

## Curiosity

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

Curiosity can be thought of as an eagerness to ask questions and to explore beyond what is merely required. To be curious is to investigate, to discover, to learn and understand new things.

*'I'm fat because I'm greedy, and if my mind is fat it's because I'm curious.'* Stephen Fry

In many lessons, most important will be the questions that pupils ask, not the answers that they propose. Questioning is a sign of intelligence and an enquiring mind. Healthy scepticism is a characteristic of those who wish to lead, and not destined to follow.

Pupils across the country with a 'fixed mind set' will try and excuse their own poor performance with the reason that they are not 'clever' and don't have an academic turn of mind, or that they aren't lucky enough to have been blessed with a good memory. These same pupils will quickly recite hundreds of pop lyrics and reel off any amount of information about their favourite sportsman or actor. Why? Because they are interested in those things. They are curious. If you are hungry for food, you are prepared to hunt high and low for it. If you are hungry for information it is the same. In our modern society, information is all around us, now more than ever before. Finding out information is easier and more convenient than it has ever been. The only reason people do not know much is because they don't have the curiosity and motivation to find out. Acquiring knowledge is the domain of the curious and a requirement of the successful.

**What can pupils do to show 'curiosity'?**

### **1. Develop a sense of wonder about the world around them.**

Don't accept things as the way they are just because it has been seen on the internet, or read in a text book, or been explained by a teacher. A good question will take you farther than bland acceptance.

### **2. Balance the detail with the 'bigger picture'.**

Pupils should consider what questions they might ask to clarify their understanding – 'focussing on the detail'. 'Closed' questions that have specific and shorter answers may be better suited to this level of detail.

This should be balanced with what questions they might ask to extend their understanding further – 'the bigger picture'. 'Open' questions that are more general and inquisitive, requiring broader explanation may be better for understanding the 'bigger picture'.

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### 3. Use 'Question Dice'.

Imagine a dice with one of the following six words printed on each face:

Who? How? What? Why? When? Where?

Imagine a second dice with the following set of words on each face:

did, do/does, can, would, will, might

Roll the two dice and put the two words together. You have yourself a question about whatever you are considering!

### 4. Make a note of your questions.

Curiosity can be unpredictable and doesn't always provoke thoughts at convenient times. Make a note of your questions as they occur to you - perhaps on your phone or on a post-it note? You can go back to them at a later stage when you have the resources to hand – looking in a text book, searching the internet, asking the teacher in a lesson.

### 5. Use 'three step questioning'.

Once you've been presented with some information ask yourself these three questions to be sure of your understanding:

- (a) What do you definitely understand?
- (b) What do you think you understand?
- (c) What questions do you need to ask in order to find out more?

Giving some thought to a well worded question will help with the efficiency of your curiosity.

### What can parents do to promote 'curiosity'?

- Give children the confidence to ask questions through engagement with their queries and the encouragement to ask more!
- Don't be anxious when the answer is not known – discuss how to find out more.
- Don't be anxious if there is no 'right' answer – discuss the pros, cons and a well-reasoned opinion.
- Demonstrate your own curiosity – show children how to be curious.
- Discuss the 5 strategies given above and how they might be implemented.

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*'The future belongs to the curious. The ones who are not afraid to try it, explore it, poke at it, question it and turn it inside out.'* Anon

