral virtues prepare pupils to contribute positively to communities, workplaces, and democracy.

- **They connect to wellbeing.** Acting with compassion, gratitude, and respect supports positive mental health and self-respect, as well as empathy for others.

Moral virtues guide us to make good choices and be reliable and trustworthy people.

Moral virtues: compassion, honesty, integrity, respect.

- **Civic virtues: ‘How we give back and contribute to the communities we belong to’**

Civic virtues can be described as the character traits that enable people to be engaged, responsible citizens who contribute to the common good. They are about how we live together in community and society, recognising that we all have duties and responsibilities beyond ourselves. Civic virtues are essential for humans who want to thrive within a social, communal and democratic life

For young people, they matter because:

- **They prepare pupils for citizenship.** Young people learn how democracy, law, and community life depend on active, responsible participation.
- **They build a sense of belonging.** Civic virtues help pupils feel connected to their school, neighbourhood, and wider world, reducing isolation and fostering identity.
- **They encourage service and contribution.** By volunteering or helping others, young people learn that their actions can make a real difference.
- **They strengthen social responsibility.** Civic virtues guide young people to think not only about their own rights, but also their responsibilities to others.
- **They foster respect and tolerance.** Living in a diverse society requires civility, understanding, and cooperation; civic virtues help young people navigate differences constructively.

Civic virtues help young people contribute positively to their community and society. They are vital because they build responsibility, belonging, and active citizenship

Civic virtues: service, citizenship, neighbourliness.

- **Performance virtues ‘How we keep going’**

Sometimes called *enabling virtues*, these are the personal strengths that help us to manage ourselves effectively and enable us to engage fully with our moral, civic, and intellectual virtues. They are not about morality directly, but about the qualities that support us in reaching our potential and persevering in challenges. For young people, they are important because:

- **They build resilience and confidence.** Young people face setbacks and challenges; performance virtues help them to recover, adapt, and keep going.
- **They support learning and achievement.** Perseverance, focus, and self-discipline allow pupils to reach their academic and personal goals.
- **They strengthen collaboration.** Teamwork and leadership prepare pupils to work effectively with others in school, employment, and wider society.
- **They connect with employability.** Employers value skills like resilience, motivation, and communication — all rooted in performance virtues.

- **They enable moral and civic growth.** Moral courage needs perseverance; service needs commitment; curiosity needs self-motivation. Performance virtues make the others possible.

Performance virtues help you to work hard, persevere through challenges, succeed in learning, and prepare for adult life and work, while supporting moral and civic

Performance virtues: resilience, teamwork, leadership, determination

Although we aim to promote and provide opportunities for pupils to engage with and develop each of them. In, 2023, the school community collectively identified five ‘Wanstead Character Virtues’ which are a priority for us as a school community. They inform our shared identity and are virtues which all members of the community, adult and young person, aspire to each day.

Our character virtues are:

- **Integrity**
- **Curiosity**
- **Respect**
- **Service**
- **Teamwork**

5. Wanstead Virtues Explained

- **Integrity**

To have integrity, is to be honest, consistent, and true to your values. A person with integrity acts the same way in private as they do in public, even when no one is watching. They keep their promises, take responsibility, and do the right thing because it is right — not for reward or recognition.

We explain to pupils that it is having and demonstrating integrity is.... being honest and staying true to your values. It’s about doing the right thing — even when no one is watching.

- **Curiosity**

Curiosity is having a genuine desire to explore, ask questions, and learn more about the world. Curiosity drives us to go beyond the surface, to wonder “why” and “how,” and to look for new knowledge and experiences.

We explain to pupils that curiosity isthe habit of wanting to learn and ask questions. It makes us explore new ideas, think more deeply, and enjoy discovering the world around us.

- **Respect**

Respect is one of the traits that helps us to act well towards other people. To show respect means recognising the dignity, rights, and feelings of others and treating them fairly, regardless of differences. It involves kindness, tolerance, and empathy, but also the ability to set healthy boundaries and value oneself.

Respect isn’t just about manners; it is about valuing people as human beings and living in ways that build trust and harmony.

We explain to pupils that having and showing respect for others means..... treating people fairly, valuing their feelings and differences, and acting with kindness and fairness — just as you would want others to treat you.

- **Service**

Service is a civic virtue – one of the traits that enables us to be active, responsible citizens who contribute to the common good. To practise service means to put others before yourself by offering time, effort, or skills to benefit individuals, the school, the community, or society as a whole. It is about more than charity; it’s about a commitment to making a positive difference.

We explain to pupils that showing service means..... helping others and giving your time and effort to make a difference. It’s about contributing to your school, community, and the wider world for the good of everyone.

- **Teamwork**

Teamwork is a performance virtue – one of the strengths that enable us to work hard, persevere, and help other virtues to flourish. It means being able to cooperate, communicate, and contribute effectively with others towards a shared goal. Teamwork is not just about dividing tasks — it’s about listening, respecting different viewpoints, supporting one another, and celebrating collective success.

We explain to pupils that.... they are a valued member of the ‘Wanstead High School Team’ they also belong to their house and tutor team. Teamwork means working well with others by sharing ideas, listening, and supporting each other to reach a common goal.

6. Implementation

There are three pillars to the implementation of our character education curriculum, **character caught, character taught and character sought.**

- **Character Caught – Ethos and Relationships**

Character is *caught* through the ethos, culture, and relationships in school. Pupils absorb virtues from the environment, role models, and daily practices. Caught, refers to the indirect, implicit, and ambient ways that virtue is instilled in pupils through the environment, relationships, and culture of the school—not through explicit instruction.

Character caught is about **what is lived, what is modelled, and what is normalised** in a school community. Character is, in many ways, “caught” rather than “taught.”

Character caught includes:

Role-modelling

- Teachers, leaders, administrative staff, support staff—everyone in the school community—act as exemplars of virtue (honesty, respect, kindness, resilience, etc.).
- Pupils observe how adults behave, especially in challenging or “ordinary” moments, and internalise these behaviours. As such we ask that our staff are kind, calm and consistent.

School ethos, culture, and climate

- The tone, expectations, rituals, traditions, and norms of a school send messages about what is valued.
- These include everyday interactions, how staff and pupils treat one another, how conflicts are handled, and how successes and failures are acknowledged.
- At Wanstead we ask pupils to Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Responsible.
- Our school virtues are Integrity, Curiosity, Respect, Service and Teamwork and these virtues are displayed across our school environment.

Social Norms and Habit formation

- At Wanstead we believe that virtues and dispositions can spread through the relational dynamics of a school.
- At Wanstead high we promote the idea that over time, repeated exposure to virtuous behaviour in the school context helps pupils develop habits of character. Through consistent “caught” experiences, virtue becomes more likely to become second nature.
- We expect staff and pupils to demonstrate respect, integrity and cooperation, when these virtues are the norm in interactions, these become more natural for pupils to adopt.

Expected behaviour structures

- At Wanstead we place great value on rules, routines, policies and pastoral systems. Our responses to both positive and undesirable behaviour all contribute to what is implicitly taught by the school environment and this is why consistency is so important.
- When a school consistently acts with fairness, accountability, and care, pupils will “catch” those patterns.

• Character Taught – Curriculum and Learning

Character is *taught* to the intentional, explicit educational experiences designed to develop pupils’ virtues.

At Wanstead High we embed character education explicitly through Personal Development curriculum, which is taught fortnightly in KS3, Citizenship. Different virtues and the exploration of character are also explored across different curriculum subjects, and this is currently being mapped out and will be published once this has finished at the end of the academic year.

We ask Heads of Departments and teachers to explicitly identify opportunities within subject areas (e.g. Resilience in PE, integrity in history, curiosity in science). Across the curriculum we use stories, debates, dilemmas, and current events to explore virtues.

Our assemblies are planned out at the beginning of each academic and are used to explore various national awareness days and weeks, school expectations but also virtues. Assemblies are an opportunity for shared learning and collective reflection; each year group has a weekly assembly which focuses on key character themes.

Character taught includes:

Explicit Teaching

- Deliberate lessons, workshops and assemblies focused on character, virtue, and moral reasoning, Citizenship, ethics discussions and moral dilemmas.
- Vocabulary development, equipping pupils with the right language to talk about virtue (e.g. integrity, respect, curiosity).
- Giving knowledge about virtues—what they are, why they matter, how they look in practice.

Embedded in Curriculum

- Integrating character-related themes within subject lessons (history, science, literature) so that virtues are not “extra” but part of deep learning.
- Using subject content to pose virtue-relevant questions or situations.

Guided Discussion and Reflection

- Classroom dialogue, Socratic questioning, debate on morality, case studies, ethical dilemmas.
- Encouraging pupils to reflect on choices, values, consequences, and their own behaviour.

Skills and Dispositions

- Teaching reasoning, deliberation, self-regulation, empathy, perspective-taking.
- Helping pupils to deliberate well, not just know “what is right.”

Scaffolding Virtue Development

- Starting with more structured support and gradually enabling pupils to act more autonomously in virtuous ways.
- Building from external/tracked tasks into intrinsic motivation.

● **Character Sought – Opportunities and Enrichment**

Character is *sought* by pupils themselves through their own agency. It refers to the active and voluntary pursuit by pupils as they take up the various practical opportunities offered by the school to practise and engage in virtues. — a kind of character education from within.

At Wanstead High school a range of pupil leadership opportunities are offered such as the school council, prefect system, pupil helpers, phone monitors and librarians. Each pupil is encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities, trips, and residential which take place and are advertised across the year.

As a school we are committed to provide opportunities for social action, volunteering, and service projects within the community. We enable pupils to reflect on their character journey through journals, portfolios, or tutor discussions. Character sought is about pupils becoming agents in their own moral development, moving from habit and external influence to internal commitment.

Character sought is:

- **Voluntary and demonstrates reflective commitment**
 - Pupils choose, reflect upon, and direct their own character growth.
 - They don't passively absorb virtues but *seek* to become better people. This involves self-reflection, purpose-setting, and personal moral goals.
- **Setting character goals and commitments**
 - Pupils may decide which virtues they want to strengthen, then plan concrete steps to develop those virtues over time.
- **Maturing autonomy**
 - As pupils grow, "sought" character becomes more operational: they increasingly take responsibility for their moral life, not relying solely on external guidance.
- **Integration with relationships and community**
 - The virtue journey is not purely individual. Pupils choose associations, friendships, and service roles that help them grow.
 - They seek and choose environments that support virtuous character. This demonstrates what we refer to as practical wisdom (**phronesis**)
 - "Character sought" is about not just doing virtuous actions but choosing them wisely. Pupils aim to cultivate the capacity to deliberate well — to know *why* a virtue matters and to apply it appropriately.
- **Freedom and internal motivation**
 - Crucially, character sought requires that virtue be chosen freely rather than forced.
 - The voluntary dimension gives moral value to virtue.

7. The Wanstead House System

At Wanstead we have a House System comprised of eight house communities which run vertically across the school from Year 7 to Year 11. In each year group, one tutor group belongs to each of the following houses.

1. Mallard House
2. Wren House
3. Brambling House
4. Kestrel House
5. Skylark House
6. Redpoll House

Our house system is still in its infancy but serves as a powerful framework to channel character education opportunities. The house system is more than just a grouping mechanism—it's a **living framework** through which character education at Wanstead High School is actively practiced, experienced, and celebrated.

By embedding character development into the fabric of our house activities, we will create a more cohesive, values-driven culture that supports both personal growth and community spirit.

Character education initiatives—such as service projects, wellbeing programs, and themed weeks (e.g., Respect Week)—are organised and delivered through the house system. This ensures **broad participation** and gives pupils a sense of ownership and belonging.

The house system benefits pupils and the school community by promoting:

1. Shared Values and Identity

Each house has its own identity, motto, and values—these align with the school's character education virtues. This creates a **consistent and visible structure** through which character traits can be modelled, celebrated, and reinforced.

2. Opportunities for Leadership and Responsibility

Character education thrives when pupils are given real responsibilities. Our house system further strengthens our pupil leadership offer pathways, pupils can take on leadership roles linked to house competitions and activities (e.g., house captains, mentors, event organisers). These roles provide practical contexts for developing character.

3. Vertical Integration and Peer Mentoring

The house system activities and competitions include purposeful opportunities for pupils from different age groups to work alongside together as a team and community towards a common goal, this fosters positive **cross-age relationships**. Older pupils mentor younger ones, model positive behaviour and reinforce character values like **kindness, respect, and cooperation**. This vertical integration supports a whole school culture of mutual support and learning.

4. Healthy Competition and Collaboration

House competitions—whether academic, athletic, or artistic—encourage **teamwork, resilience, and fair play**. These events are ideal platforms for teaching character in action, especially when emphasis is placed on effort, sportsmanship, and collaboration rather than just winning.

5. Recognition and Celebration of Character

The house system provides a structured way to **recognize and reward character-based achievements**. For example, pupils earn house points for acts of kindness, leadership, or community service. This reinforces positive behaviour and helps embed character education into daily school life.

8. The Rights Respecting Award

We recognise that character is not taught in isolation but cultivated through meaningful experiences, relationships, and structures within the school. The second framework which supports our character education vision and offer is the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (**RRSA**).

The RRSA, developed by UNICEF UK, complements our character education approach as we embed the principles of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** into our curriculum, policies, and daily practices.

It promotes a rights-based culture that directly supports character development in the following ways:

- **Respect and empathy:** By learning about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, pupils learn to understand and respect the rights of others, fostering a sense of fairness, compassion and reducing prejudice.
- **Responsibility and civic engagement:** The award encourages pupils to see themselves as rights-holders and advocates for fairness, both locally and globally, promoting active citizenship and a sense of responsibility beyond the school gates.
- **Moral and ethical understanding:** Education about rights helps pupils develop a deeper understanding of moral principles, encouraging ethical reasoning and reflection, as they learn that their rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible.
- **Well-being and Self-esteem:** A rights-respecting environment enhances pupil well-being, voice, and empowerment, contributing to a safe and supportive school climate.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** The curriculum incorporates diverse perspectives and materials, helping pupils appreciate different cultures, identities, and viewpoints.

The RRSA is structured in three progressive stages—Bronze (Rights Committed), Silver (Rights Aware), and Gold (Rights Respecting)—and represents a **whole-school journey** involving pupils’ staff, and the wider community.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Oversight: Ensure character education is a core part of the school’s vision and strategic development. • Support and Challenge: Monitor the implementation and impact of character education initiatives, asking critical questions to ensure continuous improvement. • Policy Alignment: Ensure school policies reflect and reinforce character values, including safeguarding, behaviour, and curriculum policies. • Community Engagement: Promote the school’s character education ethos within the wider community and support partnerships that enhance character development.
Deputy Headteacher – Character Education Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and Leadership: Lead the development of a whole-school character education strategy that aligns with the school’s ethos and values. • Professional Development: Provide staff with training and resources to confidently deliver character education and model character traits. • Lead Monitoring and Evaluation: Track progress and impact through pupil voice, staff feedback, and data on behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement. • Lead and Co-ordinate Integration Across School Life: Ensure character education is embedded in teaching, pastoral care, assemblies, enrichment activities, and behaviour systems.
Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration Across School Life: Ensure character education is embedded in teaching, pastoral care, assemblies, enrichment activities, and behaviour systems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation: Track progress and impact through pupil voice, staff feedback, and data on behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement.
Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate character education into subject-specific curricula, identifying opportunities to explore values, ethics, and personal development. • Support departmental staff in modelling and reinforcing character traits through teaching and learning. • Monitor and evaluate the impact of character education within their subject area. • Collaborate with other departments to promote cross-curricular character initiatives.
Heads of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on the pastoral development of pupils within their year group, ensuring character education is embedded in assemblies, tutor time, and interventions. • Monitor pupil behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement, using data to support character development. • Support tutors and pastoral staff in delivering consistent messages around values and expectations. • Facilitate pupil voice opportunities and encourage reflection on personal growth.
All School Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role Modelling: Demonstrate positive character traits in interactions with pupils, colleagues, and the wider school community. • Curriculum Integration: Embed character education into subject teaching, using opportunities to explore values, ethics, and personal development. • Pastoral Support: Guide pupils in reflecting on their behaviour, choices, and growth, supporting them to develop resilience, empathy, and responsibility. • Celebration and Recognition: Acknowledge and reward character development through praise, house points, and other recognition systems.
Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Support: Reinforce character values at home through conversations, expectations, and modelling positive behaviour. • Engagement with School Initiatives: Participate in appropriate character education events, workshops, and communications to stay informed and involved. • Partnership with Staff: Collaborate with teachers and leaders to support pupils' character development, wellbeing, and personal growth. • Celebration of Progress: Encourage and celebrate children's efforts and achievements in character development, both in and out of school.
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Engagement: Participate in character-building opportunities such as leadership roles, house activities, service projects, and RRSA initiatives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Reflection: Reflect on personal growth, values, and behaviour, setting goals for improvement and development. • Positive Contribution: Uphold the school’s values in daily interactions, contributing to a respectful, inclusive, and supportive school environment. • Advocacy and Voice: Use their voice to promote fairness, inclusion, and rights, both within school and in the wider community.
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10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Character education and development will be reviewed through the following activities and mechanisms:

1. Strategic Oversight

- Governors will receive regular reports from the Headteacher and SLT on character education initiatives, progress against strategic goals, and pupil outcomes.
- Governors will review relevant policies and ensure character education is reflected in school improvement planning.

2. Leadership Monitoring

- The Deputy Head and relevant senior leaders will oversee the integration of character education across curriculum, pastoral systems, and enrichment activities.
- Regular audits and reviews will be conducted to assess how character is reflected in teaching, behaviour, and school culture.

3. Departmental and Pastoral Evaluation

- Heads of Department will monitor how character education is embedded in subject teaching, including through schemes of work, lesson observations, and student work.
- Heads of Year will track pupil engagement, behaviour, and wellbeing data to identify trends and areas for development in character education.
- Both roles will contribute to annual reviews and share best practice across teams.

4. Staff Feedback and Development

- Staff will be surveyed annually to assess confidence, understanding, and effectiveness in delivering character education.
- CPD needs will be identified and addressed to ensure staff are equipped to model and teach character effectively.

5. Pupil Voice and Engagement

- Pupils will be given regular opportunities to reflect on their character development through tutor time, assemblies, and surveys.
- Focus groups and school council discussions will be used to gather qualitative feedback on the impact of character education.

- Pupil participation in leadership roles, house activities, and RRSA initiatives will be tracked and celebrated.

6. Parent and Carer Voice

- Parents/carers will be invited to provide feedback through surveys and events, helping to evaluate the home-school partnership in character development.

The school will use a range of indicators to evaluate impact, including:

- Behaviour and exclusion data
- Attendance and punctuality
- Wellbeing and safeguarding reports
- Participation in enrichment and leadership activities
- Progress through RRSA stages
- House point and reward systems linked to character traits

Appendix 1 Wanstead High School – Character Awards Programme

Pupils will have the opportunity to earn certificates in our five priority virtues. We encourage pupils to complete and seek certification for each Wanstead Virtue as they move from Year 7 to Year 9.

Each certificate requires successful completion of at least 5 activities – both mandatory activities and three from the suggested list or approved alternatives. Evidence will be collected through reflections, tutor/teacher signoffs, or project submissions which will be signed off by the pupil’s Head of Year and Senior Leader Link.

INTEGRITY - Certificate awarded for consistently demonstrating honesty, fairness, and responsibility.

Certificate Activities and Evidence

Mandatory: complete both

- **Punctuality Challenge** – Demonstrate your commitment to learning and responsibility, maintain 100% punctuality to lessons for a full term. **Evidence:** Attendance Cert
- **Role Model Research** - Choose a famous person/local person known for integrity (e.g. a leader/activist/ sports figure). Write or record a short profile explaining what choices or actions showed their integrity. **Evidence:** 2 sides of A4 pages write up/PPT or 5-minute video presentation

Suggested: choose and complete three from the list below

- **Integrity in Action Poster** - Express understanding of integrity through art and message. Design a poster that shows what integrity looks like in school, at home, or online. **Evidence:** Poster with a brief explanation (100–250 words).
- **Integrity Interview** - Learn how integrity guides real decisions. Interview a family member, teacher, or community member about a time they had to make a difficult but honest choice. **Evidence:** Written Summary of the interview and what you learned about how integrity guides a person’s actions
- **Digital Integrity Pledge** - Show understanding of integrity in the digital world. Create and sign a “Digital Integrity Pledge” about how you will act online (e.g., not plagiarizing, being respectful, telling the truth). **Evidence:** Pledge Design with signature and brief written explanation – 1 paragraph
- **Integrity in Fiction** - Read a story (from English class or your choice) where a character faces a moral choice. Explain in writing or a short talk how the character showed or failed to show integrity. Include a reflection on what your advice would be to that character. **Evidence:** Written reflection or oral/ppt presentation
- **The Honesty and Integrity Challenge** - Recognise how personal experiences shape moral courage. Keep a short daily journal for one week recording moments when you demonstrated honesty and integrity, even when it was hard. Also include example of when you have been a role model to others. **Evidence:** Submit daily journal entries or a written reflection.

CURIOSITY - Certificate awarded for enthusiasm to explore, learn, and think critically.

Certificate Activities and Evidence Required

Mandatory: complete both

- **Curious About Careers** - Discover how curiosity can guide learning and future ambitions by researching a career you know little about but find interesting. **Evidence:** Short presentation or one-page write-up on what you found out and what you found most surprising.
- **Try Something New Challenge** - Step outside your comfort zone to explore something new, choose an activity, hobby, or subject area you've never tried before (e.g., cooking a new recipe, coding, learning a few words in a new language). **Evidence:** Written Reflection with photos or journal entry about what you tried, how it felt, and what you learned. **Evidence:** Written reflection or blog with drawings/photos of the visit

Suggested: choose and complete three from the list below

- **Cultural Explorer** – visit a museum, gallery, or cultural event and produce a creative response (poster, blog, artwork) with a short-written explanation. **Evidence:** Poster and a 500-word explanation of what you learned – written or oral.
- **“I Wonder Why...” Poster** - Turn a question into a mini exploration project. Create a colourful poster that starts with “I wonder why...” or “How does...” and explore the answer through drawings, facts, or photos. **Evidence:** Interview questions, summary of answers and a reflection of what you learned and how curiosity helped them.
- **Curiosity Interview** - Learn how curiosity leads to learning or success in real life. Interview a teacher, parent, or community member about something they're passionate or curious about. **Evidence:** Sketch or photo plus a list of your questions and research findings written/presented in your own words.
- **Curiosity in Nature** - Develop observational curiosity. Go outside (school grounds, garden, or park) and observe something in nature closely — plants, insects, clouds, etc. Ask at least 5 questions about what you see and research the answers. **Evidence:** Sketch or photo plus a list of your questions and research findings written/presented in your own words.
- **Curiosity Story Project** - Express curiosity creatively. Create a short story or poem showing a character or scene that celebrates curiosity — exploring, discovering, or inventing. **Evidence:** Written piece with a short artist's statement about how it reflects their curiosity.
- **Curiosity Reading Quest** - Learn through exploration of new ideas. Read a nonfiction book, magazine or article about a topic you've never studied before. **Evidence:** Write a book review or PPT highlighting three new things you learned.

RESPECT - Certificate awarded for showing kindness, tolerance, and valuing others.

Certificate Activities and Evidence Required

Mandatory: complete both

- **Cultural Respect Research** - To understand and appreciate how respect is shown in different cultures. Research a culture different from your own and present how respect is demonstrated in that culture. **Evidence:** Submit a visual presentation or written report with images
- **Community Kindness Project** - To demonstrate respect through service and kindness in school, at home and in your community. Over two weeks, carry out a small but intentional act of kindness each day (e.g., helping a neighbour, picking up litter, writing positive notes, helping a friend with homework). **Evidence:** Submit a written reflection of the two weeks describing each action and its impact on others and yourself.

Suggested: choose and complete three from the list below

- **Respectful Debate** -To practice respectful communication and listening during disagreements. Use either a debate in class or join up with some friends/peers to organise/hold a debate on an issue important to you (with the help of an adult). Research and prepare for the debate including agreed rules and language. **Evidence:** Submit a reflection on what you learned about respectful disagreement, or a video of the debate.
- **Respect Poster Design** - To creatively promote the value of respect in the school or community. Design a poster which can be reproduced and published around the school with a message or slogan that encourages respectful behaviour. **Evidence:** Submit a photo or scan of the completed poster.
- **Thank You/Gratitude Letter** - To express appreciation and recognize respectful qualities in others. Write a letter to someone you respect, explaining why you admire them and how they've influenced you. **Evidence:** Submit a copy of the letter (with permission/anonymised if it's personal)
- **Respect in Media** - To identify and analyse respectful and disrespectful behaviours in media. Watch and review a range of current films, Tv show, or Magazines that are popular with your peers. Identify examples of respect and disrespect. Reflect on the consequences and influences of each on young people. **Evidence:** Submit a review or reflection (written, audio, or video) with specific examples.
- **Anti-Bullying Ambassador/Role Model** – Respect in action participate in or lead on an anti-bullying initiative or campaigns with an adult/group of peers. **Evidence:** Staff testimony and evidence of the initiative e.g. posters/photos/Ppt
- **Respect in Sport** – Show your understanding of how respect is shown in a specific context by researching and writing about how respect is demonstrated in at least two different sports. Explain how this is linked to the rules of the sport, why it is important, how it contributes positively to the sport and any consequences when it is not demonstrated for individuals but also the sport. **Evidence:** Written write up or VLOG of your findings for each sport – 500-800 words including a reflection on how you can show your learning in the sport you play.

SERVICE - Certificate awarded for contributing to the school, local community or a global citizenship initiative

Certificate Activities and Evidence Required

Mandatory: complete both

- **Volunteering** – Complete acts of service and commit at least 5 hours to a service activity inside or outside school (e.g., helping in the library, Litter picks, foodbank, community centre). **Evidence:** A written reflection of what you did, its impact on others and its impact on you. Annotated photos of some of the activities.
- **Global Awareness Project** – research and present on a global issue (e.g., poverty, climate change, human rights) and propose ways to help. You may ask your form tutor if you can present in tutor time or present the finished project to your family. **Evidence:** Write up of the global issue with your suggestions on how you as an individual could support the cause and how the school community could contribute. Photos/video of you presenting it.

Suggested: choose and complete three from the list below

- **Service Through Creativity** - Use your talents to bring joy, help or inspire others. Create something (e.g., artwork, poem, music, craft) and gift it to someone who could use encouragement or appreciation. You could also use your talent to teach or entertain other e.g. play piano, sing or present in assembly/school event/ event outside of school. Help a teacher with a club or class by supporting younger pupils. **Evidence:** Submit a photo or copy of your creation and a short explanation of who received it and why/ Photo of your contribution/support/mentoring others with brief explanation of what you did, how it helped others and how it made you feel.
- **Helping at Home** - To serve your family by taking initiative and helping with household responsibilities. Take on extra chores or help a family member with a task for one week. **Evidence:** Submit a checklist signed by a parent or guardian, along with a short reflection on what you learned.
- **Fundraising for a Cause** - Contribute to a cause that benefits others in need. Plan or participate in a small fundraising activity (e.g., bake sale, sponsored walk, charity event). **Evidence:** Submit a short-written summary of the event, photos, and the amount raised or donated.
- **Organise a Donation Drive** - To support others by collecting and donating items they need. With a group of peers/an adult, organise a small drive to collect food, clothes, books, or toys for a local charity or shelter. **Evidence:** Submit a report with photos of the collection process and a note from the organization receiving the donation.
- **Service Reflection Presentation** - To reflect on your service experiences and inspire others. Create a short presentation (poster, slideshow, or video) about what you did, what you learned, and why service matters. **Evidence:** Submit your presentation and, if possible, present it to your class or group.

TEAMWORK - Certificate awarded for collaboration, cooperation, and leadership within groups.

Mandatory: complete both

- **Team Challenge Day** - experience collaboration and shared responsibility. Participate in a team-based challenge (e.g., Sports Day, Duke of Edinburgh, Year Group Adventure Challenge Days). **Evidence:** Submit a group photo and a short reflection on how your team worked together and what you learned.
- **Teamwork Poster Campaign** - To promote the value of teamwork in your school. Design a poster or digital graphic in a small group that encourages teamwork and explains why it matters within a school setting and beyond. **Evidence:** Submit the poster and a short explanation of how the group collaborated on the design.

Suggested: choose and complete three from the list below

- **Team Sports/Performing Arts Reflection** - To understand the importance of roles and cooperation in sports/Performing Arts events. Participate in a team sport or physical performance activity – dance/drama and reflect on how your team communicated and supported each other. **Evidence:** Submit a reflection or video diary describing your role and how the team worked together.
- **Leadership in Action** – Organise a small group activity e.g. run a quiz, lead a form-time discussion/activity or lead/support at a larger whole school event. **Evidence:** Staff testimony and submit a group photo and a short reflection on how your team worked together and what you learned.
- **Teamwork in the Classroom** - To practice teamwork in an academic setting. Complete a group project or presentation in a subject of your choice, ensuring all members contribute. **Evidence:** Submit the project or a photo of the presentation, along with a group reflection on how tasks were shared.
- **Group Art Project** - To create something meaningful through shared effort and creativity. Work with a group to create a mural, collage, or large poster that represents teamwork. **Evidence:** Submit a photo of the final artwork and a group-written explanation of each person's contribution.
- **Teamwork Interview** - To learn from others who use teamwork in real life. Interview someone who works in a team (e.g., a coach, nurse, firefighter, or businessperson) about how they collaborate with others. **Evidence:** Submit a summary of the interview and what you learned about teamwork and how you intend to apply it in everyday life.

Programme Delivery

- Pupils choose which certificate(s) to pursue.
- Evidence is collected in a Character Portfolio (could be digital).
- Heads of Year sign off activities.
- Certificates are awarded at assemblies, with commendations logged on school records.
- Pupils completing all five certificates earn a "Character Excellence Award".

Appendix 2 Character Achievement and Recognition Points

To recognise and reward pupils' achievements linked to the development of key character virtues, encouraging a culture of excellence, kindness, responsibility, and respect in line with the school's vision and values.

These achievements are organised by the four categories of virtues as outlined by the Jubilee Character Framework.

Civic and Moral Virtues - Focus: Ethical behaviour, integrity, respect, responsibility, kindness, Respect for others, teamwork, social responsibility, community engagement, democratic participation, and tolerance.

Virtue	Achievement Type	Description e.g. - not exhaustive, examples give to promote shared u	Reward Points
Integrity	Honesty in academic and social settings	Demonstrating truthfulness and fairness, Respect for rules and expectations – doing the right thing	3
Respect	Respectful behaviour towards all	Showing politeness, valuing others' views,	3
Responsibility	Attendance and Punctuality, Uniform	100% Attendance, Improved attendance, 100% punctuality, Improved punctuality, Uniform	3
Kindness	Acts of kindness and empathy	Helping peers, showing compassion, Helping and supporting others, demonstrating compassion	3
Courage	Standing up for what is right	Reporting bullying, challenging injustice, showing bravery in defending others or making difficult moral choices	3
Mutual Respect	Demonstrating respect for others. Valuing diversity and opinions	Acting with kindness and fairness towards all, promoting equality. Valuing diversity and opinions	3
Service	Volunteering and community involvement	Participating in activities that improve the school or local community	3

Intellectual Virtues - Focus: Curiosity, perseverance, creativity, critical thinking

Virtue	Achievement Type	Description	Reward Points
Curiosity	Asking insightful questions and independent research	Demonstrating eagerness to learn	2
Perseverance	Overcoming academic challenges	Persisting with difficult tasks or subjects	2
Creativity	Using imagination and innovation in work	Producing original ideas or projects	2
Critical Thinking	Offering reasoned views on moral/ethical issues	Engaging thoughtfully with complex topics. Applying reasoned judgement to solve problems	2
Reflectiveness	Reflecting on learning and experiences	Thinking deeply about one's own beliefs, values, and learning journey	3

Performance Virtues - Focus: Resilience, discipline, meeting targets and goals, leadership, excellence, and perseverance.

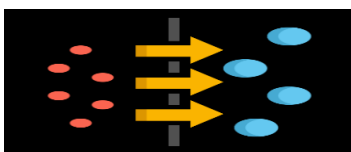
Virtue	Achievement Type	Description	Reward Points
Resilience	Persisting despite setbacks	Continuing effort despite difficulties or failures	
Excellence	Outstanding achievement	Demonstrating high performance or significant improvement	
Teamwork	Collaborating effectively	Working well with others in various groups and social settings	
Practical Wisdom	Applying knowledge wisely	Making thoughtful decisions based on experience and reflection	

Appendix 3 Character Curriculum Overview – Caught, Taught and Sought

Character Element	Description	How Delivered at Wanstead High School	Examples
Character Taught	Explicit teaching of character virtues through the curriculum and planned activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Curriculum – Routines, Habits and Expectations • Personal Development and Character lessons taught fortnightly Year 7 – 9 - embedding moral, civic, intellectual, and performance virtues • Weekly Assemblies focused on specific virtues and character themes • Tutor time discussions and reflective activities • Curriculum integration across subjects to teach virtues and practical wisdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons on equality and diversity Assemblies on service and Respect • English lessons encouraging critical thinking and creativity • History lessons exploring significant individuals who have displayed specific virtues • Practical Wisdom taught through case studies and dilemmas in PD, Classics and Sociology
Character Caught	Character development through the school environment, role models, and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff modelling virtues such as respect, responsibility, and practical wisdom • Positive behaviour systems reinforcing Ready, Respectful, Responsible ethos • Peer mentoring and leadership roles • School policies promoting inclusivity, fairness, and mutual respect e.g. Antibullying • School Environment – Wanstead Walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers demonstrating integrity and fairness in classroom management • Pupil leaders showing leadership and teamwork Character Achievement rewarding pupils showing kindness and empathy • Staff and pupil interactions reflecting mutual respect and tolerance

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School History and virtues display • Wanstead Hero's displays • Wanstead Culture Week and Day
Character Sought	Opportunities and challenges designed to encourage pupils to actively demonstrate and develop virtues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular activities including sports, arts, and volunteering • Community engagement projects and charity work • School council and democratic participation • Personal goal-setting and reflective practice encouraged across all year groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils volunteering in Christmas box appeal and House Local and National Charities • Interhouse Sports Competitions promoting resilience and teamwork • Teambuilding Adventure Days Year 7 – 9 • Curriculum Visits e.g. Paris • Student council elections and debates fostering democratic engagement • Pupils participating in the Character Awards Programme

Appendix 4 Getting the Balance Right - The Importance of all Three Pillars



Why “Character Caught”?

1. Caught bridges theory and practice

Even the best character-lessons (taught) may not “stick” unless the school’s lived culture supports them. “Caught” character ensures virtues are not just abstract concepts but part of a pupil’s lived experience

2. Caught helps us to reach all pupils

Some students may struggle with explicit moral reasoning or reflection. But through exposure to virtue in relationships and culture, they can absorb positive dispositions even without direct instruction.

3. Caught promotes authenticity and credibility

Pupils are more likely to trust and internalise moral values when they see adults consistently live them out, even in difficult circumstances. If staff say “respect” but behave unfairly, the message is undermined.

4. Caught is integral to habit formation

Virtue is best developed through repeated practice and exposure. Character caught provides the environmental context for virtues to be practised implicitly and gradually become habitual.

5. Caught underpins a virtuous environment

When virtues are “caught,” the whole school shifts: peer culture, expectations, and norms evolve in support of character development rather than undermining it.

6. Caught supports emotional and relational development

Moral values are not just intellectual ideas; they also live in our relationships. Character caught helps pupils see virtues in relational contexts—empathy, trust, justice, care.

7. Caught leads to sustainability and consistency

Character education that depends only on taught character is vulnerable to gaps. Caught character helps sustain and reinforce virtues across years and cohort.

Why “Character Taught”?

1. Taught closes the gap between awareness and action

Some pupils may recognise virtues in abstract but lack clarity or confidence to apply them in real life. Teaching bridges that gap.

2. Taught provides a common language

Pupils and staff can discuss character, virtue, moral dilemmas more precisely when vocabulary is taught.

3. Taught supports the development of moral reasoning

It is not enough to act; young people need to understand *why* and *how* to act. Taught character supports ethical thinking.

4. Taught promotes equity

Not all pupils pick up virtue implicitly or through role models. Explicit teaching helps reach all students.

5. Taught reinforces and supports “caught” and “sought” approaches

When a school’s culture (caught) and pupil-led engagement (sought) are combined with taught character, the three reinforce one another.

6. Taught prepares for complexity

In real life, virtues trade off, conflicts arise, uncertainty abounds. Taught character helps pupils work through complexity with skill rather than formulaic, scripted responses.

7. Taught helps internalisation

Through repeated discussion, reflection, and practice, pupils move from externally guided virtue to more autonomous, internalised virtue.

Why “Character Sought”?

1. Sought provides ownership and agency

When pupils actively choose their character goals, they are more likely to internalise and sustain virtue rather than simply comply superficially.

2. Sought connects habit and identity

While “caught” and “taught” lay foundations, “sought” helps transform virtue into part of one’s identity. Pupils become *someone who acts with integrity, kindness, or curiosity*, not just someone who is told to.

3. Sought prepares pupils for adult moral life

In adulthood, external structures fade; people must govern themselves. “Character sought” supports that transition.

4. Sought promotes moral reflection and growth

Pupils develop habits of reflection: evaluating their behaviour, recognising where they fall short, adjusting, and setting new goals. This promotes lifelong character growth.

5. Sought helps pupils develop resilience in complexity

Real life presents complex choices, conflicts of virtues, trade-offs. Pupils with an internal commitment are better placed to navigate these complexities rather than relying on simple rules.

6. Sought encourages consistency across contexts

Because the motivation is internal, pupils are more likely to carry virtue into settings beyond school — home, future workplaces, community — rather than treating character as “just for school.”

7. Sought illuminates’ moral authenticity

Virtue chosen freely has moral worth. If pupils only act virtuously when supervised or rewarded, the character is weaker. “Character sought” gives dignity to virtue.