



THE WAY

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FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

In their research focused on the correlative relationship between self-discipline and academic performance, Duckworth and Seligman (2005) suggest that “self-discipline predicts academic performance more powerfully than IQ does, accounting for more than twice as much variance in final grades”.

So, what is self-discipline (or self-regulation) and what does it look like for students at Thomas Hassall?

A well-established practice at the College is the use of our Positive Learning Behaviours. These behaviours are a set of practical learned strategies and approaches that are foundational for students learning well in and out of the classroom. The Positive Learning Behaviours are:

Positive Learning Behaviour	Primary Focus
Engage	Actively monitoring and taking charge of their learning.
Value	Respecting their own learning needs and those of others.
Respect	Proactively seeking guidance and acting on feedback.
Manage	Identifying distractions and taking practical steps to eliminate them.
Persist	Embracing challenge and using strategies to push through.

These have been part of College life for many years but we have recently embarked on a renewed focus, acknowledging their importance in supporting individual learning growth. It is important to acknowledge that these behaviours are relevant for all students from Prep to Year 12 and they cannot simply be 'mastered', instead they can be developed to meet different challenges and contexts.

Last week at the Senior School Assembly I reminded the students of the Positive Learning Behaviours and shared the following quote with them...

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Will Durant

My message to the students was simple...if they use the Positive Learning Behaviours more often, they will learn better. Students who are able to self-regulate by applying these behaviours more regularly will experience greater, more consistent learning growth.

Reflecting on my schooling experience, I don't recall a specific focus on self-regulation or the development of learning behaviours. Perhaps they came more naturally, maybe a less complicated childhood promoted them without the need for discussion, or possibly research has brought new insights to light. Regardless of the reason, the research is clear and supported by observational data; students who are able to manage their emotions, focus more consistently, seek and respond to feedback, and embrace challenge with the use of practical strategies experience greater learning growth. It is also important to note that this process builds momentum as behaviours lead to learning and learning fuels behaviours.

When reflecting on these behaviours, I also note the importance they have beyond the classroom. Anecdotally, we see a strong correlation between a student's ability to self-regulate and their capacity to manage complex social contexts in the playground.

As we renew our focus on these behaviours at College, I encourage parents to join us as we partner in supporting our students' learning. These are behaviours that you can expect and promote at home too. One clear and easy way to do this is by naming them when you see your child using them or when there might be an opportunity to use them. Awareness is an important first step in the process of developing each of the Positive Learning Behaviours.

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