

# AN ALIGNED EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

## Identity and Philosophy of Learning

There is a strong desire within our broader community for a clearly defined identity and philosophy of learning. Establishing a unified vision and mission was the first step for our school in creating a cohesive and purposeful learning environment. This involved aligning our values, teaching methods, and student engagement strategies within articulated statements of purpose.

However, this review and the subsequent work completed as part of the strategic consultation process have revealed a deeper need for an identifiable philosophy or cultural element to be explored and articulated within our context.

During this review process, the Education Committee drafted possible options for what this might look like. This draft was constructed as a synthesis of the Courage document into nine key areas. Our recommendation is for this work to be the beginning of our community's aspiration to define our cultural and philosophical alignment as a school.

Therefore, this draft should be further explored within the broader community via engagement to ensure a co-constructed piece is developed that aligns comfortably with our school community.

## The Preshil Educational Principles

The Preshil approach is an educational culture and ethos that is characterised by the following educational priorities and practices that are aligned with the Mission.



## Individualised Learning

Preshil values the uniqueness of each child and aims to respect and accommodate individual differences, needs and learning styles. Students are encouraged to learn at their own pace and in their own way, without being held to fixed expectations or unnecessary comparisons with others.

### **Social Learning**

Preshil recognises the importance of interpersonal and cultural learning and encourages students to learn with and from each other. The school recognises different strengths and weaknesses in a supportive and non-judgmental culture. The school aims to create an informal and nurturing atmosphere where students feel valued and heard, helping them to develop a strong sense of self while being responsible to and for others.

### **Understanding Behaviour**

Preshil takes a social and psychological perspective on student behaviour. Rather than labelling students, the school seeks to understand the origins of their behaviour and to help students think critically about the impact of their actions on their personal relationships and the wider community. Teachers help children think about the impact of their behaviour on others, so as to cultivate self-awareness and self-discipline. The school is particularly concerned with encouraging empathy, respect, and pro-social behaviours.

### **Fostering Learning and Growth**

Learning at Preshil is encouraged by exciting curiosity and catering to individual interests and talents. The aim is for learning to be engaging and meaningful for the individual and in that sense self-directed.

### **Enquiry Based and Task-Oriented Learning**

Preshil promotes hands-on and project-based learning as much as possible. Enquiry based learning provides opportunities for students to explore their interests outside of the common curriculum. The focus is on engaging children in meaningful tasks and activities that align with their interests and foster their personal growth by identifying their strengths and encouraging autonomy and skilful achievement.

### **Arts and Self-Expression**

Preshil recognizes the importance of art, music, and drama as integral parts of education. These creative outlets are seen as opportunities for self-expression, personal growth and community engagement.

### **Participatory Democracy and Student agency**

Children and adolescents at Preshil are encouraged to assume ownership and responsibility for their learning and the life of the school. They have a voice in decision-making processes, such as by suggesting and voting on project areas or bringing up issues for discussion in group forums. They are encouraged to have agency in matters that impact them.

### **Relationships and Community**

Preshil aims to function as a close-knit community, where children, teachers and parents each play an important role. Relationships between teachers, students and parents are informal, based on mutual respect and trust. Preshil believes in building relationships on a first-name basis, creating an informal and personal atmosphere. This approach helps to foster a sense of familiarity and trust between teachers, parents and students and a sense of safety and community where children are seen for who they are and feel safe to express their authentic selves.

### **Purpose of Education**

Preshil believes that education should prepare children to be thoughtful, peace-loving, and active citizens of the world. The school fosters tolerance, compassion and a concern for social justice. The school encourages children to be aware of and respond to the key issues of the times.

The approach to education at Preshil is student-centred, flexible, and focused on holistic development while fostering a love for learning and a sense of social responsibility.

### **Processes that consider each student and allow for student agency and voice**

Preshil implements processes that consider the emotional, social and psychological context in which the student is learning. Restorative practices are used to teach students how to navigate relationships in a constructive way and three-way conferences with students, teachers and parents, allow students to have a voice in the discussion of their academic progress and goals. Whole of campus meetings occur where students are able to raise issues of concern to them.