

# Aspiration

The aspect of Intellectual Character that school will focus more closely on during this half term is 'aspiration'.

Aspiration can be thought of as the motivation to take responsibility for shaping one's **own** development and future. It includes the drive to go the extra mile and put in the effort required. People who demonstrate aspiration have a desire to aim high and set clear goals. There is a **willingness** to be strategic and practical in determining how these targets will be achieved.

*'Success is the good fortune that comes from aspiration, desperation, perspiration and inspiration.'*

As a school, and as individual students, we cannot afford to be complacent. We must remember that our success will not be measured internally, against each other, but externally against other talented children from around the country and beyond. For this comparison to be successful, we must also promote aspiration.

## What can pupils do to show 'aspiration'?

### 1. Choose a role model

A role model will display strength in the areas that you want to develop. This might be someone famous. More usefully, it might also be someone closer to a pupil that is admired. Similarly, pupils should not seek to vilify those who have worked hard to become successful and achieve their aspirations. A better approach is one of self reflection, where pupils look, think, and consider how they might better themselves.

### 2. Set personal targets for improvement:

- Short term

Manageable and measurable.

*Examples might include:*

Not less than 9/10 in vocab tests for the half term.

Nothing less than a grade '2' on a grade card.

100% attendance at training sessions this term.

100% punctuality at registration.

- Long term

Ambitious but achievable with hard work.

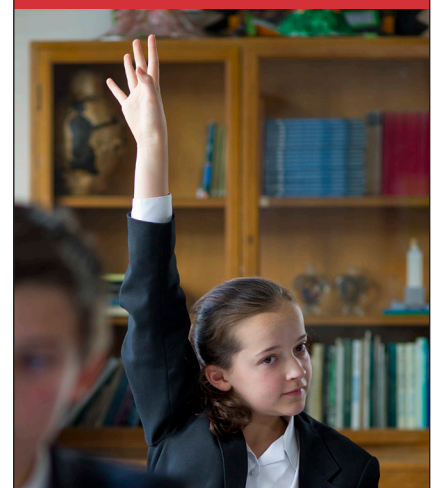
*Examples might include:*

Nothing less than a 'grade A' in GCSE examinations.

A place in the school orchestra.

A place in the district sports team.

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### 3. Consult a teacher when help is needed

Aspirational people don't make the journey on their own. They ask for guidance listen as to how they might take action themselves to improve

### 4. Study those close by who do it better

Have the humility to understand that other people may be better at a particular skill and look to learn from them.

### 5. Don't be afraid to fail

Being aspirational is rarely a straight forward task. It will come with plenty of set backs and require pupils to come out of their comfort zone – taking the risk of failure. Pupils should seek to understanding the reasons that something didn't work and this is a powerful tool for learning. It helps to form a better understanding, makes pupils stronger, and enables progress to the next challenge.

### Which one are you?

#### Mountain Person

Mountain People seek to test their ambition. They are prepared to struggle to get to the top and they put up with the bumps and bruises that inevitably get in their way. They take the risk of being successful, because there is no such thing as the risk of losing. They are people who view the glass as half full and not half empty.

#### Valley Person

Valley people seek the comfortable ground of safety and security. They may want success, but they do not want to be involved in the hassle of getting it. They are 'almost' people who have lots of explanations for not making it themselves – their sentences start with 'I could have ...' or 'I should have ...' When they talk about someone else who made it, they state these people 'got the breaks'.

Parents can encourage their son/daughter to be aspirational by speaking to them about the 5 strategies mentioned above, and discussing with pupils how they might be implemented. A set of targets, that is shared with others, helps everyone focus on success. Aspiration also comes from having strong expectations about routine tasks such as the organization of the school day and interactions between pupils, parents, and school.

Jason Slack  
Headmaster

**'You've got what it takes, but it will take everything you've got'**

