



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ELICITING GREATNESS SINCE 1854.



Drawn from the foundational documents which articulate our school's identity, ethos, and direction, these statements summarize the values that guide us, shaping the policies and practices for all members of our community.

These Guiding Principles emerged from a consultative process to make the set of foundational documents more memorable, accessible, and applicable to daily decisions.

It is our hope that all members of the Woodstock community will recognise the essence of Woodstock in these guiding principles, and that they will form the yardstick against which we measure the integrity of our personal and collective lives in this place.

Above all else, in line with our defining identity, we seek a way of living and working together which is in congruence with the teachings of Jesus and other great teachers.

- We pursue wholeness
- We seek well-being
- We elicit greatness
- We value compassion
- We tread lightly on the earth

In every decision and plan, we must ask ourselves, does this course of action pursue wholeness, does it seek the well-being of others, will it elicit the greatness in others, is it compassionate and does it tread lightly on the earth?

1. We pursue wholeness.

Explanation: At Woodstock we believe that a meaningful education provides not only academic skills and attributes, but must also provide emotional, spiritual and physical wholeness - within ourselves, in our interpersonal relationships, and within the local and global systems we inhabit. Our focus is, therefore, on making wholeness central to the school experience. This includes

making sure our planning and decision making supports the living of what Parker Palmer calls, "undivided lives" - in other words, lives that are characterized by integration and integrity in a world dominated by fragmentation.

In Practice: Seeking wholeness means that we must always live and work from a clear sense of the big picture. Nothing that we do should be done because it seems pragmatic or expedient. We must always look for congruence with our underlying principles.

Questions:

- Is this decision in line with our underlying principles?
- Do I speak the truth even when it is difficult?
- Does the way I conduct my work uphold the school's reputation and integrity?
- Do I stay true to my word?
- Am I in pursuit of truth?

2. We seek well-being.

Explanation: To see Woodstock as a community rather than an institution is to recognise the centrality of the human dimension in all that we do. We seek to be a safe place in which everyone acts with regard for the intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of others.

In Practice: This means taking account of the complex interdependence of all things in decision making – knowing that the impacts of a seemingly isolated decision can ripple out to affect others. Above all, we prize collective wisdom as an important resource emerging from our diversity – knowing that working collaboratively creates the potential for far better decision making. This means we must strive to build and maintain trust. It also means having to balance decisions between the needs of the one and the many.

Questions:

- Do I contribute to Woodstock being a trusting community?
- Do I consider the impact of my decisions, personal and professional, on others?
- Do I avoid gossip and seek the truthfulness of rumours?
- Am I careful to consult before making decisions – even if it takes more time?
- Do I assume personal responsibility for the quality of Woodstock's shared life?

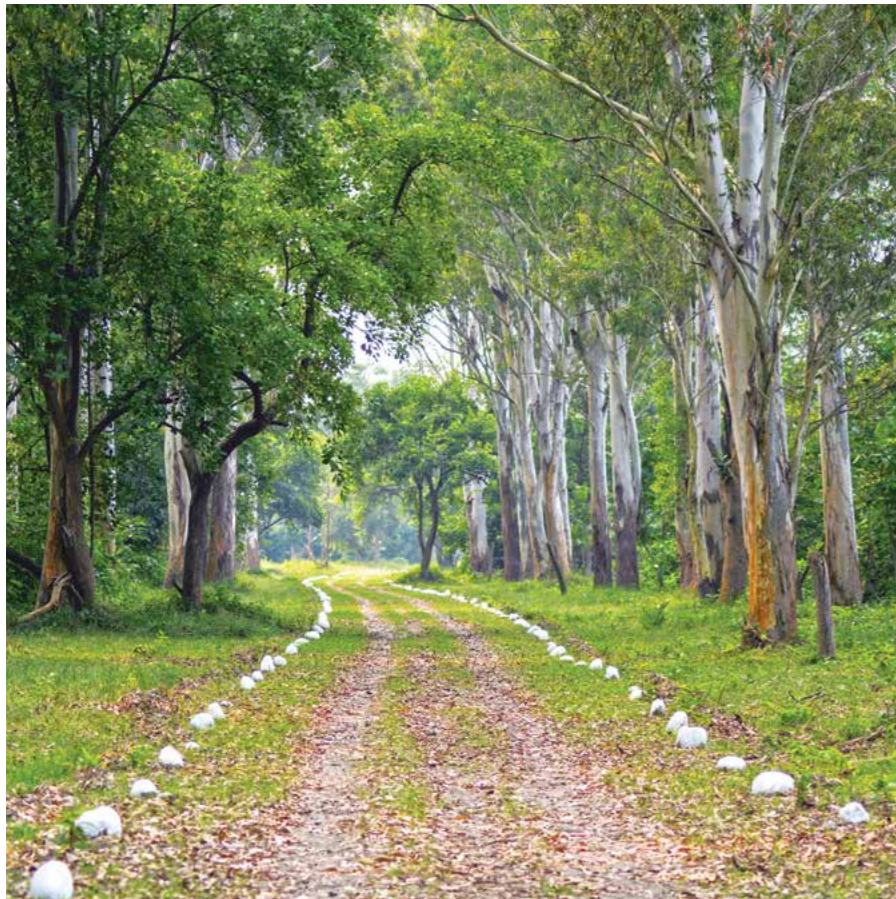
3. We elicit greatness.

Explanation: This principle refers explicitly to the title of Woodstock's educational philosophy, "Eliciting Greatness". Behind this phrase is an approach to life and learning which recognizes the power of guided discovery, of careful facilitation and of experiential learning. It recognises that

one of the greatest gifts we can give to others is the opportunity to discover things for themselves rather than for us to provide all the answers.

In Practice: This principle reinforces the power of encouragement, example and service to others as the framework within which we understand the function of leadership roles. This is achieved by actively looking for ways to draw out and support the growth of those we lead, to develop the potential of others and to enable them to be more and to achieve more through this relationship. In this sense, everyone is a leader – for everyone has the power to influence others for good and to draw out their greatness. This view of leadership is about creating the inner conditions and commitments from which positive outer influence can emerge as integrity and trustworthiness. When these personal foundations are developed, leadership techniques and strategies will be meaningful and





effective, tapping into those energies which can truly inspire and eliciting the greatness within.

Questions:

- Do my leadership roles build others up and increase their growth?
- Does my example inspire others to follow me?
- What is the impact I have on those around me and those I work alongside?
- Is Woodstock a better place because I am here?

4. We value compassion.

Explanation: In our care for students and for one another, we favour the compassionate path. With those who fail, our focus, wherever possible, is on restoration, forgiveness and learning. When it comes to our philosophy of care, following rules and implementing policy are not ends in themselves. Our

goal is to maintain relationships, to safeguard trust, to encourage honesty and integrity, and to advocate for compassion and hope.

In Practice: Focusing on these goals requires that we avoid intimidation, fear or the heavy-handed exercise of authority in discipline. To do this we make use of concepts which are foreign to behavioural management approaches but not to Woodstock's roots. These are concepts like forgiveness, dignity, trust and kindness. Maintaining the health of the community sometimes requires finding a balance between compassion and justice. On such occasions, balance is not achieved by applying a generic theoretical principle but by the painstaking consideration of the details of an individual's circumstances. At such times, justice applied with mercy can become an act of compassion.

Questions:

- Do I foster an atmosphere of compassion and care through my attitudes, words and actions?
- Do I listen to others and remain open to changing my opinions if necessary?
- Do I find loving and compassionate ways to deal with those who fail?
- Do others feel cared for in my presence and through my actions?

5. We tread lightly on the earth.

Explanation: In our allocation of resources, we conserve and regenerate the natural environment we inhabit; at the very least, causing no harm – in essence, we tread lightly on the earth. This principle compels us to model, with integrity, a credible and carefully considered approach to the natural environment in the allocation of every resource.

In Practice: We believe that we are

stewards of resources which have been entrusted to us for our responsible use. In everything from the allocation of resources in the natural environment to financial resources (for example, the distribution of revenue in budgeting to ensure responsible investment choices), we seek decisions which align with our principles. This principle also alludes to the value of seeing the benefits in approaches to life which appreciate the simple and frugal as opposed to the ostentatious or extravagant.

Questions:

- Do my personal and professional choices reflect a commitment to the natural environment?
- Do I allocate resources as a faithful steward?
- What kind of approach am I modelling to our students?
- Is the environment I am responsible for better because I am here?



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