



Values Newsletter

Issue 1 January 2015

Happiness

Happy New Year! You will remember that last term we spent time as a community deciding on a series of values that would guide or drive our thinking and behaviour. We agreed on a set of 22 values, one per month for two years – with a pause each August – that will inspire us to be the best learners and best people we can be.

Our first monthly value is **happiness**. We will be exploring what happiness is and how it can have a transformational effect on ourselves and on others. We will consider what we should do differently to live more happily, and whether helping others makes us more happy. Is happiness a state of being that focuses on the present only, or can it be both reflective and aware of the future? How can we develop happiness from within ourselves?

By adopting Values based Education approaches alongside our own philosophy, we are particularly keen to understand what happens if there is 'too much' or 'too little' of each value. For instance, what about the person who seeks temporary happiness through a constant supply of material goods, or the person who only responds to rewards? We will try and understand why a culture of fear and suspicion, one without happiness at its heart, has a particular effect on people, and what we can do to transform lives. We will also investigate what would happen if sources of displeasure were removed.

As parents and carers, we ask that you take time this month to spend time with your children as we consider happiness. You may want to explore happiness through picture books, such as local author Ted Dewan's *Crispin, The Pig Who Had It All*, or Catherine Rayner's *Augustus And His Smile*. You might wish to watch Sam Berns' inspirational TEDx talk *My philosophy for a happy life* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g>). In particular, you might want to explore www.actionforhappiness.org, which includes *Ten Keys to Happier Living*.



Do let us know about any stories, moments or events that happen this month – we would love to share them with our school community in next month's Values newsletter.

"The true development of human beings involves much more than mere economic growth. At its heart there must be a sense of empowerment and inner fulfilment. This alone will ensure that human and cultural values remain paramount in a world where political leadership is often synonymous with tyranny and the rule of a narrow elite. People's participation in social transformation is the central issue of our time. This can only be achieved through the establishment of societies, which place human worth above power, and liberation above control. In this paradigm, development requires democracy, the genuine empowerment of the people".

Aung San Suu Kyi