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# Turton School

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## TURTON SCHOOL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

### **INTRODUCTION**

Turton is a hugely popular, successful and continuously improving 11-18 high school in the north of Bolton. We have a genuinely comprehensive intake of 1600 students, including 400 in the Sixth Form. In 2014, we received 540 applications for our 240 places in the new Year 7. Turton is an equally popular place to work. This year, we had over 100 applicants for some of the teaching posts advertised.

2014 also saw the best ever results at both GCSE and A level for Turton. GCSE A\*-C with English and Maths was 70%, up 7% from the year before. English was a highlight with 81% A\*-C in Language and 83% in Literature. At A level 50% of exams scored A\*, A or B grades and we sent students to all the top universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham, Newcastle and Sheffield.

Recent national awards include Artsmark Gold from the Arts Council, Inspiring IAG Gold from Connexions, OFSTED's Best practice guide as one of the twelve best schools in the country for safeguarding student welfare, SSAT's Gold Award for valuing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity and UNICEF'S Rights Respecting School Award.

### **ETHOS**

The Turton Touchstones underpin everything that we do here and inform every aspect of our daily interactions with each other in this big family. The touchstones can be found at the end of this document.

They are:

- Relatedness
- Community and Belonging
- Creativity and Expression
- Self-awareness
- Seeing the good in others

Trust, resilience and emotional intelligence are at the heart of all our ambitions as a school community. Compassion is the key to the positive relationships which we seek to build within school. We work hard to ensure that there is no place for racism, sexism or any other form of prejudice in school. We celebrate the diversity of our school community and want every member to have a voice. VOL, our student council, our prefects and college ambassadors, our Parents' Association and Governing Body all work closely with us to make every year at Turton better than the one before, in whatever way possible.

### **PASTORAL CARE**

From our feeder primary schools through to university, college or the world of work, our pastoral system and Student Support Centre nurture all our young people and aim to remove any barriers to learning so that everyone, regardless of social or economic advantage or disadvantage, can fulfil their potential. As well as group tutors and pastoral leaders, an excellent team of academic, community and behaviour mentors offer additional guidance, support and stability to all who will benefit and an extensive and dedicated Learning Support team nurture those with special educational needs and disabilities.

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## **CURRICULUM**

### **KEY STAGE 3**

Alongside traditional subject areas, our Opening Minds curriculum and “Stop the Clock” Citizenship days aim to encourage personal learning and thinking skills which all lessons will then develop. A broad curriculum is maintained through Years 7-9 with flexible organisation to allow departments to group appropriately. There is additional support for those with particular social, emotional and learning needs, extra opportunities for the most gifted and talented and activities aimed at the middle range who can sometimes be invisible in large schools, as well as those who are struggling with their learning.

### **KEY STAGE 4**

At GCSE we offer a broad, balanced and academically challenging curriculum which prepares students well for college, university or the world of work. In 2014, more than a quarter of all GCSE exams came back A\* or A.

### **KEY STAGE 5**

The Sixth Form offers a broad and rich range of A level subjects to the majority of our own students who stay on and to a significant number of external students who join us for the college years, as well as BTEC Business and our own Foundation Learning programme, not to mention a world of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities.

## **ALL ARE WELCOME**

We are an open and collaborative school. Openness, trust, honesty and integrity are essential to the way we work. We encourage all students, staff, parents, governors, neighbours, employers and support agencies to become involved in school life. We seek to be responsive rather than reactive. Students, parents and staff know they can come to talk to us at any time to discuss problems and make suggestions.

Turton is a very hardworking, fast moving and forward thinking school. It will not suit colleagues seeking a leafy suburb or a quiet backwater. However, for those seeking the challenge of providing the very best learning opportunities, while nurturing attitudes of compassion, consideration, independence and resilience in the next generation, Turton is an extremely rewarding place to work.

If you find the Turton Touchstones and the job information which follow of interest and you feel that you would like to come and make a contribution to our future development, then we will be pleased to hear from you.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your interest and wish you well in this and any future applications.

Best regards

John Porteous  
Headteacher

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## The Turton Community Touchstones

With the following questions in mind:

***The stress of school is compounded, for many young people, by their inability to see the point of it. What is the purpose of education? Is it for the attainment of government targets, or is it to provide young people with the life skills to become confident learners and adults?***

***How do we coach students, effectively and systematically, in the habits and qualities of mind that will enable them to meet the demands of school and their futures?***

***The rate of emotional problems such as anxiety and depression has increased by 70% in adolescents. How do we address this?***

We have thoughtfully explored the essence of what we provide for the students of Turton, which ensures that they are prepared for their futures and develop a sense of well-being. We feel that the following Touchstones encompass our approach and reflect a common purpose for staff and students to embody.

### **Relatedness**

*"There is a very important and fundamental relation between learning and personality development. . . . The two interact in a "circular process." Thus, mastery of symbol systems (letters, words, numbers), reasoning, judging, problem-solving, acquiring and organising information and all such intellectual functions are fed by and feed into varied aspects of the personality—feelings about oneself, identity, potential for **relatedness**, autonomy, creativity, and integration." Biber 1961*

In its simplest form relatedness is about how well we get along with each other. But the challenges of relatedness are in the depth of its impact on people's effectiveness. Some points for consideration are:

- Quality of relationships - staff and students tend to get along at Turton, but how often do staff use good quality relationships to motivate and engage kids? We have excellent examples of this but equally some staff misinterpret getting along as ignoring problems.
- Collaboration - for example, how well staff connect with the Turton ethos, or the usefulness of how they work together. Does collegiality have an impact on teaching and learning? Do staff trust each other enough to challenge and feedback to each other?
- Being a Global Citizen - here we need to consider the extent to which staff model and students develop compassion and empathy for others. For example, exploring the opportunities in lessons for students to experience and really understand diversity and difference.

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- Positive influence - this extends right down to how students work together in lessons and influence their peers through working together, as well as looking at ourselves as leaders and the impact of our influence.

## **Community and Belonging**

*“Feeling connected to others, to caring and being cared for by those others, to having a sense of belongingness both with other individuals and with one’s community.”*

*“I am what I am because of who we all are.” “Ubuntu.” Nelson Mandela*

Community comes from a shared purpose and collective vision. Our job is to create this and help everyone to feel connected to it.

Community provides safety, a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose and collective spirit, but there are huge opportunities for learning through community service. We already have many community service opportunities throughout school; however, by making the learning goals more explicit and focussed, we could ensure that community not only provides important safety and support networks but also provides an environment where students can experiment with group problem solving, conflict resolution, effective communication, project organisation, stress management and negotiations and compromise.

Community is the platform for developing responsible citizens by using the Turton community as a model for life beyond school. Issues such as race relations, environmental concerns, rights and responsibilities and wealth and poverty, can be raised.

In addition, community has to play a part in the working lives of staff, both in terms of their well-being and in terms of their classroom practice. On the one hand, staff morale and effectiveness are influenced by their connection to and feelings about the school community and their place in it. For example, developing focussed groups that are mutually supportive as well as providing a common purpose can improve performance. On the other hand, staff can enable students to develop important skills through including community service in their lesson planning.

## **Creativity and Expression**

*‘My contention is that **creativity** now is as important in education as **literacy** and we should treat it with the same status.’ Ken Robinson*

*“Imagination is more important than knowledge.” Einstein*

*“Schools kill creativity” Ken Robinson*

Surely the whole point of education is to enable children to create themselves and to be able to express this creation effectively throughout their lives. Creativity and expression are about children developing the habits of mind, attitudes and skills needed to not just survive, but thrive beyond school.

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Creative subjects have a huge role to play in developing students' confidence and skills and helping them to discover their talents and abilities. But, in a sense, all subjects are creative subjects, or at least they have a part to play in developing the following habits of mind through creativity and expression.

- Taking risks - intellectually and emotionally – seeing failure as a virtue.
- Curiosity – if you are curious and able to engage with new challenges and investigate them, you are more likely to expand your capacity to cope than if you are passive.
- Resilience – if you stick with difficult things and don't give up at the first hurdle, you are more likely to find a solution.
- Imagination – if you know how to balance your imagination and your logical mind, and to think with a mixture of creativity and clarity, you are more likely to come up with good ideas.
- Feedback – if you can ask for help and receive feedback without getting upset, you will learn faster than if you are defensive or self-righteous.
- Expansive thinking – if you develop a broad mind and can express your own values and principles as well as understanding those of others, you will learn the qualities of empathy, conflict resolution and the power of successful relationships.

There are various myths about creativity. One is that only special people are creative; another is that creativity is just about the arts; a third is that it's all to do with uninhibited "self-expression". None of these is true. On the contrary, everyone has creative capacities; creativity is possible in whatever you do, and it can require great discipline and many different skills.

Creativity, like learning in general, is a highly personal process. We all have different talents and aptitudes and different ways of getting to understand things. Raising achievement in schools means leaving room for these differences and not prescribing a standard steeplechase for everyone to complete at the same time and in the same way.

## **Self-Awareness**

*"We teach who we are" Palmer 1998*

*"Good teaching comes from the integrity and identity of the teacher; not methods and techniques" Guy Claxton*

Well-being's first priority is satisfaction with personal relationships and a sense of purpose in life. Income and employment are secondary to this. Self-awareness encompasses the inter-personal skills and attitudes needed to achieve well-being and to develop personally and professionally.

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Defining self-awareness is like trying to define 'love'; it is far reaching and all encompassing. In an attempt to simplify it, we should consider it from the edict of 'valuing all learners and treating them with dignity.' The dignity of the child is the purpose of the UNCRC and informs how we behave towards each other; however, this is much deeper and more challenging than being polite and cooperative. The following are points for consideration and form part of self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

- Social ability – I can understand other people's behaviour and I know how my actions make other people feel, having insight into people's feelings and concerns.
- Optimism – a general feeling that things will turn out well, leading to motivation.
- Dignity – teachers who see individuals and protect students' dignity at all times; also students with a strong sense of their own dignity will become adults who can take risks, handle setbacks and act to protect other people's dignity.
- Personal connection – the art of relationships, listening and empathy, reading people's emotions and recognising and responding to people's feelings and concerns.
- Negotiating solutions – the talent of the mediator, preventing or resolving conflict.
- Organising groups – the essential skill of the leader.
- Character – an awareness of how this affects our teaching style and how it affects students' learning styles.

Self-awareness and social intelligence are crucial in defining how well we work with children, from how effectively we influence their learning and development of skills to how well we do at influencing their behaviour in and around school.

## **Seeing the good in others**

*'Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.'* Dalai Lama

This is about our investment in staff and developing a professional learning culture in school.

- Trust – involves reliability, reaching shared understanding, trusting yourself so that you can trust others, effective delegation, providing professional growth and development, open communication, admitting mistakes, keeping confidences.
- Respect.
- Compassion.
- Empowerment and allowing people to be their best.
- Collegiality – how we share knowledge and expertise across school.

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In sharing these principles and purposes with staff, we need to be mindful of how explicit we are, how frequently we re-iterate and define the language we use. For example, we need to be able to unpick a notion like resilience and make it understandable to everyone. We should not assume that everybody 'gets it' All of these touchstones will need regular reinforcement, even when we think they have been accepted as the way we do things round here.

Turton September 2014