



DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S CITIZENS THROUGH LEADERSHIP

At Drayton Manor, we know that we are not just educating students to pass exams. Whilst we strive for academic excellence, we know our students need more than that. Our school values of Ambition, Character and Civic Virtue reflect our desire to teach the whole person and to inspire generations of change makers and active citizens. It is about recognising that all our students have their own unique skills and abilities and have much to bring to their own lives and the lives of those around them.

We are educating tomorrow's citizens, and we take this responsibility very seriously. The world needs citizens and leaders who care about their world and their fellow humans, who can work for the greater good as well as ensure their own success and well-being.

To help our students develop the skills and traits needed for this, we have embedded a strong student leadership programme into the fabric of school life. We want students to develop confidence, good character, ambition and a keen sense of civic duty, reflecting the values we hold dear at the school. Giving students opportunities to develop and experience effective leadership at all levels of the school is a powerful way to do this. At the time of writing, over 200 students hold a formal position of Student Leadership. These include School and Year councils, Wellbeing Ambassadors, House Captains and Student Learning Leads. However, you may not know that we also have Student Coaches for our Sports Teams and Music, as well as Student Librarians who work alongside staff, supporting them whilst building excellent leadership skills and demonstrating civic virtues.

This newsletter aims to give you a greater understanding of student leadership across the school, to introduce some of our talented, driven, inspirational student leaders and to share what they achieve and how they make an impact in their community.

Inspirational leaders and role models

We appreciate the considerable amount of time, energy and dedication our school leaders put into their duties in addition to their schoolwork, and we value their input. We like to arrange dedicated events to thank them, such as a recent special leadership assembly for the student leaders with a talk by BBC's Clare Balding. Clare talked about the dual importance of staying focused on goals and purpose, while practising self-leadership and resilience. She cited the example of Emma Raducanu, the tennis player, who had to retire from the All-England Club due to health problems, but through self-care, determination and resilience, was able to bounce back to win the US Open.

A supportive school environment

Peer support happens naturally at all times throughout the school, reflecting the supportive, nurturing environment and ethos we strive to create. Archie (10E) told us how he always feels safe and supported to ask for help from fellow students and staff when he needs it. Hermione (9F), who works with our football coaches, praises her coaches, but also highlights that students can get a lot of support from their peers and teachers.

In addition to this ongoing peer support, we have several more formal leadership paths our students can take through their school life, including sports, well-being, peer mentorship and community work. We also encourage students to take the initiative and create their own leadership roles where they see a need.



Sports

We are enormously proud of our long tradition of excellence in sports at the school. Our school has achieved remarkable success in a variety of competitive sports, and we are delighted that our older players take immense pride and satisfaction in coaching their younger teammates.



Kayleigh (Year 13 student)

Kayleigh started coaching the girls' football team because she thought she wanted to go into sports coaching as a career. She has since changed her mind and is pursuing sports management instead, but she still values the experience and opportunities the coaching gives her.

Apart from giving her a healthy break from studies during a busy academic year, she says it has helped her develop a lot of valuable skills that will help her in all aspects of her life. She has grown in confidence, and her communication skills have improved, and she values the autonomy of the role, which has given her a greater sense of independence than she might otherwise feel.

She told us of a year 7 student who she encouraged to step outside their comfort zone and their usual friendship group to join the football team. The student is now happily on the team and has made more friends by doing so. Kayleigh gets a deep sense of satisfaction from seeing the positive impact she can have on her fellow students and is grateful to the teachers for the opportunities she has been given.



Kyam (Year 13 student)

Kyam works with the boys' and girls' football teams and loves the small shifts he can help his coachees achieve in their skill level. He takes pride in helping them accept where they are in the moment, while setting their sights on achieving their goals. He helps them to recognise the value in the small improvements and feels that this is more rewarding than the bigger goal of excellence.

'This is powerful learning. While we encourage our students to have ambition and aim for their highest potential, it is important that they recognise the importance of the small steps and celebrate success along the way. This helps create the growth mindset that is so important if they are to stay on the path towards their goals.'

Kyam told us that his coaching work allows him to find balance, and that his coaching work is one of the most rewarding things he has done during his time at Drayton Manor.



Franclim (Year 13 student)

A sense of wanting to give back to the community underscores the motivation of all our student leaders. Franclim has been playing football since year 8 and was helped in his own development by the support and encouragement of the coaches who supported him. He has no aspirations to go into sport as a career and prefers to keep it as a hobby while he pursues his career dream of cyber security. But he knows that the skills he is developing as a coach, such as communication, team working, leadership and patience will help him wherever he goes in life.

Franclim enjoys being a role model and being able to give younger students someone to look up to, as well as enjoying the break from study and the chance to have a lot of fun.

Many of our current coachees plan to follow Franclim's lead, and 'pay it forward' when they become old enough to become coaches. Daniel (12.4) told us that the coaches have helped him to become a more confident player, helping him develop better on pitch movement skills, while Mona (10L) told us how much she values the support and encouragement they offer, even giving up their time to watch their games as well as helping the teams train.





Student leadership across the school

It is not just in sports that students can develop their leadership skills. Students can get involved with many aspects of school life and represent their peers, champion causes that matter to them and give back to the school and community in many ways., for example food bank donations.

Head Boy, Head Girl, and Prefects

In Year 12, students can apply for the coveted role of Head Boy and Head Girl. The selection process takes place at the end of Year 12 and once approved, the students work in the role through Year 13. This is a demanding process which requires a great deal of commitment, ambition, and self-belief to get through to selection. Students must complete a written application, then give a speech to their year group. The final decision is based on a student vote, so candidates must think carefully about what their peers need and show them how they will deliver.

Abubakr (13.8), our Head Boy, and Harnoor (13.5), our Head Girl, are enormously proud of their roles, and the impact they can have in school life. The speech was their first experience of public speaking, and while both were nervous, they enjoyed it and are much more confident about speaking to an audience now.

They are proud to represent the student body and to have such a strong relationship with staff and be able to influence the life of the school through their leadership. Every year, they are supported by a Deputy Head Girl and a Deputy Head Boy who deputise for them as well as a team of Prefects who take on additional responsibilities, e.g. this year Lara (13.7) led on many areas of work across the school in her role as Deputy Head Girl.

We are immensely proud of our student leaders and all Prefects. Their dedication to their roles, to their peers, and to school life cannot be beaten. They freely and enthusiastically dedicate their time and energy to attend and be involved with school events. They are motivated by a strong desire to give back to the school community, and we know that the whole school appreciates the work they do and looks up to them as role models.





DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

House Captains

At the heart of our school community is our House Captain system. This is a powerful and empowering way for students to give to their community and learn leadership, communication, and advocacy skills.

The process of becoming a House Captain requires self-leadership, determination, civic duty, and ambition. Students apply to be House Captains for their year group and must submit written applications, selling themselves and explaining why they think they would make a good House Captain. This takes a lot of courage and a competitive and rigorous process. Not all students get selected on their first attempt but use this experience to further develop their skills. Fortunately, like Sasha and Eliza in Year 8, many of them try again the following year, undeterred by not getting elected the first time around. This sort of robust determination is a great trait that will see students do well in their lives, and we value their commitment and resilience.



The House Captains relish the chance to work for the community, both in school and within the wider community. Astrid (8F) enjoys the work they do in the wider community and has enjoyed taking part in the charity drives, such as Food Bank donations, and entertaining the residents at Neem Tree Care home, for the Winter Party. She also appreciates that the House Captains can make a tangible difference in school life and is proud that their suggestion of turning an unused outside area into an outside gym has been implemented.



Eliza (8L) enjoys being an advocate between teachers and students, helping the form tutor and students to have a voice and ensuring that the school is run for them. Sasha enjoys the best of both worlds and loves affecting both the local and the school community. She hopes to create more opportunities for connection and making friends across the year groups in the school, by organising more social clubs.



Timur (9H) enjoys the teamwork and camaraderie he experiences as part of the House Captain team and enjoys helping to organise events and help others overcome their challenges in school. He has a great deal of empathy for his fellow students and takes immense pride in working not only as a House Captain, but also as part of the well-being ambassadors' team. This allows him to use his experience to guide people and be by their side as they navigate the more challenging aspects of life.



Molly (13.1) chairs the House Captains Events committee. Her committee organised a hugely successful whole school book swap event in January, in which over 110 students took part, enjoying the books they were able to exchange.





Entrepreneurial skills

Seeing a problem and recognising that you can find a solution is a fundamental part of civic duty and entrepreneurship. We are enormously proud when students seek to find their own solutions, taking the initiative to make improvements to school life.

Tiyonne (13.8) and Beth (13.4) wanted to play an integral role in promoting equality within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). The students set up a STEM club, to encourage girls throughout the school to discover the fun of STEM subjects, to make the subjects more accessible and give their fellow students a supportive space to ask questions and talk about STEM topics.

The club gives students a chance to take greater ownership of their STEM projects. Because the groups are smaller, they can work in closer teams, access more resources per student and explore questions in greater depth to find their own understanding. The club crosses all year groups, so the students involved can form friendships across the year groups, giving some valuable range to their peer groups.



Well-Being ambassadors

Timur (9H) is also part of our Wellbeing Ambassador team. This is a particularly important part of our student leadership, as we recognise the importance of taking care of our students' mental and physical well-being as well as their academic growth.

Our Wellbeing Ambassadors are driven by a powerful desire to help their fellow students. Many, like Timur, have experienced their own personal challenges, and want to use their experience and empathy to support their peers.



Minnie (8I) enjoys being able to help others. She was a House Captain last year but prefers being a Wellbeing Ambassador, as she feels she can make a more immediate impact on people's lives with her skillset and by doing this work. Iskander (9L) wanted to take a lead in help bringing kindness and support to people. Thaleise (13.8) joined the team during the pandemic. She knew that helping others would also help her, and has been an Ambassador ever since, rising to the role of Lead Well-Being Ambassador in Year 13.



Beth (8J) and Amy (8E) both recognise that while the staff at school are incredibly supportive, there is significant value in having supportive peers available to help and our Wellbeing Ambassadors are delighted to provide that. Beth is delighted that she knows that even though she is only in Year 8, she can make a difference to people's lives.

The Wellbeing Ambassadors are delighted by the impact they can have in the school and wider community. Thaleise told us that her proudest moment was organising events for Children's Mental Health week last year and raising lots of money for the iHeart Charity. Beth enjoyed taking part in a well-being Ambassador organised readathon and is delighted that the event led to an ongoing book club. Pedro (12.6) and Timur (9H) are enormously proud of the different event days the team organises and are delighted to be able to help increase awareness and acceptance of diversity both in and outside of school life.

The next project for the Wellbeing Ambassadors will be the launch of a Digital Wellbeing Charter which has been developed in collaboration with staff and aims to ensure that students are able to be the best and safest version of themselves online. The students had already created a wellbeing charter, then told staff that digital safety was something that their peers would like more help with. This will be a real force for good in a world that increasingly binds us to our technology. Students need to learn to keep themselves safe on the internet whilst also embracing the strengths such technology can bring if used correctly, and we are so proud of them for recognising the importance of this for themselves.



Supporting the wider community

Our students know that their civic duty does not only apply within the school community. We have strong ties to the wider Drayton Manor community, and our students relish the chances to make a difference to local residents.

We regularly organise food bank donations and deliveries and members of the school leadership team can take the donations to the food bank, meet the volunteers and package up the donations ready to help those in need in the community. This is an important experience that helps students develop empathy and compassion for their fellow humans, a vital trait in good leaders.

Students also love to support other community members. In December, a group of our school leaders visited Neem Tree Care Home, where they sang Christmas carols, spoke with residents, and gave out gifts. The students loved this experience and they brought a lot of joy to the care home residents.





School leadership and school values

As you can see, there is a tremendous amount of energy, dedication, and community spirit in every single one of our wellbeing ambassadors. Our students are our greatest assets at Drayton Manor and we are hugely proud of each and every one of them. The cultural capital created by the efforts of all reflects the values of the school. We are sure that you can see that Ambition, Civic Duty and Character are bursting out of all our school leaders and provide excellent role models and leadership.

We know that our students are becoming the compassionate, dedicated, active citizens our world needs and we know they will succeed in their chosen path.

Student leaders, we are incredibly grateful to you for all that you do and we hope you are as proud of yourselves as we are of you. Keep up the great work!

