inspiring a future-ready, anchor-steady community that flourishes and thrives

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Westwood Primary aspires to tell the story of the redwood tree - strong, resilient and flourishing. Located in the vibrant estate of Jurong West, which was once swampy land, this school was built to thrive and to be exceptional.

Redwood trees have a strong network of roots that reach out and provide support for one another as they grow. Similarly, the Westwood community speaks of interconnections among the school staff, families and our pupils, who are strongly bound by authentic relationships.

We have a shared vision - to **flourish** and **thrive** together - so as to become a positive institution in Jurong West that inspires our community to lead meaningful and engaged lives.
“Constructive and positive education is perhaps the most important facilitator of the mindsets necessary to support an economic paradigm based on happiness and well-being.”

(p.59)

“Teach mindfulness widely to counteract the psychic hunger that causes materialism as the primary spirituality of our time.”

(p.150)
1. **GIVING: Do things for others**
   Caring about others is fundamental to our happiness. Helping other people is not only good for them and a great thing to do, it also makes us happier and healthier too. Giving also creates stronger connections between people and helps to build a happier society for everyone. And it's not all about money - we can also give our time, ideas and energy. So if you want to feel good, do good!

2. **RELATING: Connect with people**
   Relationships are the most important overall contributor to happiness. People with strong and broad social relationships are happier, healthier and live longer. Close relationships with family and friends provide love, meaning, support and increase our feelings of self-worth. Broader networks bring a sense of belonging. So taking action to strengthen our relationships and create new connections is essential for happiness.

3. **EXERCISING: Take care of your body**
   Our body and our mind are connected. Being active makes us happier as well as being good for our physical health. It instantly improves our mood and can even lift us out of a depression. We don't all need to run marathons - there are simple things we can all do to be more active each day. We can also boost our well-being by unplugging from technology, getting outside and making sure we get enough sleep!

4. **APPRECIATING: Notice the world around**
   Ever felt there must be more to life? Well good news, there is! And it's right here in front of us. We just need to stop and take notice. Learning to be more mindful and aware can do wonders for our well-being in all areas of life - like our walk to work, the way we eat or our relationships. It helps us get in tune with our feelings and stops us dwelling on the past or worrying about the future - so we get more out of the day-to-day.

5. **TRYING OUT: Keep learning new things**
   Learning affects our well-being in lots of positive ways. It exposes us to new ideas and helps us stay curious and engaged. It also gives us a sense of accomplishment and helps boost our self-confidence and resilience. There are many ways to learn new things - not just through formal qualifications. We can share a skill with friends, join a club, learn to sing, play a new sport and so much more.
6. DIRECTION: Have goals to look forward to
Feeling good about the future is important for our happiness. We all need goals to motivate us and these need to be challenging enough to excite us, but also achievable. If we try to attempt the impossible this brings unnecessary stress. Choosing ambitious but realistic goals gives our lives direction and brings a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction when we achieve them.

7. RESILIENCE: Find ways to bounce back
All of us have times of stress, loss, failure or trauma in our lives. But how we respond to these has a big impact on our well-being. We often cannot choose what happens to us, but we can choose our own attitude to what happens. In practice it's not always easy, but one of the most exciting findings from recent research is that resilience, like many other life skills, can be learned.

8. EMOTION: Take a positive approach
Positive emotions - like joy, gratitude, contentment, inspiration, and pride - are not just great at the time. Recent research shows that regularly experiencing them creates an 'upward spiral', helping to build our resources. So although we need to be realistic about life's ups and downs, it helps to focus on the good aspects of any situation - the glass half full rather than the glass half empty.

9. ACCEPTANCE: Be comfortable with who you are
No-one's perfect. But so often we compare our insides to other people's outsides. Dwelling on our flaws - what we're not rather than what we've got - makes it much harder to be happy. Learning to accept ourselves, warts and all, and being kinder to ourselves when things go wrong, increases our enjoyment of life, our resilience and our well-being. It also helps us accept others as they are.

10. MEANING: Be part of something bigger
People who have meaning and purpose in their lives are happier, feel more in control and get more out of what they do. They also experience less stress, anxiety and depression. But where do we find 'meaning and purpose'? It might be our religious faith, being a parent or doing a job that makes a difference. The answers vary for each of us but they all involve being connected to something bigger than ourselves.
“The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again is the very root of judgment, character and will. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.”

William James, The Principles of Psychology (1890, p. 424)
The time has come for a new prosperity, one that takes flourishing seriously as the goal of education and of parenting.

Learning to value and attain flourishing must start early – in the formative years of schooling – and it is this new prosperity, kindled by positive education, that the world can now choose.“

- Professor Martin Seligman, 2011
Our Education Crossroad

Wellness

STAGNATION

THRIVING

Flourish & Flow

REGRESSION

LANGUISING

Cynicism

Illness

Mediocrity

Excellence
Our **Aspiration** for Westwood Primary

**Becoming an Exceptional School for Positive Education**

- Positive Emotions
- Positive Engagement
- Positive Relationships
- Positive Meaning
- Positive Accomplishment
- Positive Health

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THRIVE Model @ Westwood Primary

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Our Journey in Positive Education

We want to create a flourishing school where everyone can fulfil his or her potential and achieve both success and well-being. To this end, we have conceptualised a Westwood’s THRIVE Framework for Positive Education, to guide our design and delivery of learning and development of our pupils.

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Westwood Primary aims to nurture Flourishing Pupils through its THRIVE Framework for Positive Education. Ultimately, we hope for every pupil to be happy, resilient and engaged. We want pupils to find meaning and joy in learning, as well as in relating with their friends and contributing to the community.
Our Positive Education Journey...

• Crafting the Ethos
  o Our Character Strengths
  o Our School Mission
  o Our School Vision
  o Our Strategic Focus

• Staff Training & Development
  o Initial Staff Training in March
  o Conversation with Core Team – Strength Assessment in April
  o Overseas Conference in Perth
  o Staff Training in June
  o Principal’s residential course at Geelong Grammar School
  o Presentation at ERAS conference
  o Staff Training in November

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WESTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Staff Conversation on Positive Education #1 (18 Mar 2013)

Positive Education is....
- Use of positive psychology in education
- Getting pupils motivated about learning and excelling
- Words, actions and experiences for the learner to engage in positivity
- Getting pupils to reflect and work on their behaviour rather than punitive methods
- Instilling good values, focus on holistic education to develop life-long, self-directed learner

Our Vision....
- Learning – to embrace key principles and practice of positive education as we embark on this journey
- Role-Modelling – to emulate positivity in life, e.g., not giving up, being thankful, etc, for our pupils
- Facilitating – to create a positive school culture for excellence and wellness

Key Concerns....
- Are pupils ready for this new focus?
- Do parents reinforce what we teach?
- Are staff ready? – our competency, our understanding
- Does it always work? – where do we draw the line, balance

What We Have Already Started Doing...
- Role-modelling and explicit teaching of positive values of respect, care, teamwork
- Strengthening teacher-pupil relationship
- Creating a safe and affirming learning environment
- Highlighting good examples of pupils’ positive behaviour
- Positive reward, reinforcement and partnership with parents
- Showing care and doing things with our hearts

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DISCOVER & DREAM
Envisioning A Positive Staff Culture

Our Westwood Staff
Thriving Educators who are teacher-leaders and community builders

Our Teacher Belief
A Talented and Unique Individual with the Potential for Success
DISCOVER & DREAM
Envisioning A Positive Staff Culture

Our Desired Westwood Staff Culture

GROWTH - to LEAD

Generosity, Respect, Open-mindedness, Wellbeing, Trust, Happiness to
Love, go the Extra mile, Act on our belief, Drive.
DISCOVER & DREAM
Positive Education from Our Core Beliefs

A Thriving & Flourishing Community
A Heart of Gratitude  A Resilient Mindset
A Passion for Community  A Future-Ready Confidence

a Westwood Primary Pupil is...

A Self Directed Learner
A Concerned Citizen
A Flourishing Individual
A Confident Person
A Compassionate Leader
Key Questions by Strategic Teams

#1: Instructional Leadership
How do we apply positivity into the curriculum?

#2: Culture, Climate & Community
As a positive school, what are our unique practices?

#3: Student Support
How do we best serve our pupils with positive education?

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Positive Education in the Westwood Curriculum

Implementation Strategies of Positive Education

• **Explicit articulation of learning objectives** through SWBAT (Students Will Be Able To) corners at the front of class for pupils to have clear learning and behavioural objectives for the various lessons.

• **Customise the Co Curriculum** lesson packages (FTGP & Character Education) for teachers to teach & role model affirmation to the pupils for peer encouragement of effort and behaviour.

• Creating **visible icons** like the traffic light to teach explicit reflective thinking & Positivity.

• Teaching pupils to “**Pan for Gold**”; institute regular “**What Went Well**” (WWW) moments in the classroom.
THRIE & FLOURISH @ WESTWOOD

Ownership of Learning
At the Literacy Loft of each classroom, children are presented with personalised writing prompts that stretch their learning and provide them with creative challenges. They are encouraged to chart their own learning progress each day.

We want every child to be responsible for his or her own learning. Our goal is to enable every child to be involved actively in intellectual and academic pursuits, and come to an understanding of himself/herself, the community and the world.

Creativity & Expression
Children enhance their creative and expressive capabilities during Art, Music and PAL lessons. Learning to be confident as they explore new ways of doing things.
We focus on developing a growth-mindset in each child, with the belief that he/she is capable of academic success. Children understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence.

Developing Self-Management Skills
Academic skills like self-checking, attending to details are fostered when children learn regulatory practices to guide their learning in a mindful manner.

Building Resilience & Mindful Practice
Children learn to overcome challenges rather than avoid them, and to find inspiration in the success of others rather than feeling threatened.
We help our children find the connections across different experiences and subjects, so that they can find purpose and meaning in every task they undertake; and can make connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they experience in life.

Connections
Our Outdoor Experiential Learning Discovery Zones, including the Sensory Garden, Eco-Aquarium, Aesthetic Garden and Desert Garden, have been purposefully designed to provide an authentic learning environment outside the classroom for pupils to engage in new and real-life learning.

Engagement
In our language classrooms, pupils are immersed in digital stories as they take on the roles of story characters. As they develop a love for reading both within and outside the classroom, they will keep learning throughout their lives.
We believe that for children to reach their full potential, they must first master themselves, and learn to manage their own thoughts and emotions. After they become LEADERS OF SELF, they can then build on their strengths to lead others.

Knowing Self, Knowing Others
On our Character & Citizenship Education (CCE) Day, hands-on, group activities are conducted to present pupils with different team-based scenarios. Through these activities, children learn the importance of working with others and the need to manage their own thoughts and emotions.

Developing Student Leadership
Our junior prefects lead and serve the school community with their hearts. Through various school involvement and training, their leadership and interpersonal skills are honed, while they learn to appreciate their own talents and abilities.
THRIE & FLOURISH @ WESTWOOD

We teach our children that every gesture, whether big or small, can make a difference. To lead a meaningful and purposeful life, they learn to appreciate the contributions of others and to find ways to help others.

Values and Purpose

Through our Values-in-Action Projects, our pupils develop future-ready confidence by engaging the community to better the lives of others. In our Donation Drive Projects, they learn to adapt to different situations by interacting with the residents in the neighbourhood to garner their support for the Singapore Children’s Society. Pupils also visit the elderly residents from the Gift of Love and learn to appreciate what they have. Through these meaningful learning experiences, Westwood Primary pupils learn to use their talents and skills to serve and benefit others.
We provide opportunities for children to **develop their character strengths**, to enable them to appreciate their unique abilities and capacities to **flourish and perform at their best**.

**Making Values Come Alive!**

To bring across the message that the Westwood Dolls embody our values, we use the sale of the dolls as an opportunity to raise funds for the Singapore Children’s Society - aligned with our Character Strength of **A Passion for Community**.

Along this journey, we have been amazed by how both the staff and the children connected with the message of the Westwood Dolls. Our pupils have expressed their understanding of the school’s character strengths through drawings, poems and stories, tapping on their unique talents of expressions. Here are a few examples of their wonderful work!
We put in place school-wide processes to engender a culture of well-being within the school community.

Optimism and Positivity

Our teachers put in place enjoyable routines that help children experience optimism and positivity, the children engage in song singing as they transit between their seats and the front of the class so that they are ready to learn.

Every week, teachers set aside time to help children reflect on ‘What Went Well’ during the week. This is done in the Pupil Handbooks, and with teachers’ facilitation, children learn to focus on the positives in life so as to better manage challenges they may face.
We inspire our children to pursue happiness by engaging in meaningful endeavours. Stories from inspirational people who exemplify meaning in life are used to stimulate them to think about their own purpose and what makes them happy.

Personal Reflection

Our Pre-Assembly Moments (PRAM) are a special time for teachers and school leaders to share positive stories and life experiences with the whole school. This creates a sense of community and connectedness, as we talk about the values that shape us, and share anecdotes that bring out the school’s character strengths.

Children learn how to build meaningful relationships with their peers through respecting and caring for one another. Teachers skilfully bring out the social and emotional learning aspects of the lessons and guide children to become trustworthy friends who would do what is best for others as a way to experience happiness and joy.
We inspire our parents and partners to live, teach and embed well-being in our lives, as well as to act as authentic role models for our children.

Positively Westwood!
We view parents as key partners in our Positive Education journey. One way in which we have actively engaged them is through our ‘Board of Positivity’, where parents pen down well-wishes and words of encouragement for their children whenever there is a parent-teacher conference. These heartfelt notes contribute greatly to each child’s sense of belonging.
Becoming a Positive School of Distinction

• 2016: Reference to Thrive Framework and Use of selected Positive Education strategies in every classroom (e.g. ‘What Went Well’), Whole-school Thrive Fiesta
• 2017 - 2019: Piloting of signature Positive Education programmes and strategies (e.g. Mindfulness breaks)
• 2020: An impactful, positive education integrated in core and non-core curriculum

• 2016: Continuation of action research on ‘academic talk to empower student voices’ and ‘use of process praise’; development of resources to impact classroom teaching
• 2017 – 2019: Exploring partnerships with established researchers (e.g. SMU, NIE) to measure the impact of Positive Education signature programmes.
• 2020: Established research partnerships to sustain positive education curriculum

• 2015/16: Inaugural Parents’ Symposium, partnering with PSG for ‘Thrive Fiesta’
• 2017 – 2019: Enhancing school’s Learning for Life’ programme, with focus on community service and student leadership.
• 2020: Establishment of deep partnerships with selected agencies in the West Zone.

• 2016: ‘Thriving Together’ termly sharing sessions, whole-school structured mentoring and set-up of Teaching Lab.
• 2017- 2019: Engagement of a Positive Education consultancy
• 2020: Westwood Primary as a recognised institution of Positive Education, where teachers can apply for teaching attachments.
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