

Service at Ardingly

Through Service, we aim to form staff and young people who contribute intelligently and effectively to the welfare of Society. Love is shown in deeds, not words. Staff and students recognise the intrinsic altruism of care afforded by both working at and attending the College. We are not a school of privilege, but a school of obligation. The ability to recognise the rights and needs of the neighbour or of the wider community, and that they are as real as one's own, is an essential characteristic of our Service programmes. There is nothing sentimental or phoney about the rights of the neighbour, whether it's the neighbour at home, in the classroom, in the staffroom, in the street or further afield in less-developed countries or wherever those rights are real. The living-out of that recognition is charity and love; at Ardingly we prefer to use the term 'compassion' – that ability to suffer with.

Normally, people associate service pure and simply with charitable giving. Naturally, there must be works of charity and quick responses to immediate and pressing need: relief for earthquakes, floods or volcanoes or Christmas hamper appeals, shelters for the homeless, Médecins sans Frontières. But at Ardingly we recognise that there is another dimension to the works of charity and that is works of justice. This is when we all respond to the underlying issues or causes. They are challenged to ask: why have such situations arisen? Who can they lobby to change inequitable legislation? How can they shape public opinion for a change in attitude? And in what ways can we educate people about the reality of social justice principles, about the dignity of the human person, and where should they direct their advocacy? At Ardingly our works of justice tackle the root causes which create the need for works of charity. We recognise their inheritance and upbringing in a global context, which starts with them viewing others as equal. Both staff and students are exposed to the reality of social diversity and are expected to develop the courage to make a difference. Such strength in interpersonal intelligence lays the foundations for adults of good character - for them to become fully human. Ardingly boys, girls, men and women are expected to change the world for good.