

WILLOW TREE ACADEMY

Ethos and Culture

Shared Values and Beliefs

The Willow Tree Academy promotes and cultivates an ethos based on a system of shared values and beliefs. These are the heartbeat of our organisation.

Key values

Passion — Working in education, we have the ability to profoundly change children's lives; the stakes are incredibly high. Our aim should always be to provide for the pupils of our Academies what we would want for our own children.

Positivity — Staff have a responsibility to be positive and supportive of each other. Negativity leads to low expectations and a culture where excuses are tolerated.

Aspiration — Embodied in the Trust motto, "Together anything is possible" all members of staff aim for excellence in their individual professional roles.

Commitment — Staff are prepared to go the extra mile to provide the best possible education for their pupils. The interests of children are always placed ahead of those of staff.

Tenacity— The amount of time children spend in education is finite, there is a sense of urgency to our core purpose. We have a responsibility to ensure every moment a child is in a Willow Tree Academy must be spent productively. Once wasted, it is gone forever and cannot be given back. We teach children to be resilient and tenacious in their quest for learning and expect the same of our staff.

An important bi-product of the above values must be an enduring sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Whilst it is right that achievements are celebrated, the focus remains on the challenges ahead. PPACT forms the basis of initial discussions with prospective employees of the Willow Tree Academies.

Moral purpose

The Willow Tree Academy is committed to improving the life chances of all children. This moral obligation, our mission, does not end at the school gates. Where Willow Tree Academies have the capacity to make a difference, they are morally bound to do so and will work with the wider community and other agencies to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families

Consistency of approach

Involvement in the Willow Tree Academy requires that partner Academies maintain consistency within their own organisations and across the Trust. The principle of “no opt-out” is adhered to by staff in order to maximise the impact of agreed policies and approaches.

Distributed leadership

All Willow Tree Academy staff are considered to be leaders. It is the responsibility of all adults to drive and contribute to their Academy improvement agenda.

Success behaviours

Willow Tree Academies promote behaviours that lead to success. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour, so their learning and the learning of others is maximised; all members of staff are required to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and work as a team across the individual schools and the trust as a whole.

Teaching and Learning

Raising standards

Willow Tree Academies maintain a relentless and rigorous focus on raising standards through the learning skills curriculum, particularly in the core areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

High quality teaching

Willow Tree Academies aim to ensure all their children receive high quality teaching every day.

Committed to inclusion

The Willow Tree Academies are non-selective, learning communities that value the abilities and achievements of all their pupils. Staff are committed to providing for every child, the best possible climate for learning. Recognising the entitlement of all pupils to a creative, cohesive curriculum, reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive.

A calm and safe learning environment

The Willow Tree Academy promotes a calm, safe, learning environment. Although learning aims to be dynamic and fun, from an early age pupils are taught how to return to a place of calm reflection.

Embracing new technologies

Willow Tree Academies drive their improvement agendas through the strategic application of new technologies. Enhancing the transformational potential of ICT, they invest in new technologies to improve pupil outcomes.

A dynamic curriculum

Willow Tree Academies operate the same skills-based, integrated curriculum which aims to give every child the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This is based on first-hand experience and is designed to develop Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education. Enterprise, Sport, the Arts and ICT underpin our curriculum and provide a profound primary experience for all our pupils.

Investing in People

Empowering pupils

Willow Tree Academies consider children to be equal partners in the learning process. As a result, pupils are empowered to become active, responsible learners.

Professional development

The Willow Tree Academy is committed to investing in its workforce. The preferred approach is always “growing our own” – employing staff at the beginning of their careers and investing in them so that they become high-calibre professionals. By providing high quality professional development opportunities across the Willow Tree Academy we will contribute to maintaining the highest standards of teaching and learning and assist in recruiting and retaining staff.

Our commitment to a cycle of continuous improvement informed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures that we are never complacent in our achievements. We strive to challenge any underperformance and build on our successes.

Partnership with parents/carers and the wider community

The Willow Tree Academy believes that children achieve more when schools, families and the wider community work together in close partnership. Willow Tree Academies promote and value the involvement of parents in their children’s education, as this makes a positive difference to achievement.

High quality governance

Aligned to the Willow Tree values, governors provide active support and challenge for the Academies they serve, focussing on the three core functions of governance; these are;

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the HT to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the performance management of staff and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Health and sustainability

The Willow Tree Academy encourages member Academies to seek environmentally sustainable solutions and to teach the children the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles.

A well-maintained physical environment

Children and staff of Willow Tree Academies deserve to work in a well-maintained physical environment. "Attention to detail" is emphasised, so that the highest expectations are maintained. High quality resources and the classroom environments that inspire, question and challenge engage children from the moment they enter the door.

We are also committed to learning 'away from the desk' and so we work hard to ensure our school grounds are also a superb learning resource. Our residential experiences enhance our pupils' learning experience and we aim to give them memories that last a lifetime.