**A Framework for Ethical Leadership**



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**Preface**

This framework demonstrates how a college can recognise the importance of ethical and values driven leadership.

By following a common approach a college can allow all staff to grow and develop their leadership skills and qualities.

Ethical leadership is built upon respect for moral beliefs and values the dignity and rights of others. It is therefore, closely related to concepts such as trust, honesty, consideration, empathy and fairness.

Being fair means understanding other people’s perspectives. The more you appreciate other people’s issues, the easier it is to act in an ethical manner.

International research has shown there is a clear link between a college’s success and ethical leadership.₁

**₁**How Ethical Leadership Impacts Student Success

[Phillip Neal](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/doSearch?ContribAuthorStored=Neal%2C+Phillip) [Brooke Justice](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/doSearch?ContribAuthorStored=Justice%2C+Brooke) [Kyle Barron](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/doSearch?ContribAuthorStored=Barron%2C+Kyle) First published: 01 March 201

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20342>

**Introduction**

The framework for ethical leadership has been developed from interviews, staff surveys and consultation with Governing Boards. This was undertaken during this unprecedented academic year.

There was considerable consensus that the language of values, behaviours and leadership styles was needed to become part of everyday decision making and practice. Every decision and judgment college leaders make sets an example and should promote ethical behaviour in students and colleagues. ‘How’ we do things is as important as ‘what’ we do.

In an environment where colleges are so diverse and responsible to many different people, communities must be able to rely on individual decision-making leaders and governing boards to do the right thing. It is not enough for college leaders and governing boards to have good intentions. There is a need to question, ‘How do we know that we are doing the right thing?’

The framework provides a set of values, behaviours and leadership styles that creates a good community and establishes a common language that makes it easier for staff to communicate effectively.

The framework is intended to be based on a flexible set of principles which become part of conversations and ingrained within leadership roles.



**Underlying Principles**

The practical use of the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education by the pathfinders has established some common themes on a national scale and across multiple leadership and governance roles.

1. The framework is adaptable to a college’s context without creating additional work.
2. The framework is intended to establish a common language to direct governance and leadership discussions and decision-making.
3. Using the values, behaviours and leadership styles in practice it is intended to embed a culture, build confidence and consistency in leadership right across the college.

The framework will enable staff and governors to reflect on their practice and leadership. Using the values, behaviours and leadership styles as a sounding board will support staff in their conviction that they are doing the right thing. As the framework is used more widely, staff will feel that elements of their leadership such as kindness is increasingly important when making decisions for the good of students, staff and the community.

1. The framework will be a strong pillar within recruitment, CPD and appraisal processes and activities.
2. The framework will prove influential when considering a college’s curriculum offers

6. The principles of the framework could be used across a whole college

community – students, parents and all staff – as well as the leaders and the

governing board.

**Values and Behaviours**

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| Key Values | Shown by Behaviours |
| **Healing and Humility** | * Constantly striving for unity and consensus and a feeling of inclusion * Creating an atmosphere of psychological security and stability * Being loyal, altrocentric and dedicated to building an inclusive whole-college community |
| **Kindness and Compassion** | * Being empathetic and actively listening to concerns of others * Wherever possible showing warmth and gentleness towards others * Showing belief in and empowering others |
| **Dignity and Integrity** | * Acting honestly and transparently in ways that generate trust * Always having respect for others * Being conscientious – following up on promises |
| **Truth and**  **Justice** | * Being role models for the college’s values and behaviours * Striving to do the right thing – “having a moral compass” * Communicating in a warm inclusive manner. Being aware of how your behaviour, tone of voice and language impacts on others |
| **Forgiveness and Mercy** | * Being prepared to forgive and keen to bring about peace and reconciliation * Valuing the development of the whole person and especially those who find education difficult * Wanting the best for all students and colleagues |

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| Key Values | Shown by Behaviours |
| **Optimism and Creativity**  **Joy, Vision, Daring** | * Being positive and encouraging optimism and creativity. Showing “realistic optimism” * Being resilient and calm in difficult times * Encouraging innovation and celebrating the   ability to implement new ways of working |
| **Service and Sacrifice** | * Having a duty of care for others * Showing a desire to be of service to others * Being prepared to put the needs of others before yourself |

For a College to move forward, a commitment to the mission statement and key values is not in addition to the quest for excellence but integral to it.

Essentially, the approach is based on the premise that people come before strategy.

Leadership styles shown by all staff must be aligned to this.

*“Learners have consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating an environment that values and nurtures difference.”*

Outstanding Ofsted grade descriptor for behaviour and attitudes

Further Education & Skills Inspection Handbook

March 2020 No 190021 p53

**Leadership Styles**

**– the positive and the negative**

**Situational leadership** is about using appropriate leadership styles in the most appropriate circumstances.

Considering a college’s key values and associated behaviours it is useful to identify which leadership styles would be most appropriate in order to ensure the mission, ethos and the transformation and excellence agenda are reflected in daily actions and practice.

Research by the CIPD₂ has shown the following leadership styles help to promote and embed staff emotional health and wellbeing. They would also closely align and complement the college’s values and behaviours.

**The “8 C’s” leadership styles and their associated characteristics are shown by:**

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| 1. Being an excellent communicator | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Has emotional intelligence when dealing with staff and students * Is a good listener and coach * Communicates honestly with all staff and has a clear sense of vision and purpose * Makes the effort to speak personally with staff and can inspire and motivate colleagues | * Unaware of impact of behaviours on others * Lacking in empathy for others * Comes across as defensive and communicates with a limited range of staff * Lacking in presence and visibly. Over reliant on email communication |

₂[Leadership in the Workplace | Factsheets | CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/leadership/factsheet)

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| 2. Being consultative | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Promotes staff engagement by seeking the views of others * Empowers others and nurtures talent and skills * Has a ‘no blame’ and collaborative approach * Encourages teamwork and has a good sense balance between autonomy and accountability | * Reluctant to seek the views of others * Tends to micro-manage * Tends to blame others and not take personal responsibility * Management style is more command and control |

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| 3. Being consistent | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Acts with integrity and is a role model * Seen as fair, just, approachable and very professional * Upholds the college’s values * Deals with conflict well | * Not trustworthy and consequently perceived as not approachable by many staff * Perceived as inconsistent and moody * Undermines the college’s values by being negative and very critical * Lacking in the ability to manage conflict |

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| 4. Being compassionate | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Recognises and tackles excessive workloads and inequalities * Shows kindness and care for others * Treats all staff with respect * Builds trust | * Not aware of and unsympathetic to the pressures on staff * Not seen as compassionate * Shows little concern for others * Not a good team player |

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| 5. Being creative | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Encourages innovation and provide opportunities for others to contribute ideas * Open to new ways of working and promotes a ‘can do’ attitude * Keen to solve problems and look for new opportunities * Takes calculated risks and allows others to do so | * Does not see developing others as a priority * Often adopts a negative approach to change * Not open to change and often has a negative attitude * Overly cautious and risk averse |

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| 6. Being conscientious | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Keeps promises and commitments * Keeps people properly informed and ‘in the loop’ * Is self-aware and knows own strengths and weaknesses * Is competent and willing to admit when help is needed | * Lacking in consciousness and reliability to get things done * Often fails to consider the consequences of actions and decisions on others * Lacking in self-awareness and personal limitations * Often lacking in humility |

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| 7. Being calm | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Has a high degree of emotional self-control * Is approachable and creates time for others * Able to reduce panic and anxiety in others * Aware of personal emotional triggers | * Lacking in emotional self-control * Perceived as impatient and lacking empathy * Responds badly when under pressure * Lacking in emotional self-awareness |

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| 8. Being courageous | |
| Positive | **Negative** |
| * Is authentic and has a strong moral compass * Confronts unacceptable behaviour with tact and diplomacy to preserve dignity * Adopts an ethical approach and strives to make the right decisions even though these might not be popular * Does not permit any inappropriate talk about absent staff | * Does not value and act in a way that is ethical * Lacks tact and diplomacy, little emotional intelligence * Overly concerned with personal ego and popularity and keeping everyone happy * Does not take a firm stance with gossiping and undermining of colleagues |

“Developing learners’ character, which we define as the set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives learners the qualities they need to flourish in our society”

Outstanding Ofsted grade descriptor for behaviour and attitudes.

Further Education & Skills Inspection Handbook March 2020 No 190021 p55

**Summary and Conclusions**

1. The framework will give all staff confidence in their ability to lead. It is about being good role models.
2. The college values will be a constant, aligned to a clear vision.
3. The framework will enable all staff to have the courage to do what’s right, not about what is easy or always popular.
4. The framework will be perceived as being integral to everyday college practices. It should not be a bolt-on or something else to do on top of everything else.
5. The framework embodies everything that our education sector should be about. A key question should be, ‘how will it be embedded to ensure what is best for students or staff?’
6. A shared language will provide positive guidance to ensure decisions made support the emotional health and wellbeing of students and staff.
7. Being an ethical employer attracts the best staff. The framework will allow for constructive and dignified challenge to ensure whatever is agreed is carried out.
8. The framework will allow leaders to navigate a path when times are tough and where there is conflict. It will help to articulate what you do and why you are doing it.
9. Embedding the framework with governors and staff will create an environment where the leadership and all staff feel their own values will align with those of the college.
10. Kindness, courage and optimism are three attributes fundamental to the Holy Cross Framework. It should be stressed again, that ethical behaviour is not just the responsibility of people with leadership roles but of everyone employed at a college.

**March 2021**

