

COMMENTARY

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THE SINGLE STEP THAT BEGINS AN IMPORTANT JOURNEY

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Te Kura o Tititea Mount Aspiring College

When I see our new Year 7 students arriving on their first day at MAC, I sometimes reflect on the Chinese proverb attributed to Lao Tzu: 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.'

That single step that every student takes when they commence their journey at our college is the first of thousands of steps they will take with us.

From their first day of high school to their very last, each student's journey is unique to them. And, like all journeys, there will be ups and downs.

Adolescence can be hard for our young people to navigate, and challenging also for their families, caregivers and whānau who must guide them through this sometimes turbulent time in their lives.

Our job as educators, pastoral caregivers, and administrators is to work together with students' parents and caregivers to support every student on their journey with us, and help them navigate the ups and downs they will encounter along the way.

One way we signal our intent and commitment to every student is in our 'leaver profile'.

Our leaver profile describes the attributes we want every student to develop during their time at MAC, so they can leave our school equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to, and flourish in, a complex world. These attributes are:

Mastery: Being able to master the skills and capabilities needed to strive for one's personal best. Using knowledge and skills to problem-solve, create, and innovate.

Attitude: Having respect and confidence in self and others, and having a sense of purpose. Acting with integrity, and making the most of opportunities.

Citizenship: Celebrating diversity, being inclusive, and having the courage to do the right thing at the right time. Being connected to the community.

Another important part of the journey is recognising that success is different for everyone. We all have different ideas about what success means and what we are endeavouring to achieve.

As our students journey through MAC, it's important for them to take stock along the way, and recognise and celebrate what they have achieved, rather than immediately setting another goal and forgetting to reflect on how far they've come.

Taking a step back, and reflecting on the journey is an important part of keeping perspective as we all strive for our personal goals.

When it comes to achieving their personal goals, students need the right conditions for learning both at school and at home. While these conditions will look different for each family/whānau, meeting young people's physical and emotional needs helps them feel safe.

If we can provide the right conditions for learning at home and at school, we are giving our students the best possible chance of achieving success — whatever that looks like for them.

Our many academic pathways and learning enrichment and support opportunities, alongside our focus on the wellbeing of our students, allows us to create the best possible conditions for learning.

And, if our students need additional support, our pastoral care team of specialist guidance counsellors, an in-school behavioural psychologist, junior and senior deans, careers guidance counsellors and youth workers from Kahu Youth and 24-7, is available to step in and work with students and their families.

If we can support every young person who journeys through our school, and equip them with the attributes they need for their post-school life, then their journey of a thousand miles with us — a journey that begins with a single step — will have been a success.

Useful resources

MAC parents resources: mtaspiring.school.nz/resources-for-parents/

How we support our students: <https://mtaspiring.school.nz/how-we-support-our-students/>

More information

Please contact Principal Nicola Jacobsen on 03 443 0498 or principal@mtaspiring.school.nz