

Guiding Principles of Melville-Knox Christian School Aberdeen

According to the first question of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, the chief end of man is “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever” (1 Cor. 10:31). This purpose should not only govern the behaviour of individuals, but even that of organizations, businesses and educational establishments. **For this reason, the guiding principle of Melville-Knox Christian School is to glorify and enjoy God through the education it provides.** Flowing from this primary guiding principle, Melville-Knox Christian School aims to practice three subsidiary principles, which are stated and described below.

The first subsidiary principle of Melville-Knox Christian School is to instil wisdom and Godly character in its pupils, equipping them for life in the 21st Century. Any education builds a foundation for a pupil’s life, but only an education based on the Word of God will build a solid foundation that will adequately prepare the pupil for life in the 21st Century (Luke 6:46-49). God’s Word applies to all areas of life and for this reason the School bases each of its subjects, not just Religious Education, on Biblical principles. Through thorough instruction of the Bible, the School seeks to train its pupils in the fear of the Lord by teaching them about their spiritual inheritance (Prov. 1:7, 4:7). An understanding of this spiritual inheritance would not be complete, however, without an accompanying understanding of the pupils’ cultural inheritance. In order to be ready for life in the 21st Century and to have a positive impact on their own cultural environment, the children have to be culturally literate. The School recognises that, as a Christian school, the culture it transmits to its pupils is not the mainstream culture of 21st Century Britain, but a sub-culture of it. The School, however, seeks to achieve an appropriate balance between teaching the Christian and secular cultures of today. Through this kind of cultural education, the School seeks to show its pupils the positive aspects of the culture they live in, while preparing them for the dangers and sin that exist in that culture.

In addition to preparing its pupils culturally for life in the 21st Century, the School also seeks to prepare its pupils by building their character. What does it benefit a person if he has the best education available but has a bad character? Melville-Knox Christian School sees character building as a vital aspect of education, which it strives to achieve by teaching Biblical standards of behaviour and thought, disciplining bad behaviour, rewarding good behaviour, and providing the examples of Godly teachers. The School recognises that the main responsibility for character building lies with the children’s parents and, in increasing measure, with the children themselves, so the School works in partnership with the parents when possible. Ideally, the School and the parents will share each other’s values and methods, but

where this is not the case, the School will insist on correct behaviour while the children are in its care.

Through this outlined approach, the School believes and prays that, as the Lord blesses the work, its pupils will learn wisdom and develop in Godliness so that they are able to successfully navigate and positively impact the secular culture in which they live. As Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." The School desires to glorify God by producing individuals who will walk the narrow path that leads to life and who will seek to glorify God and enjoy Him as they live their lives.

The second subsidiary principle of the School is to provide its pupils with excellent education. Melville-Knox Christian School strives to accomplish this aim by doing everything as "unto the Lord" (Col. 3:23-24). In other words, the School will endeavour to do all to the best of its ability, with diligence and integrity, always seeking first the glory of God. In order for the School to accomplish this, all the individuals who lead and work in the school must work towards this goal.

The School will promote this high academic standard by maintaining an encouraging and safe learning environment. Such an environment will encourage the pupils' enjoyment of the learning experience and promote a desire within them to strive for excellence in their work. This suitable environment is one that teaches children at their level and inspires them to learn by encouraging them to work hard but not discouraging them by demanding what they cannot achieve. As much as is possible, the teaching is to be tailored to the individual pupil; slow learners are to be given the time they need to learn and faster learners are to be spurred on with extra tasks. By approaching excellent education in this way, the School seeks to develop each pupil's individuality and gifts.

A necessary level of attention to individual learning speeds and talents is only possible where the teacher-pupil ratio is kept low. Melville-Knox Christian School's rule for maximum class size is 20 children per class. Additionally, each class will ideally have at least one classroom assistant. If the School begins to grow beyond the size of 20 pupils per class, the School will seek to accommodate this growth, not by increasing the class size, but by opening up sister schools. It is part of the vision of Melville-Knox Christian School to offer excellent Christian education to all who want it, and this involves the possibility of opening up new schools in areas where there is no provision of excellent Christian education. Through this aim, the School seeks to bring glory to God through its standard of excellence and wide availability of education; it seeks to encourage the enjoyment of Him through the learning environment that it provides.

The third and final subsidiary principle of Melville-Knox Christian School is to be a fragrance and a light to its surrounding community. 2 Cor. 2:14 says, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." Also, Jesus tells us,

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14-16).

In keeping with these portions of Scripture, Melville-Knox Christian School aims to be visible in the community and to serve it. Serving the community includes, firstly, offering excellent education indiscriminately (including to those from families with other faiths or no faith, as long as the parents agree to submit to the aims of the School and its practices). Secondly, the School will seek to help home-schooling parents fulfil their God-given responsibility to educate their children in the ways of the Lord. The School will aim to have programs that will support home-schooling parents educationally, emotionally, and spiritually, where applicable. Thirdly, the School seeks to serve the community by actively looking for opportunities to be a blessing to it, such as taking part in a clean-up project, visiting a local care home, participating in the activities organised by the community, etc.

In brief, the chief end of Melville-Knox Christian School is “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” through its teaching and the three subsidiary aims of the School that seek to bring this into practice are:

- to instil wisdom and Godly character in its pupils, equipping them for life in the 21st century
- to provide its pupils with excellent education
- to be a fragrance and light to its surrounding community by offering excellent education indiscriminately, by supporting home-schooling families and by being positively involved in the community.