

The Avanti Way

An Introduction to our
Philosophy of Education



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Why we're here

Avanti exists to help each person become a well-rounded human being through personal and spiritual growth, and so make the world a better place.



Our Core Principles

- We are unique spiritual beings with incredible potential and we achieve our full potential by discovering and nurturing all parts of ourselves – intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual.
- We can choose how we wish to respond to life and what we nurture within us.
- We are called upon to care for and respect all life – human, animal and plant – and to live in a way that causes the least possible harm.
- We each observe the one same reality from our own unique perspective and open-minded dialogue deeply enriches our vision.
- We will live increasingly meaningful and satisfying lives if we each serve a purpose higher than ourselves.
- We need to love and be loved, and to be nourished by personal relationships that encourage us to be the best we can.



Our Triple Pathway

Avanti Schools support each person's life journey along three parallel paths:
Educational excellence; Character development; and Spiritual insight.





Educational Excellence means to be passionate about learning. This requires us as individuals to be reflective and thoughtful, and to be willing to be bold and adventurous. Avanti's approach to education is to lay the foundation for each individual to embark upon a lifelong journey of learning and self-fulfilment.

Character Development means to be conscious of our place in the world, to live in a way we would wish to see others live, and to be aware of how our choices affect the world around us, including all nature. Avanti's approach to character is for each person to become reflective, compassionate and responsible citizens.



Spiritual insight in our non-denominational schools means to understand ourselves, others and the world around us. Spirituality is made relevant and accessible to all, irrespective of faith or belief.



Spiritual insight in our Hindu faith-designated schools means to awaken each person's unique and loving relationship with Krishna. Spirituality is made relevant and accessible to all, irrespective of faith or belief.

Our Three Practices

Our way to support the three paths of Educational excellence, Character development and Spiritual insight, is through a student-centred approach to education based upon our three practices of Dialogue, Experience and Relationships.



Dialogue

The ability and willingness to hear others with an open mind and to speak truthfully and honestly is a critical sign of intelligence, and an essential component of education.

Dialogue-based educational excellence:

1. Approaches learning by examining the big questions of life, through open discussion of multiple perspectives, questioning one's own assumptions and empathic dialogue.
2. Guides students to be actively involved in creating their own paths of learning, working as individuals and in groups, and so discover their genuine interests and abilities.
3. Explores opportunities for in-depth study of chosen areas of knowledge and experience.



Experience

Our capacity to internalise what we have learned and put it into practice in our lives is the test of true learning. This leads to genuine personal development and character formation.

Experience-based character development:

1. Enables students to reflect upon and better understand their own natures. Then they will more clearly see their core strengths, areas for development, where they fit into the bigger picture, know what areas they wish to study and how best to learn.
2. Approaches a given subject with a clear focus on how it can practically be applied, and with an expectation that students can engage in personal creative expression.
3. Supports students to encounter the real world and take ownership of their experience by means such as self-organised learning and Avanti's principles of restorative justice.



Relationships

Heartfelt relationships with others, deep interest in and concern for the world around us, and for some, finding and cultivating an authentic relationship with God based on love and service—these are the foundations of spiritual wisdom.

Relationship-based spiritual awareness:

1. Creates opportunities and provides structures for students to create genuine relationships. These are built into regular routines, along with acts of service to others.
2. Encourages the habit of introspection and meditation for students to better understand their place in the world in terms of their own identity, their relationship with others, and with the wider world. Some will want to explore their relationship with God.
3. Calls upon both staff and students to practice daily reflection, by means such as reflection diaries, so as to deepen their self-understanding in the above ways.





Our Philosophy

The study of Philosophy is often divided into aesthetics, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Here we introduce Avanti's perspective on these four areas.

Aesthetics of Education

The ultimate purpose of education is to cultivate love, which is both an aesthetic and rational experience. Love is already present in our heart, and for some, will culminate in love for God. The teacher need only help reawaken it and teach students to express love through practical action and good character.

Ethics of Education

The symptom of an educated person is good character, including empathy, gratitude, courage, integrity, self-discipline and respect. Knowledge is defined as reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. It's not enough for something to be factual; it must also be beneficial for others. This requires helping students practice ethical action based upon their nature, while keeping life's ultimate goal in sight.

Epistemology of Education

The relationship between teacher and student creates the circumstances that lead to learning. The teacher must model the qualities he or she wishes to see in the student. The student cultivates both inquisitiveness and humility, since neither blind following nor absurd inquiry are helpful. The teacher helps the student develop powers of observation, critical reasoning, and dialogue, while also honouring the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

Metaphysics of Education

The teacher uses these methods to help the student distinguish reality from illusion. Our conviction is that every individual is spiritual by nature and therefore possesses great potential for learning and growth. We each approach the same reality from different perspectives and the resultant dialogue lies at the heart of education.

