

# **2023 -2024 HDCH Community Covenant**

## **Our Deep Hope of Being a Community of Restoration**

As a Christian learning community, we work to be a place where our character is cultivated through learning for a life service to God. In doing this, we want to see all HDCH students become a faithful presence in the community that they serve. We are a school community called by Jesus to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31). The ultimate vision is to be a community of Shalom; that is to say, a community where God’s peace, justice and harmony permeate all aspects of who we are and what we do. We will not always get this right. There will be conflict. This community covenant will seek to outline expectations between all stakeholders to define what it means to work together and how we ought to treat each other, even and especially when there is conflict.

We will seek to resolve conflicts and problems through the Restorative Justice in Education process, which involves setting high expectations and providing high support to live into those expectations. This covenant is part of this process.

Therefore, we as students and staff commit to...

**Section 1 - Treat everyone in the school with dignity and respect.** Dignity recognizes that each person is created in the image of God and thus infused with intrinsic value. Respect is the posture we take toward one another because of the inherent dignity we acknowledge in each other. The following list gives some examples of what respect from students for the school community looks like:

- We will honour each individual’s personal boundaries, receiving consent before taking photos, posting to social media, physically touching, or making verbal comments.
- We will not bully or harass, with our in-person and online actions or words, anyone for any reason.
- We will listen to our teachers and their directions.

The following list gives some examples of what respect from staff for the school community looks like:

- We will set and consistently apply class and learning expectations.
- We will handle concerns privately and not in front of the class.
- We will work to set aside preconceived notions of who a student is before getting to know them.
- We will create space for students to express their needs without shame or embarrassment.
- We will treat students as complex human beings, not just a task to have to do to get through the day
- We will speak about students and colleagues in a way that protects their reputation and upholds their dignity, whether or not they are present.

**Section 2 - Treat everyone in the school with kindness.** Biblical kindness is outlined as a fruit of a spirit-filled life and reflects God's grace, generosity and love. It is a key posture that we should adopt to help build a healthy school culture.

The following list gives some examples of what kindness from students to staff looks like:

- We will use language that is polite and builds people up.
- We will show grace to the teachers and staff, understanding that they are complex human beings.

The following list gives some examples of what kindness from staff to students looks like:

- We will use a kind tone of voice when speaking with students.
- We will provide encouraging (not just negative) feedback about learning progress.
- We will be mindful of the competing priorities and complexity of students' lives.
- We will have the grace and patience to work with students when they may be "off" on a given day.

### **Section 3 - Be relationally and educationally present in our school and community.**

Our task is to learn together. The Apostle Paul tells the Thessalonian church “we loved you so much that we shared with you not only God’s Good News but our own lives, too.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Our work of learning is done best together.

The following list provides some examples of what it means for students to be present with our school community in our learning:

- We will be ready for class by being on time and in uniform
- We will not let technology be a barrier to being academically, mentally and socially present in class. (follow the school’s and teacher’s structures to help stay on task and engaged).
- We will honestly make our needs known and trust the teacher to help when students are struggling to be in class.
- We will support our peers in their learning, especially when collaborating in the classroom on various projects and learning experiences.

The following list provides some examples of what it means for staff to be present with our school community in our learning:

- Learn and use names
- Do our best to make learning meaningful and engaging
- Assume the best of students and start with the assumption that they are doing the best they can.
- Develop caring and supportive relationships with students.