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Good morning, All! In this session, we'll be discussing toilets and character education... []

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First, the toilet problem...

As you well know, the school has recently invested £400,000 renovating student toilets across the site. At last, we can give students the facilities that they deserve!

Recently, however, during one of his toilet duties, [name] conducted some student voice – thank you, [name]! Students expressed the concern that it wouldn't be long before the new toilets were “trashed” (their words). This raises a critical question: How do we get students to look after their facilities? This is a particularly difficult question in the case of toilets, because, when students are using the toilets, no one is looking. So, [] how *do* we get students to do the right thing when no one is looking?

Difficult though this question may be, we already have the resources to begin answering it. The answer is *character*. [] Character is what we do when no one is looking, and since no one is looking when we use the toilet ... I hope ... then character is indeed what we do in the toilets! One might even argue that the character of students at a school might be judged by inspecting the state of their toilets.

Thus, the whole of character education can be brought to bear on this issue. My aim in this presentation is to use this issue as a springboard to reinvigorate our approach to character education at Barr's Hill. And, if we get this right, students – not to mention the wider community – stand to gain far more than just well-looked-after toilets... []

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First, a reminder: What is character education? Well, character consists in *virtues*, so [] any educational activities aimed at helping young people develop virtues would count as character education.

Hopefully the language of virtues sounds familiar. We have been operating with a virtue framework at Barr's Hill for some time now, namely, [] PRIDE – Proactive, Responsible, Inquisitive, Determined and Engaged. Those are all virtues.

However, the PRIDE virtues alone cannot address the toilet problem. Indeed, a student could be Proactively, Inquisitively, Determinedly Engaged in defacing and damaging the toilets. As for Responsible, it's unhelpfully vague. Responsible how? Responsible for what? Addressing this ambiguity was part of the rationale behind the introduction, last year, of the Responsible Behaviours... []

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Honesty, Kindness, Considerateness, Bravery, Respect and Gratitude. These Responsible virtues *can* address – or at least begin to address – the toilet problem. Could a student be Kind, Considerate, Respectful and Grateful and, at the same time, go around damaging and defacing toilets? Of course not! These virtues were originally chosen to address the behaviours that staff believed were most problematic at school (we did a poll, just over a year ago, if you remember). Top of the list was behaviour in the corridors between lessons – in other words, behaviour when no members of staff are looking! So, the toilet problem is in fact an old problem in a new guise.

But what makes the difference between the Responsible virtues and the other PRIDE virtues? Well, in a nutshell, the Responsible virtues are moral virtues, and moral virtues have *intrinsic* value. The other PRIDE virtues are a mixture of performance and intellectual virtues, which have only *instrumental* value – if any value at all. Determination, for example, is valuable only if you are determined to be honest, kind, considerate, and so on. If, on the other hand, you were determined to damage and deface the toilets, then determination is certainly not a virtue, but rather a vice! []

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Moreover, if we zoom out for a minute, Barr's Hill is about building brighter futures. But how often do we stop to ask what makes a future bright? Aristotle would say that a bright future is a *flourishing* future, and that flourishing involves exemplifying the moral virtues – our Responsible virtues, for example.

So, our Responsible virtues are not merely a way of getting students to look after their expensive new toilets. Rather, they are part of what it means to have a bright future – and not only a bright future, but also a bright *present*.

So, just because the Responsible virtues were introduced later on, does not mean that they are secondary in importance. In fact, they are in fact the beating heart of PRIDE at Barr's Hill. Something like this... []

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As you can see, graphic design is not a virtue of that I possess. I encourage more skilful colleagues to improve upon my design. [name], I'm thinking of you! But you get the general idea. The Responsible virtues sit at the heart of PRIDE; the encircling PRIDE virtues should always be guided by and directed towards the Responsible virtues.

Is that it, then? Now that we staff appreciate the central importance of the Responsible virtues, will the toilet problem resolve itself? Unfortunately, not. Deciding upon a set of virtues is just the first question for character educators. The second and much harder question is about *internalisation*. If we want students to do the right thing when no one is looking, and indeed to have the brightest of futures, then they need to carry these virtues *within* themselves. So, how do we get students to internalise the Responsible virtues? []

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First, a bad strategy – *rewards*! Research has shown, time and time again, that if you reward a child for engaging in some desirable behaviour – one of our Responsible behaviours, for example – then the child comes to view the behaviour as something that they do *in order* to get a reward. Reward a child for being kind, for example, and they will end up caring less about kindness and more about rewards! And if the reward then becomes unavailable, as it would when no one is looking – in the toilets, for example – then the child is less inclined to engage in the behaviour than they were prior to the reward! In short, rewards undermine the internalisation process.

Hang on a minute. We at Barr's Hill operate a system of rewards – PRIDE Points! [name] once described PRIDE Points as “a currency for buying good behaviour” – an excellent description, [name]! But if our goal is for students to *internalise* the Responsible virtues, and research has

shown that rewards undermine the internalisation process, then [] what should we do about PRIDE Points? Five-minute discussion. I'll have a wander around, and then we'll feed back. []

[] Okay, thank you for that – some excellent discussion! [name], I was especially interested in your suggestion. So, in light of the research on internalisation, what do *you* think we should do about PRIDE Points? ... For those who couldn't hear him, Andreas said that we ought to get rid of PRIDE Points altogether. I agree. And that's what we're going to do. [] No more PRIDE Points!

That's not to criticize the PRIDE Points system. I want to make that very clear. PRIDE Points have served their purpose – they helped us claw our way out of deep hole. But we are now ready for the next stage in our character education journey. And if we are to take the next stage seriously, then we must now leave PRIDE Points behind. []

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Now for some strategies that have been shown to *facilitate* the internalisation process [] – strategies that we will be implementing in place the PRIDE Point system. None of these strategies are groundbreaking. The best teachers make regular use of them – keep in mind [name], for example, or [name]. In fact, one could argue that making good use of these strategies is part of what makes someone an outstanding teacher. And we will devote whole sessions later today to unpacking each of these strategies in detail – sessions that will be led by other members of staff, you'll be happy to hear! For now, just the briefest of introductions:

First, [] social affirmation. In other words, instead of *tangible* rewards, like PRIDE points, we will make better use of *verbal* rewards. And we will shift away from pre-ordained, public, outcome-focussed affirmation to spontaneous, private, effort-focussed affirmation.

Second, [] building a sense of belonging. In the case of the toilets, students need to feel that the facilities belong to *them*, the community, and that they *themselves* belong in our community. This deep sense of belonging is built upon a foundation of authentic relationships, which will be a central focus moving forward.

Third, [] role modelling. If we want students to look after the toilets, then they need to see us – the staff – looking after our toilets! ... Well, if not our toilets, then the site more generally. We should pick up litter wherever we see it, and generally seize every opportunity to exemplify the Responsible virtues.

Finally, [] promoting empathy. Students need to be encouraged to share in the feelings of others. Regarding the toilet problem in particular, I can't help but share one of Beth's ideas – toilet twinning! Each of our toilets will be twinned with a toilet in a developing country, and a photograph of the twinned toilet will hang in each of our cubicles. This should encourage students to see their shiny new toilets through the eyes of someone less fortunate than themselves, promoting not only empathy but also gratitude. A brilliant idea, [name]! []

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A summary, then. The toilet problem is this: [] How do we get students to do the right thing when no one is looking? The answer: [] by encouraging them to *internalise* the Responsible virtues. This means that we will be shifting our focus away from [] PRIDE Points and other extrinsic motivators, onto strategies that facilitate internalisation, strategies such as [] social affirmation, belonging, role modelling and empathy.

Now, a few final comments. It is likely that some of our students may have become reliant on extrinsic motivators, such as rewards, in order to regulate their behaviour. So, removing PRIDE Points may result in an initial decline in behaviour. But this is a bullet that we must bite – for the sake of brighter futures! And it is a bullet that we are all more than capable of biting. As part of our commitment to this new approach, conversations about the use of internalisation strategies will be incorporated into Performance Management. We will also share examples of best practice at Showcase Best Practice meetings, which I very much look forward to. []

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For those interested in learning more, here's some further reading, all of which I have already put in a folder on SharePoint.

And that's it from me! Thank you for listening, and for your contributions. [] []