



TRANSFORMING SCHOOL ETHOS Developing an Inspiring Workspace

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Developing an
Inspiring Workspace

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(Deemed to be University)

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SECTION I

Theoretical Underpinnings



2.0 A Word to the School Leaders...

NEP 2020 lays out its vision for creating positive working environments and overhauling service conditions for teachers as maximising “...the ability of teachers to do their jobs effectively, and to ensure that they are part of vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of teachers, students, parents, principals, and other support staff, all of whom share a common goal: to ensure that our children are learning.”(clause 5.8). We reckon that the adoption of a wholeschool approach is a precondition for the success of all efforts aiming to ensure that all children are learning. Building upon the policy environment and the case for a whole school approach, the present module seeks to achieve two objectives: firstly, it seeks to broaden the vision of NEP, 2020. It seeks to enable school leaders to think of developing their schools as inspiring workspaces for all stakeholders and not just the teachers. Secondly, while all modules in this compendium collectively strive to achieve the vision of NEP by addressing varying focal areas, the present module emphasizes the role of school ethos in the process. Principals entrusted with the responsibility of creating inspiring workspaces will benefit from a theoretical framework to understand the very concept of ethos; a concept often found as nebulous as it is omnipresent. The current module, attempts to operationalise the concept and suggest indicative strategies and suggestions for harnessing the strength of school ethos towards creating schools which are nurturing, conducive and inspiring for one and all.

2.1 Objectives

1. To provide the school leaders with a theoretical foundation to conceptualise school ethos
2. To facilitate an understanding of the characteristics of an inspiring workspace.
3. To enable an appreciation of the interrelationship of school ethos and school as an inspiring workspace.
4. To enable reflections on the role of a school leader in developing school as an inspiring workspace.

2.2 Concept Box



1. **Ethos:** Set of guiding beliefs, values and attitudes shared by members of a group/organisation which then imparts a characteristic spirit of such group. Such spirit is felt by one and all when interacting with this group/organisation.
2. **Statement of Ethos:** A formal declaration of an organisation's ethos. It is a conscious and concerted commitment to an ethos.
3. **Values:** An idea that one puts premium on or values, vis. democracy, secularism, respect for all etc. Values translated into common experience and given expression through varied symbols create the ethos of a school.
4. **Symbols:** Manifestations of an idea/value. Symbols are contextual and are given meaning by discussion and consensus.
5. **Consistency:** In this case, a continued coherence between values, common experience and symbols.
6. **Common experience:** An experiential state shared by all stakeholders, for example pride in one's school's legacy and achievements. Common experiences can be consciously created.
7. **Whole School Approach (WSA):** An approach emanating in school health literature, later adopted across school enhancement efforts. WSA emphasises involving all stakeholders, at all times, in all policy, practice and processes, such that schools are able to promote the holistic well-being and flourishing of all its members.
8. **Pervasiveness: (Strong/weak) :** Pervasiveness determines the extent to which the ethos permeates all aspects of a school: i.e. people, policies, practices and processes. The greater the pervasiveness, the stronger the ethos and vice-versa. A strong profile by itself does not ensure a great ethos profile of school. It has to be read in conjunction with the 'footprint' indicator.
9. **Footprint :** (Positive/ negative) refers to the impact an ethos has on the whole school. To be perceived as a continuum, the two extreme ends denote a positive and a negative footprint, respectively.
10. **School Ethos Profile:** A construct that can help stakeholders develop a summative understanding of overall school ethos. It is created when the twin criteria of the pervasiveness and footprint of a school's ethos intersect. As a result, it can be of four types; robust, toxic, tepid and frigid

2.3 From Ethos to ‘School’ Ethos: The Fundamentals

The term ethos is an often used but rarely explicated one; researchers agree that it continues to be a nebulous one (Teach First, n.d.)! We hear terms such as national ethos, organizational ethos, school ethos and so forth. The NEP 2020 for instance in its vision statement looks to nurture ‘an education system rooted in Indian ethos’. It goes on to talk of ethos in a similar vein on four more occasions, yet the exact meaning NEP attributes to the term remains as elusive as it is in the literature, at large. We frequently also come across the term organizational ethos in literature on improving workspace culture and efficiency just as we come across the term school ethos repeatedly in literature on school reforms and increasing school efficiency.

Despite its frequent usage, ethos remains a term difficult to define precisely. As Carla Solvason (2005, p. 85) points out, “The terms ethos, spirit, climate, ambience and culture are often used interchangeably, or without appropriate definition.” Ethos is most often confused with culture and theorists are divided on whether ethos derives from culture, informs it or is actually the same and can indeed be used interchangeable (Carla Solvason, 2005). There is however a recent consensus on ethos being more a matter of feeling; it is the characteristic spirit that an institution emits. Here, it is to be briefly noted that having an ethos does not automatically imply having a positive ethos too(the subsequent section on positive and negative ethos will take it up in greater detail). An organization’s ethos may be positive, productive and encouraging or it may be negative, avoidant and toxic, or anywhere between the two extremes cited. No matter which one, each organization still has an ethos.

Efforts to define ethos variously refer to it as the ‘characteristic spirit’ or the ‘typical way of existence’ or the ‘underlying set of beliefs and values’ of a group which may be a nation, an organization, a sports team and so forth. A fully framed definition of ethos generally reads as ethos is the set of guiding beliefs, attitudes, values shared by members of a group. Fundamental to the definition of ethos are two ideas; one that ethos is ‘actively shared by all the members’, and two that it is ‘underlying or guiding’. Each requires further elaboration.

We begin with idea about it being shared; so, national ethos is shared by all citizens, organizational ethos by all stakeholders and team ethos by all players and support staff. If the group members subscribe to contrasting values or simply not the same values, the

diffused value set cannot be called ethos. For a set of values etc. to be called ethos, it must be reflected in the actions of all group members. To illustrate, taking school as the context, members will imply everyone right from the guard stationed at the school entrance to the school leader. Suppose a school positions itself as a ‘welcoming space’ in its statement of ethos but the same is not communicated to the security staff at the very entrance of the school. When parents or members of community visit the school, the security staff, in following their strict safety protocols may fail to balance their duty with school’s ethos and the idea of ‘welcoming space’ may fail at the very gate of the school.

The second phrase i.e. guiding or underlying implies that it is instrumental in shaping what happens in the group; in our case the school. So underlying implies that it shapes and gets reflected in all aspects of the school, in actions of all people, in interactions of all stakeholders and so on. It thus is the string which ties policies, processes, interventions, interactions and behaviors in one cohesive whole such that each reflects the same set of values. Against this backdrop then school ethos can be understood as referring to the guiding beliefs, attitudes and values shared by the stakeholders of a school and the resultant feeling that permeates every aspect of the school environment, which everyone, including an arriving visitor, innately understands. So, a school may have a welcoming ethos or a formal one, a professional ethos or a friendly one, even a democratic ethos or an authoritarian one!

We elaborate on the term ethos some more with the aim of gaining gradual and further insights into the concept of school ethos.

Firstly, one must recognize that ethos is an inevitable result of humans with shared aims coming together for longer span periods. To elaborate, whenever a group of humans come together for sustained periods of time with ostensibly shared aims and objectives, the variations in individual beliefs, attitudes and values have to be addressed and accommodated in a manner that a group identity can emerge. The group as an entity then has its own set of beliefs, attitudes and values which are ideally subscribed to by all members in the group.

Concept in Action: Ethos on Cricket Ground

One may find it useful to think of a sports team say the Indian cricket or badminton team representing the nation at international competitive sports events. In their personal lives each of the players and members of support staff may place different value on punctuality, uncompromising training routines, having a substance-free life, and compromising on quality time with family and friends etc. However, coming together as a team with a given expectation of performing to international standards as elite sportsperson, each member of the team must adhere to these values when on a team tour or training camps. Similarly, the focus on fitness and use of on field-aggression may be adopted as team values, communicated to all, and all members subscribe to and consistently try to achieve these levels as members of a well-oiled unit.

Schools are organizations which see the coming together of people from culturally, linguistically and generationally different profiles. Which such diverse backgrounds variations in beliefs, values and attitudes are bound to exist. However, the shared aim of creating conducive and inclusive learning environments for each learner is the meta-objective which is expected to drive this organization and all its members. Accordingly, the values, attitudes and beliefs of each member have to be in sync with this meta-aim.

Think for a moment, the challenges that a school leader of a multi-religious student population may face in ensuring an inclusive and equity driven ethos for all students if some, most or any of her teachers and support staff do not believe in the value of secularism. Similarly, a school looking to reflect discipline, hard work and perseverance as values may find it difficult to bring students on board if they come from families which are indulgent, pampering and dismissive of the need of children living a disciplined life from an early age. Yet again, a school which values cleanliness and orderliness may have a difficult journey if the cultural ethos of the larger community does not reinforce the same value. At the broadest level, a school looking to value learning over grades, process over measurable performance may find it difficult if they do not find system level support for maintaining such ethos and are plagued with frequent teacher transfers or memos for attaining less than expected results in their initial years of trying to change the ethos. The above examples emphasize the need of all stakeholders in maintaining a school's ethos be it teachers, students, parents, support staff, community or the school leader herself.

Secondly, all organizations have an Ethos; their time and manner of coming into being and sustaining may differ! For organizations like newly founded schools engaging in a conscious

deliberation on the ethos they want to embody and reflect, or schools engaging in review and self enhancement exercises, an ethos is consciously subscribed to from day 1. For other schools which are unaware of either the need, necessity or ubiquity of ethos and thus are not consciously invested in choosing and nurturing it, ethos is an after product and gets created as processes, practices and behaviors happen. In either case, the organizations do have an ethos. Both the creation or coming into being of an ethos is a time consuming process. Whether an ethos is consciously subscribed to and worked towards or whether it inadvertently comes about as a net effect of everyday processes and practices, the process is time taking. Whereas one can with certainty identify a point in time when a school consciously subscribed to an ethos say, by collectively drawing up and committing to a statement of ethos in an all stakeholders meet, the point in time when the ethos actually became palpable throughout the organization is hardly identifiable. What one can identify is specific incidents reflecting such ethos. It is to be recognized that these events, whether involving teachers, pupils, support staff, parents and so on, can only come about once certain elements of the ethos are internalized by the concerned stakeholders

A school ethos, while difficult to define precisely, does have some identifiable characteristics. The Teach First task force in its policy paper (n.d.) on school culture and ethos notes that it is generated by a coherence between common experience, values and beliefs, and community symbols. We move forth to understanding each of these in some detail.

2.4 What Constitutes School Ethos?

The overarching theme in the Teach First conceptualisation is coherence which means continuity. So while we do discuss the three concepts individually, the guiding principle in this conceptualisation remains the ongoing coherence between all these.

Conceptual Linkages



Each of the modules in this compendium is in itself an example of what organisations can value.

We recommend that while reading each of the remaining 5 modules, you ask the following two questions to yourself:

1. What should the stakeholders of a school be valuing before they start following this module in earnest.
2. Given this module's focus, what can be a suitable name for the kind of ethos this module seeks to build?

1. **Values and Beliefs:** The first component of ethos is the overwhelmingly discussed values and beliefs dimension. People act according to what they consider valuable. So if one values hard work and self-improvement one will feel aligned to a school which prioritises learning over marks, and perseverance and grit over ranking and rewards. Values and beliefs are the pillars on which the edifice of ethos is erected. Values are important because they provide individuals with a guide to interpret and appraise events and experiences. A School leader's effort at getting to know each staff members personal life scenarios may not be appreciated by a staff which values formalism at work place. Similarly, a staff which values collegiality, having each others back at all times, and treating one's school as one's family may not buy in an ethos of official formalism in form of notifying committees for each and every task and may find accompanying rigid job descriptions binding and stifling.

Concept in Action: Values and Beliefs

In a school committed to an ethos of belongingness and implicit trust, students and staff work together to write an annual anthem for school.

The logos for annual inter-school events are designed by students, and an archival display of all anthems and logos till date adorns the corridors of school leading up to the principal's room.

Any undesirable whether behavior by staff, teachers or pupils is to be explained on an ethos form wherein the behavior is to be explained with reference to school's ethos.

2. **Common Experience:** An essential element of an ethos is that it creates a common experience for all members. So for a school committing itself to the democratic ethos should be able to ensure that all members, irrespective of age, status, designation, gender and experience has an opportunity to express themselves without being discriminated against. The two key terms in this phrase are 'common' which means 'same for all' and 'experience' which means to live, to feel. This takes us back to our initial statement about ethos being 'felt' when one is in the school. Creating common experience is the only way to ensure that values and beliefs are materialized in the lived experiences of all coming in touch with the school.

Concept in Action: Creating Common Experience

A headteacher wanted to make respect part of the school ethos (having taken over a school where she thought it was missing). She walked the corridors and whenever she had the opportunity held the door open for students to pass through.

Naturally students responded by holding the doors open for her. She would always say a courteous thanks and smile lovingly at them. Other staff followed her lead and, over time, the school became a place where students and staff held the doors for each other, said thank you, and smiled at each other.

- 3. Symbols:** Symbols symbolise. They are concrete manifestations of an idea; in this case they manifest the values and beliefs informing the ethos. Symbols provide visibility to an idea. They make the values easily understandable by providing them a form that is available for all to see, touch, hear as the case may be. Symbols derive universal meaning from their context of use. Take for example the Indian flag. It is not the only tricolour in the world. In fact, the flags of Niger, Ireland and Ivory Coast use the exact three colours as our Tricolour; saffron, white and green. Yet, the symbolism of our flag is very distinct from the one engrained in any of these flags. For eg. in the Irish flag the green represents the Catholic religion, the orange represents the protestant religion, and the white in between signifies a lasting truce or peace between the two. In a school, the school logo or badge is the closest equivalent to the universal symbolism of a flag for all its citizens. It is imperative to note that not only are the symbols key signifiers and communicators of ethos, but involving all stakeholders in a consultative process of designating these symbols can help achieve such values as democratic participation, school belongingness, ensuring equity of participation and so forth. Mission statements, welcome banners, displays of student work and achievements, awards, trophies and plaques, halls of honour, mascots, historical artefacts and collections are all possible symbols in thoughtful hands.
- 4. A note on coherence:** As mentioned at the outset, while the values/beliefs, common experience and symbolisms are all used as signifiers of ethos, ethos itself is the emergent property of these three consistently being in sync with each other. The accompanying diagram connotes this coherence and consistency, respectively and represents the continuity of spirit and consistency over time. The diagram denotes a mutual reciprocity among the three components. While values and beliefs reflect in the symbols, the symbols reinforce them while also creating a common experience for all. Similarly while a common experience informs which symbols are most representative of the peculiar spirit of a school, the experience itself creates

either a continuity or a discontinuity between values overtly subscribed to and values that pervade a school in reality. Vigilant leaders are always aware of this mutual reciprocity and determination of the three and strive to nurture an ethos which has coherence and consistency of these three elements at its core. Thus they periodically engage their stakeholders in following questions: How can our school create a common experience which is consistent; which values and beliefs of the fellow stakeholders need to be aligned, and which symbols and institutional practices are effective in constructing, representing and communicating this ethos?



2.5 What is ‘School’ in School Ethos: A Whole School Perspective

When we talk of a school ethos, we talk of the characteristic way of being in that school. Whereas this use of language does specify the meaning of ethos, the meaning of school itself must be put to question and an elaboration sought. Such an attempt at elaboration requires us to ask which actors shape and get shaped by the ethos, where in the school do we see this ethos permeate and when or how often. In other words, we seek to understand the meaning, scope or coverage of the prefix school as used in the phrase school ethos. Ethos by its very definition aligns with a whole school approach.

Conceptual Linkages



We recommend cross-referencing module 6 ‘Promoting Mental Health: Enabling a Whole School Approach’ for an in-depth discussion on whole school approach and finding activity ideas for how to facilitate thinking using a whole school approach

Whereas the literature on whole school approach emanated primarily in the domain of school mental health, its applicability is desirable in all endeavours of school (DFE-WA,2004; Wyn et al, 2000; Weare, 2000, 2009). A whole school approach is defined as entailing cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing. An even expansive version of this approach seeks to nurture and sustain conditions which

support the cognitive, physical and socio-emotional development of not just the students but all all stakeholders of the school. (DFE-WA,2004) Whole-school approach involves ethos, relationships, communication, management, physical environment, learning strategies, curriculum, support procedures and responses, relationships with parents and the surrounding community (Weare, 2009).

When a whole school approach undergirds an intervention, the questions of for whom, by whom and of whom are invariably answered as for all, by all and of all stakeholders.

Applying the whole school approach to school ethos then implies that a common experience is created for each and every member of the school, while each member in turn does their bit to contribute in creating such common experience for all others. Further that values and beliefs are subscribed to as a collective and are consistently disseminated, pursued and strengthened by all. Finally, that symbols are shared and owned up by all and are at the same time reflective of the aspirations of all involved.

2.6 Why should School Leaders Focus on School Ethos?

Over the decades, sufficient research evidence has been generated to show that school ethos has a direct bearing on shaping the improvement trajectories of students, teachers and school leaders alike. These findings are in consonance with our earlier assertion that school ethos is organically aligns to a whole-school approach. In other words, a positive school ethos (a concept which will be shortly discussed in greater details in the subsequent sections) results in ostensible benefits for the key stakeholder groups

With regards to the students, research has shown that a positive school ethos results in both improved educational achievement and enhanced pupil happiness. As a result, a positive school ethos remains a key ingredient in achieving learning outcomes while promoting mental health and subjective well-being for all students. (see also, modules 5 and 6).

A positive school ethos also remains a key ally in school's pursuit for equity and equality . Given the diverse and inequitable home conditions that our learners come from , a school ethos which values diversity and champions inclusion and respect for all can go a long way in addressing social inequities and creating harmonious societies . A school ethos which is inclusive can have an empowering effect on it's learners. It can lead to significant psychological gains such as a boost in self-esteem, enhancing self-belief, perceive efficacy, promoting cooperation and collegiality, bolstering a sense of subjective well being,

nurturing life skills, promoting appreciation for perseverance, democratic ideals and so forth.

With regard to the staff, school ethos has also been shown to reduce staff burnout and attrition, reduce the potential for conflict at the workspace, reinstate prestige and dignity in teaching related work, give teachers and support staff a sense of purpose and moral fulfilment etc. Research has also shown that teachers and support staff with a positive perception of their school's ethos have a much higher threshold for tolerating or condemning negative behaviours at work place. With respect to the work culture at school, a positive school ethos has been shown to support educational excellence, growth mindset, productivity of stakeholders and staff collegiality and cohesion.

School leaders too stand to benefit significantly from a positive school ethos. Not only does a positive school ethos add to the social and emotional cohesion and dynamism of schools as a workspace, it is also instrumental in helping achieve the mandated aims of schooling; whether achieving learning outcomes, developing students' potential for holistic growth, or nurturing responsible, caring and sensitive global citizens of tomorrow. Nurturing a positive school ethos also has psychological benefits for the school leader herself. A happy, strife-free and productive workspace has the potential of significantly improving the sense of subjective well-being of the school leader too. A democratic and inclusive workspace also enhances the school leader's sense of moral and ethical fulfilment.

There is conclusive research evidence favouring the nurturing of a positive school ethos. As school leaders look to engage in evidence-backed practices vis-à-vis nurturing positive school ethos, a discussion on the very meaning of a positive school ethos is in order. The next section seeks to shed light on the meaning of often repeated terms such as positive ethos, strong ethos and so forth. We hope to provide our leaders with a robust conceptual and linguistic reference point as they channelize their efforts and teams towards creating inspiring workspaces.

2.7 A Typology of School Ethos

As mentioned at the outset, the term ethos by itself does not imply a positive ethos. Yet, much of the discussion around ethos centres around how to create a positive ethos that merely by acts of repeated associations a synonymising of ethos and positivity occurs. The present section seeks to present a framework to understand the ethos profile of an institution in a bid to provide the school leaders with a clearer idea of what they ought to be striving for and what they need to be vigilant against.

In this context we will try to understand two distinct typologies of ethos. The first typology uses pervasiveness as the grounding principle; accordingly, an institutional ethos may be termed either strong or weak or anywhere in between. The second principle is of footprint ; leading to either a positive or a negative/toxic ethos. Whereas these two typologies are independent of each other, and best imagined as two axis which intersect to create an institutional ethos profile, often in everyday conversations a strong ethos is taken to mean a positive ethos. A reflective leader is to exercise caution and reasoning when she hears someone pitch for a strong ethos. ‘We must work towards developing a strong ethos’ is not the same as we must work towards developing a strong and positive ethos’. Let us examine...

- i. **Pervasiveness:** Pervasiveness refers to the extent to and rigour with which an ethos is detailed, disseminated, reinforced, internalised and followed up. Pervasiveness also considers whether the ethos permeates through the whole school. In other words, does it guide all people, processes and practices. Pervasiveness also takes into account the various systemic and system-wide mechanisms deployed to maintain the omnipresent undergirding of the ethos in question. A high degree of pervasiveness results in a strong ethos, whereas a low degree of pervasiveness leads to a weak ethos.
- ii. **Footprint:** Footprint refers to the impact of an ethos as felt on all concerned. The footprint is to be gauged taking a whole school approach. This implies assessing the impact of school ethos on all stakeholders and in all domains of their existence vis.. cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical. Given that ethos is often understood as the feel a school emits, footprint can be said to assess whether the feeling so emitted is positive, constructive, assured and invigorating or negative, cynical, trust-deficient and stifling. An ethos which leaves a positive footprint emits the former while a negative footprint emits the latter. An ethos with positive footprint or simply a positive ethos enhances the sense of belongingness, socio-emotional connectedness, physical and mental wellbeing, productivity as well as work satisfaction, collegiality, internal motivation to learn, grow and develop together, and so forth for all stakeholders. A negative ethos adversely impacts each of these for every stakeholder. Footprint also brings to the fore how stakeholders relate to the ethos: i.e. whether the ethos is subscribed to because the stakeholders feel ownership and responsibility of their own accord or whether the buy in stems from factors such as demands for systemic compliance, peer pressure , expectations of external gains and so forth.

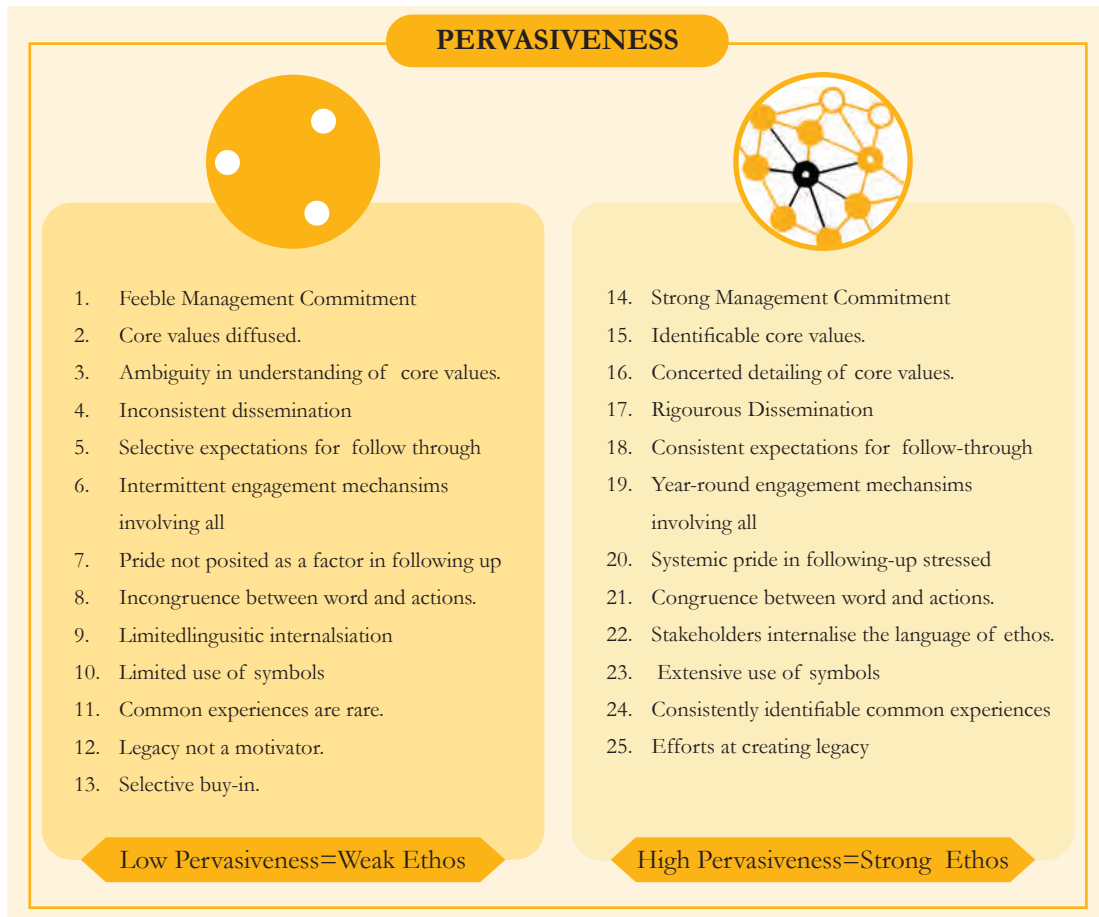


Fig: The Pervasiveness Continuum: Indicative Characteristics of Weak and Strong Ethos.

2.8 The School Ethos Profile

The intersections of the pervasiveness and footprint continua lead to four distinctly identifiable ethos profiles namely robust, toxic, tepid and frigid. A robust profile is the desirable ethos profile; one that school leaders must commit to nurturing and sustaining in their schools.

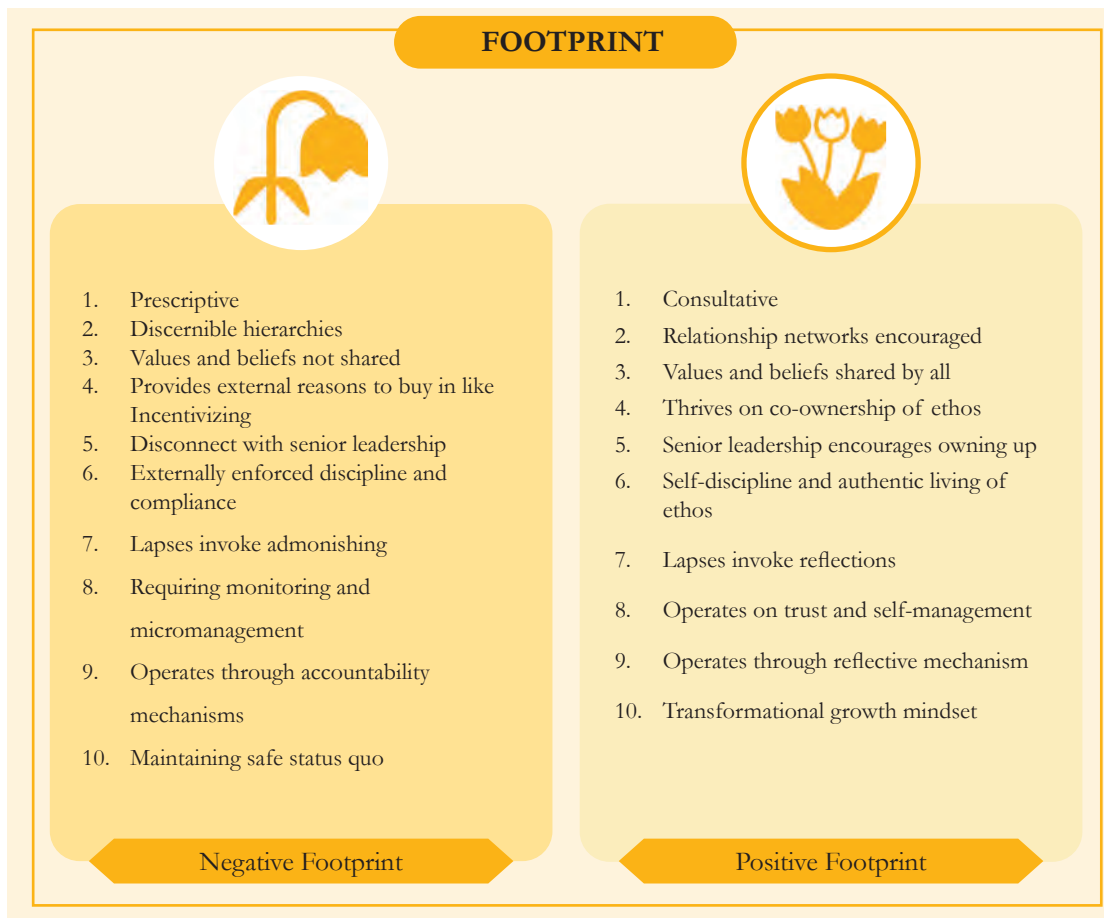


Fig: The Footprint Continuum: Indicative Characteristics of Negative and Positive Ethos.

Both the pervasiveness and footprint dimensions run as continuum and a school's ethos can lie anywhere on each of these continua. Their intersection is said to create the school's ethos profile. The school leaders must find encouragement in the fact that the ethos profile can be consciously shaped. We now move forth to discuss the possible profiles that emerge from the intersections of pervasiveness and footprint continuum and which of these profile most resembles the 'positive ethos' we hear everyone refer to in everyday parlance.

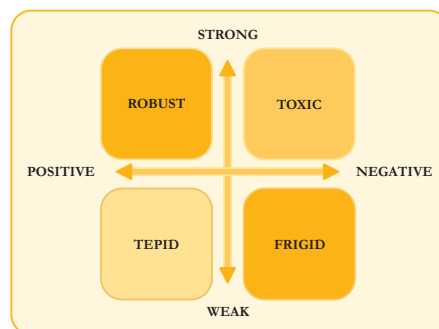


Fig: The Four Ethos Profiles.

A robust profile is obtained when an ethos permeates the whole school i.e. it is found to be strong on the pervasiveness continuum while also being found to be positive in its footprint. If on the other hand a school's ethos does permeates the whole school i.e. is found to be strong on the pervasiveness continuum, but has a negative footprint, we encounter the most damaging of the four possible profiles, namely the toxic ethos. A toxic profile must ring an alarm bell for a reflective leader.

Less damaging but equally a cause of concern are the tepid and frigid profiles respectively. Tepid, which literally means displaying minimal warmth or lukewarm, is a profile obtained at the intersections of weak and positive ethos. A tepid profile salvages itself as its fundamentals are in place so far as the kind of values and beliefs committed to are not damaging to stakeholders' socio-emotional or cognitive well-being. Yet, it is in pursuing these with less than all earnest, that a tepid profile becomes a cause of concern. A school leader faced with the challenge of addressing a tepid ethos profile has his or her work clearly cut out in that they only need to strengthen the detailing, dissemination, reinforcement and follow up mechanism for the values and beliefs already committed to.

The frigid profile, literally meaning 'lacking both warmth and enthusiasm' results from the intersections off a weak and a negative profile. While not as damaging as the toxic profile, the frigid profile requires the maximum work as it is found flawed on both the pervasiveness and the footprint continuum. A leader on encountering an frigid profile in her school must take up the twin projects of creating a positive footprint by replacing the values and beliefs found damaging to the stakeholder's well-being, and secondly by bolstering the pervasiveness of the ethos by nurturing enthusiasm and commitment towards it

2.9 The Robust Ethos Profile and Work

As discussed at the outset, the rationale behind consciously investing in a school's ethos profile is that it has a direct bearing on shaping the work culture. As noted in the preceding section, it is at the intersection of a strong ethos and a positive ethos that the robust profile i.e. the sole desirable profile gets created. All the other profiles whether toxic, tepid or frigid are varyingly characterised by disengagement from work, a deficient socio-emotional climate and undermining of a subjective sense of well-being for all stakeholders.

A robust ethos on the other hand is known to create a workspace which is characterized by relational trust, is non-threatening, high on productivity, amenable to teamwork.

The stakeholders are happy, creative, fearless and thriving. They also report experiencing positive pressure and eustress; both desirable work states with proven linkages with high productivity.

A robust ethos profile also results in a growth mindset and is known to facilitate a healthy attitude towards mistakes; one's own and of others.

Robust ethos has obvious social benefits, too. It is known to create workspaces which are high on collegiality, trust teamwork, cooperation and decentralized authority.

Robust ethos is conducive to nurturing leaders rather than followers. Given the open and dialogical stance of an organisation characterised by robust ethos, it allows for the stakeholders to fathom their contribution in advancing the journey of the collective towards growth and betterment. This is particularly conducive to experiencing engagement at work place. The stakeholders are said to be engaged, rather than disengaged in their work when they find meaning and fulfilment through it. Research evidence has proven that meaning and fulfilment are valued much higher than the materialistic gains from work like pay, incentives and tangible rewards.

2.10 Decoding an Inspiring Workspace

The term inspire derives from the Latin *inspirare* meaning “blow into, breathe upon,”. Figuratively it implies to “inspire, excite, inflame,” The meaning is to denote that something or someone has been breathed life into on account of an invigorating idea or purpose. The modern definitions of inspire read, ‘something that makes someone want to do something or that gives someone an idea about what to do or create: a force or influence that inspires someone.’ (Britannica, n.d)

Pause and Ponder: Why do we work?

Timothy Judge and colleagues reviewed the results of eighty-six studies that included about fifteen thousand employees. Their analysis of the data from all these studies combined suggested that level of pay had very little effect on either job satisfaction or pay satisfaction. So, it is unlikely that pay compensates for routinized, meaningless work. Why do we work then, what matters...?

We conceptualise school as an inspiring workspace against this linguistic backdrop. At the outset, taking a whole school approach, we need to visualise all stakeholders and how a robust ethos can contribute to shaping school processes, practices and expectations such

that each and every one of them is breathed life into by an invigorating idea or sense of purpose.

To take the conceptualisation forward, we need to ask ourselves the following three key questions.

- Who is to be inspired, by whom, when, to what end, and how?
- What are the features of an ethos which is inspiring?
- What does an inspiring workspace look like for different stakeholders?

Our preceding discussions have thrown up the ideal answers to the first four questions already while delineating the Whole-school approach and in elaborations on the Robust ethos profile. Nonetheless, as school leaders we must realise that while the ideal case has been elaborated upon earlier, the answers to these question will vary depending on the school ethos profile characterising a school. Accordingly, even schools with the toxic, tepid and frigid profiles will be able to answer some of these questions from their distinct locations. To illustrate, the following table gives an indicative account of these answers as emanating from various ethos profiles.

Please note that the answers to ‘how to inspire’ is not exhaustive and is only to begin a discussion. Several more processes, practices and mechanisms can be identified when answering from the positions of Robust and Toxic profiles respectively.

Having developed an understanding of the school ethos profile can mediate the answers we seek using the illustrative table given above, we posit faith in reader discretion and wisdom to carry on with such transfer of learning and give more depth to the table as they reflect on their practice. We move on to address the remaining questions, namely:

- What are the features of an ethos which is inspiring?
- What does an inspiring workspace look like for different stakeholders?

Ethos Profile Question to be asked →	Robust	Toxic	Tepid	Frigid
Inspire to what end?	To own and further the institutional ethos	To follow institutional ethos	To own and further the institutional ethos	To follow institutional ethos
Who is to be inspired?	Everyone	Teachers, students, staff	Everyone	Teachers, students, staff
Who is entrusted with inspiring?	Everyone	Hierarchical	No clarity	No clarity
When to inspire?	Ongoing	Ongoing	No clarity	No clarity
How to inspire?	Capacity building	Compliance mechanism	No clarity	No clarity

Fig: Table denoting orientations to key questions from 4 Ethos profiles

The preceding section has sufficiently stressed that the only desirable and functional ethos is one which subscribes to values and ideals which adopt a whole school approach to development and growth, has a positive footprint and is found to be pervasive. Thus, the robust ethos leads to authentic inspiration when inspiration is seen as wanting to do something over and beyond the routine expectations, skills and capabilities.

Concept in Action: An Inspiring Workspace

- **Accessibility:** Doors and minds are open; everyone in the organisation has access to resources, time and decision-making opportunities.
- **Consciousness:** Each person knows the goals of the organisation and believes he or she can play a part in achieving them.
- **Connectivity:** Relational trust is evident. Relationships are actively encouraged within and across functions, assignments and departments.
- **Consistency:** Commitment to innovation runs right through the organisation and is built into processes and leadership styles.
- **Multiplicity:** Teams and groups are characterised by diversity

It is to be acknowledged that different people may find inspiration in different ways. Simply put people get inspired by what they value. To illustrate, for an individual valuing material rewards, acknowledgement in the form of appreciation certificates, rewards and other forms of incentivizing will be inspiring. For teachers valuing lifelong learning may find an organisation committed to their learning and growth inspiring. The concept in action box enlists some features of an inspiring workspace. However beyond this indicative list, the school leader and the stakeholders can get together to further brainstorm on what they collectively value and what inspires them. It is worthwhile to invest time in carefully choosing the values which are collectively believed in as it will help create an ethos with a positive footprint. Some other values which are known to do so are, valuing care for all, valuing growth and development for all, valuing self-discipline, valuing self-accountability, valuing collaboration and communication and so forth. Having chosen values which inspire a group collectively, these also have to be translated into policy, process and practice by collective brainstorming.

Our next concern is to understand how would an inspiring workspace appear when viewed from the eyes of various stakeholders. In the day-to-day existence of the school the students, the teaching and support staff and the school leader remain the primary stakeholders. In an ideal but rarer scenario one hopes to have parents, community and system level officials who are equally willing and available to support school's initiatives and endeavours. For the purpose of learning together we focus on the primary stakeholders and trust that the school leaders will be able to extend the understandings and strategizing to any stakeholder group as and when required.

An inspiring workspace can be gauged on two aspects: firstly, the attitudes that a stakeholder group exhibits in responsibilities/tasks traditionally assigned to them or expected of them, and secondly the newer territories they are seen to be willing to chart bolstered by the positive footprint of their workspace. To illustrate, traditionally the students have been expected to be punctual, attentive, participative, regular, self-disciplined, perseverant, making submissions in time, following school rules, having clear focus on exams and career etc. While an inspiring workspace may get students to exhibit all these characteristics, these are not a sufficient indicator of. A school that inspires students must be preparing them to be going above and beyond these. The following survey table presents a cross section of such 'above and beyond behaviours' that one can expect to see in such inspiring schools for various stakeholder groups:

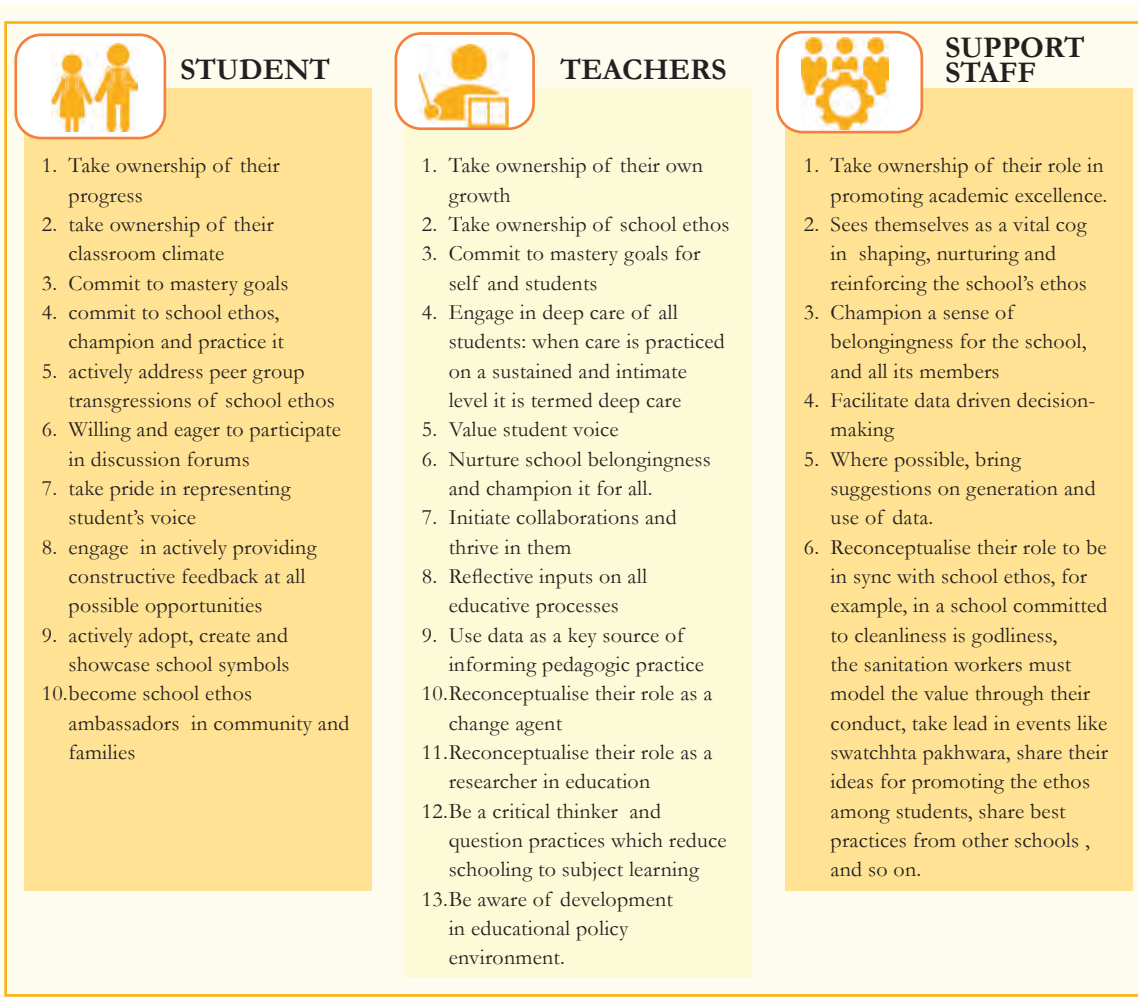


Fig: 'Above and beyond behaviours' exhibited in an inspiring workspace.

2.11 Sustaining School Ethos: What Works and What Does Not?

The next set of questions to be answered focus on ensuring the sustainability of a school ethos. The following boxes respectively catalogue the factors which hamper and aid the sustainability of school ethos.

What hampers sustainability?

- ⊗ **Preoccupation with student attainment:** an excessive focus on quantifiable learning indicators can lead a school into a vicious cycle of performance orientation, instead of a learning orientation (see module 1 for similar discussions.)
- ⊗ **Tendency to view oneself more favourably:** researches on organisation culture caution against this human tendency of attributing philosophical motivations to oneself and materialistic motivations to others undertaking the same job. For eg. teachers often claim they teach for the joy of it, but assess others as working for pay, rewards etc. Conscious attempts to discuss such research findings on human organisational behaviour may help avoid an environment of trust deficit.
- ⊗ **Golem effect:** acting as a self-fulfilling prophecy, golem effect is said to occur when a negative assessment of an individual's capabilities by an authority figure/supervisor results in them actually underperforming over time. Seen often in teacher student relationships, it is as true in principal teacher relationships too.
- ⊗ **Reverse Golem effect:** when a subordinate's negative assessment of a superior's competence actually leads such superior to underperform. The reverse golem effect is often seen when superiors demographic like age, gender, caste, language, religion etc. place them in a socially disadvantaged position. Think for example a young principal in her late 30s, having to interact with teaching staff with average age of 50 and some nearing retirement.
- ⊗ **False consciousness or ideologies:** individual ideologies especially around issues which are of direct bearing on educational processes can have a stifling effect on ethos. For example, in a school with an expressed ethos of 'success for all', if a teacher believes that intelligence is fixed and no amount of hard work can help a 'dumb' student, their teaching will reflect a differential treatment to students so labelled. Coupled with Golem effect, this will mean that in the long run such students will actually underperform. (see also, module 1 for discussion on mental models).


 What aids sustainability?

- ☑ School leadership which is authoritative and distributive in nature
- ☑ Teacher professionalism as an underlying value
- ☑ School positioning itself as a Learning organisation
- ☑ Recruitment commensurate with ethos
- ☑ Induction and orientation for students/staff
- ☑ Time and space allocations in sync with ethos
- ☑ Formal mechanisms to include students in all planning and follow-ups
- ☑ A jointly evolved code of conduct in line with ethos
- ☑ Periodical retrospection built in the system
- ☑ System level linkages such that the ethos is communicated and supported
- ☑ As far as possible infrastructural, financial provisioning in line with ethos,
- ☑ Regular professional development opportunity in sync with ethos

2.12 Creating an Ethos which Inspires: A Checklist for School Leaders

A whole-school approach while being premised on continuous and consistent participation from all stakeholders, does not imply that School leaders' role becomes any less important; its texture is indeed changed though! A WSA recalibrates the school leaders' role to being a galvanising force and a wise guide handholding all, while leading them onto the path of individual as well as collective growth and development.

The leader is to be, at least in the initial stages, the font from which an organisational awakening begins. By virtue of the systemic authority invested in a principal, the opportunities of system level networking and access, the established narrative of the leader being the HoS for the community and parents, the leader can be the face of change to begin with.

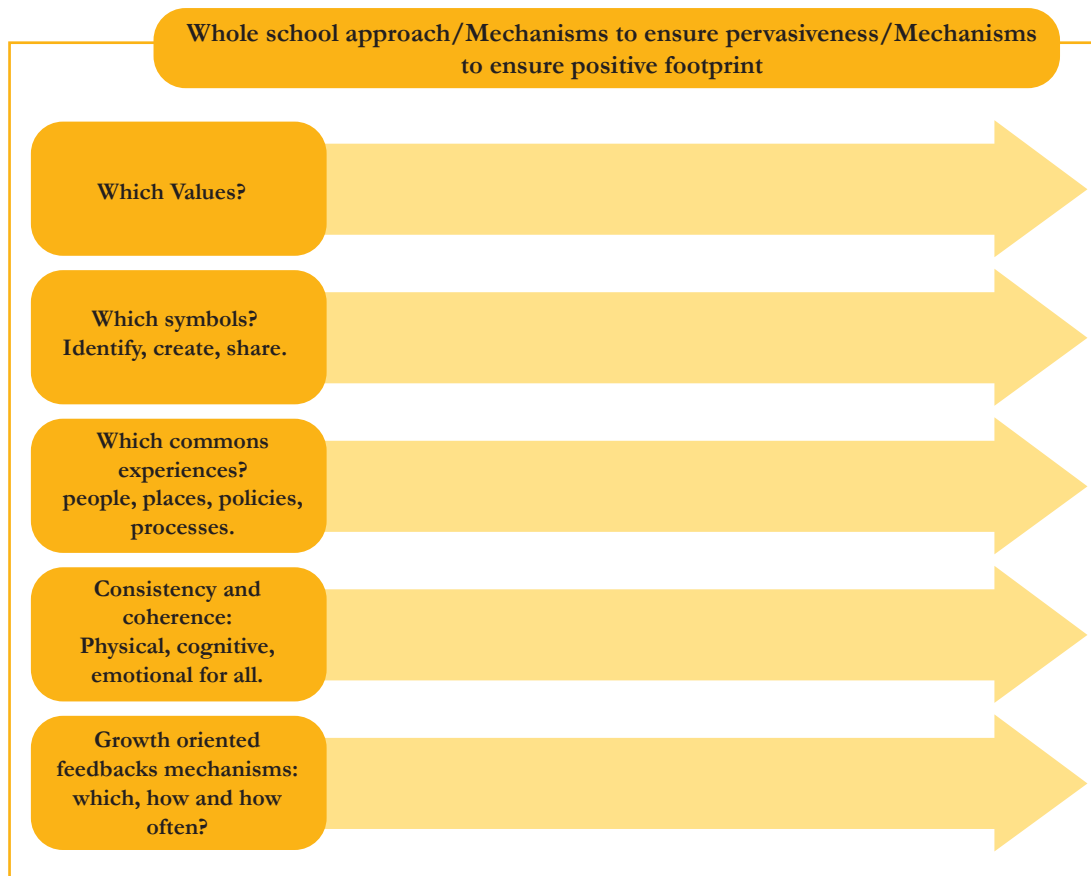
The leader in addition to mustering a will to bring an organisational transformation or enhancement, as the case may be, also has to enable certain staple preconditions, which provide the groundwork for successful buy-in, participation and eventual ownership of all stakeholders for any such efforts.

The present section enlists several such enabling conditions which a school leader must create. Each of these conditions are actually seeped in values that must undergird any school with a positive ethos. The list is in way exhaustive. We call upon the leaders to add to the list in wake of their experience and specific context.

Checklist for School Leaders

- Lead the school with a whole school approach at all times
- To adopt an open door policy for ideation, review and feedback on school ethos etc.
- To lead regular discussion and follow-ups on the coherence between school's ethos and its day to day functioning
- To establish an environment of dialogue and consultation
- To lead discussions on the future vision and ethos of school and the respective roles all stakeholders must assume in it.
- To champion equity and fairness at work place
- To lead, encourage and facilitate a culture of collaborations
- To demonstrate and enable critical thinking in school policy, processes and practices
- To be committed to the ongoing professional development of each and every member of the staff.
- To endorse a flexibility in timetabling, day and yearly calendars to allow for time for consultative endeavors
- To stress the creation of yearly calendars in sync with school ethos
- To lead discussion on year-round aligning of instructional program with school ethos
- To prioritize and root for student participation in all planning forums
- To create a culture of regular sharing and dissemination of pedagogic and organizational best practices
- To demonstrate emulation worthy code of conduct which is in sync with school ethos
- To facilitate provisioning decisions in sync with school's chosen values
- To lead a culture of sustained academic excellence
- To engage in temporal, spatial and infrastructural facilitation required for pursuing academic excellence
- To liaison with community, academics and system level officials such that the school is at the fore front of knowledge, skill and attitudinal innovation.

The discussions so far have focused on establishing a conceptual framework for understanding school ethos. The preceding sections have attempted to simultaneously foreground the role of school leaders in establishing a conducive ethos; in this case the robust ethos profile, in creating a workplace which is inspiring. The specific steps for designing such an ethos traverse all the concepts discussed in preceding sections. The following flow chart gives a quick glimpse of how this process may unfold in real life scenarios. The principles, even as they follow this process chart, are requested to foreground the whole school approach when planning for school ethos or any school enhancement initiative. It would imply that our planning recognises all people as both contributors and beneficiaries. All spaces like the library, the playground, the assembly, the water cooler point, the staff room etc. reflect the ethos to maintain coherence and consistency. The same is true for all policies and processes like admissions, examinations, recruitment, promotions, scholarships, parent teacher meeting and so forth.



2.13 Summary

The NEP focuses our gaze firmly on the ramifications of conducive service conditions in the process of ensuring learning for all. This present compendium aims to create an enabling ecosystem for the same. The present module along with the first module on Learning organisations provides an enabling ecosystem to this effort itself. Together these modules seek to provide an ideational and attitudinal foundation on which the later modules are to be perched. Specifically, the discussions in this module would be found enabling in developing a conceptual base for appreciating school ethos as a key determiner of school enhancement efforts. Synthesising the existing literature and extending the theorisations in novel directions the present module seeks to provide a concrete reference point for identification of ethos as strong, weak, positive, negative and so on. A theoretical and applicative contribution of use is to be found in the section on School ethos profiles. Further, discussions on the componential breakup of school ethos would also aid efforts for streamlined planning for ethos; an otherwise nebulous concept. Finally, illustrative discussions on the dynamics of interaction of ethos and inspiring workspaces will go some way in helping school leaders establish an ethos which helps us take further steps towards the vision of NEP. In a lighter vein, we urge the readers to carry the first two modules as the very ethos of this compendium. We urge readers to be forever aware of the ethos their school will have to commit to such that the successful adoption of any and all of the later modules can be hoped for!

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SECTION II

Facilitator's

Toolkit



A. Blueprint

B. Session Manual and Resources

A. Blueprint

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
Day 1						
S1.	Decoding Ethos	Ice breaking Creating experiential reference points for understanding the meaning of ethos.	Either 5 or 10 groups such that the group size does not exceed 5 members each.	S1A1. The Ethos we commit to	Chart paper, A4 sheets, markers, glue, board pins.	60 min.
S2	Decoding Ethos	To initiate reflections on the meaning of ethos.	Groups from previous activity to continue.	S2A1 Teachers Write on Ethos...	Displays from previous activity Readings D1/S2A1- I and II	30 min.

SECTION II

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session /Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S3	From Ethos to School Ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To continue reflections on the meaning of ethos. •To enlist words, people and actions commonly associated with ethos. 	Groups from previous activity to continue.	S3A1-Statement of Ethos.	Worksheet D1/S3A1-Statements of Ethos	30 min
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To conceptualise ethos based on preceding sessions. •To draw upon this conceptualisation to reflect on school ethos. 		S3A2-Ethos: A Summative Account.	Worksheet: D1/S3A2-‘What is Ethos?’ Summary Sheet: Created by participants in session 2 Summary Sheet D1/S3A2 Ethos Checklist	60 min

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session / Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S4.	Components of School Ethos	<p>To develop an understanding of the componential model of school ethos.</p> <p>To facilitate the application of this understanding to real life scenarios.</p>	<p>Phase - I Individually.</p> <p>Phase - II Groups of 5.</p>	S4A1- Lecture-School Ethos: A Componential Understanding	<p>Resources Required:</p> <p>The D1-S4A1 Sheet, and an image of the target group's institutional logo (for eg. the NVS logo)</p>	90 min
S5.	Consolidation and agenda setting...	<p>To provide buffer time to complete any pending activities.</p> <p>To consolidate the day's learning.</p> <p>To engage in doubt solving and, agenda setting for next day</p>	Entire Group	Session Recap and Consolidation	<p>To be distributed as home task</p> <p>Worksheet: D2/S6A1</p> <p>The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon sheet</p>	30 min

SECTION II

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
Day 2						
S6	Consolidation and agenda setting	<p>To develop a contextual understanding of an inspiring workspace</p> <p>To facilitate an enlisting of the indicators of inspiring workspace for stakeholders.</p> <p>To initiate reflections on the role of ethos in creation of inspiring workspace.</p> <p>To initiate reflections on the role of school leader in creating a conducive ethos</p>	<p>Phase-I Individual</p> <p>Phase-II Same groups as Session I from day 1 to continue.</p>	S6A1 - A Stakeholder's View of an Inspiring Workspace	<p>Charts, Markers,</p> <p>Worksheet: D2/S6A1 The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon Sheet</p>	90 min

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session / Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S7	Ethos Typology and Profiles	<p>To introduce the typology of ethos w.r.t the pervasiveness and footprint parameter</p> <p>To facilitate an analytic understanding of how these parameters intersect to create identifiable ethos profiles.</p> <p>To develop an appreciation for conducive and non-conductive ethos profile w.r.t creating inspiring workspace</p>	Individual	S7A1-The Ethos Profiles Lecture: Towards A Conceptual Understanding	Chart Markers Handouts: S7A1 I. Pervasiveness Matrix II. Footprint Matrix III. Ethos Profile	90 min

SECTION II

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S8	Ethos and Inspiration Interphase	<p>To analyze real life scenarios using the understanding of ethos typology and profiles.</p> <p>To examine how various ethos profiles impact the understanding of inspiring workspaces</p> <p>To develop an understanding of how the role of school leaders varies in the process.</p>	Previous groups to continue.	S8A1 Activity: Deploying Ethos for Creating Inspiring Workspaces	Charts, Markers, D2/S8A1-Work Sheet-From Ethos to Inspiring, D2/S8A1-Handout Work Ethos : 2 Case Studies	90 min

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S9	Towards an Action Plan	To develop an action plan for nurturing	Phase-I individually Phase-II Previous groups to continue	S9A1- Planning for Ethos	D2/S9A1-I Handout-Sustainability Checklist, D2/S9A1-II Worksheet-The Principal's Primer, D2/S9A1- Process Chart-Our School Ethos	90 min
S10			The Road Ahead			30 min

B. Session Manual and Resources

Day and Session	Session Title	Session Resources	
		Type	Title
D1. S1. A1	The Ethos We Commit To...	NA	NA
D1. S2. A1	Teachers Write on Ethos.	Reading	D1-S2A1- I and, D1-S2A1- II Teachers write on Ethos I & II
D1. S3. A1	Statement of Ethos	Worksheet	D1-S3A1 Statement of Ethos
D1. S3. A2	Ethos: A Summative Account.	Worksheet Summary Sheet Summary Sheet	D1/S3A2 ‘What is Ethos?’ Created by participants in session 2 D1/S3A2 Ethos Checklist
D1. S4. A1	Lecture- School Ethos: A Componential Understanding	Process chart	D1-S4A1 Sheet ‘ Our Chosen Ethos’ Internet image Target group’s institutional logo
D2. S5	Session Recap and Consolidation	Worksheet	D2/S6A1 The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon sheet (distributed in advance as homework)
D2. S6. A1	A Stakeholder’s View of an Inspiring Workspace	Worksheet	D2/S6A1 The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon Sheet (continued from previous day)

Day and Session	Session Title	Session Resources	
		Type	Title
D2. S7. A1	The Ethos Profiles Lecture: Towards a Conceptual Understanding	3 Handouts:	S7A1-I. Pervasiveness Matrix S7A1-II. Footprint Matrix S7A1-III. Ethos Profile
D2. S8. A1	Deploying Ethos for Creating Inspiring Workspaces	Handout Worksheet	D2/S8A1-Handout Work Ethos: 2 Case Studies D2/S8A1-Work Sheet-From Ethos to Inspiring
D2. S9. A1	Planning for Ethos	Handout Worksheet Process Chart	D2/S9A1-I Sustainability Checklist D2/S9A1-II The Principal's Primer, D2/S9A1-Our School Ethos
D2.S10	Last Session: The Road Ahead	NA	NA

D1.S1.A1



Activity: The Ethos We Commit To...

Time Required: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Ice Breaking
- Creating experiential reference points for understanding the meaning of ethos..

Group Size: Entire Group

Resources Required: Chart papers, A4 sheets, marker pens, glue, board pins.

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The facilitator begins the session by dividing total number of people into 5 groups using any method they deem suitable. (if the group size becomes too large, say more than 5, each group can be further split up into 2 so that total number of groups is now 10)
2. The group members are asked to move together.
3. 5 minutes are earmarked for the group members to interact with fellow members.
4. Subsequently one member from each group is asked to come for draw of lots.
5. The 5 chits in draw of lots are marked: 1. Students, 2. Commissioners (Joint, Deputy, Assistants all included) 3. Teachers, 4. Parents and 5. Principals.
6. The draw of lots decides which role is assigned to each group. So a group member who draws the chit labelled 'Parents' goes back to their group and all members have to think like parents.
7. Each group is given next 20 minutes to brainstorm according to their role and write a statement of 'ethos' for the NVS on the chart provided to them. They are categorically asked to leave some space blank at the top . This space will be used in next session .
8. The next 10 minutes are given to the group to draw a logo which reflects the ethos they have just written. The Logo to has to be drawn on the chart.

9. Once done, each group is asked to present their ethos statement and logo to the entire group using their chart.
10. All charts are later displayed around the room for future use and reference.

Points for Debriefing:

None at this point, the facilitator will return to this activity later.

D1.S2.A1



Activity: Teachers Write on Ethos

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives:

- To initiate reflections on the meaning of ethos.

Group Size: The groups from the previous activity continues.

Resources Required: The displays from previous activities, aisle board/whiteboard, Readings-D1-S2A1- I and II , A sheets to create summary sheets.

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The facilitator distributes both the session readings to each group.
2. The groups are told to create a bulleted summary sheet of both readings as they proceed.
3. The group is told that this ‘summary sheet’ is to be used in session 4.
4. They are also asked to identify any additions/ modification to their original vision drafted in session -1 resulting from the reading of these handouts.
5. Debriefing follows.

Points for Debriefing:

- What are the distinct foci of the two readings ?
- What are the common takeaways from them?
- How did these reading impacted your original draft?
- Did you change the logo in any way to reflect this change?



Reading: Teachers Write on Ethos-I

Teacher 1: Matt Bawden

Topic: School ethos, vision and aspiration

(Matt Bawden is an assistant headteacher. Baldwin advises on the importance of school ethos, how it links to aspiration, and how we must communicate it. He offers three guiding principles for using school ethos or vision to raise aspirations)

Character, aspiration and school ethos are all linked.

It is possible that some students, parents, staff or others may not feel a part of your school's ethos. If this is the case, they are unlikely to aspire to more than their own personal vision and values allow. We all have a world-view, and if ours does not push us to do more or be more then we will not gain more.

Those who feel marginalised may do so because they feel the school is not there for them, that the ethos is not inclusive, or because they feel the ethos people talk about, that would include them, is not the reality.

Ethos is often a bit of a nebulous beast. It can be very hard to express the school's ethos in a few words, and yet we still aim to do so, adding mission statements, vision and values to our websites.

These summaries are expressions of what our schools stand for. They are ways of seeing how what we do is different from the school next to us, a marketing tool, a way of making a point about the purpose of education, or simply an expression of why we do what we do.

A few minutes spent searching online will show similar views of the purpose of school, the vision for the students and community, and the values schools seek to promote. Each school may dress things up differently, but on the whole they all seek to develop the whole student, for the good of the community, the families and the child.

The vision will be tempered by local circumstance, and may take into account employers, quirks of geography, or the aspirations of former generations of students. The typical school develops the vision in a variety of ways, but almost always this is via a broad

and balanced curriculum, plenty of extra-curricular opportunities, and an emphasis on some form of moral or spiritual education. It may be impossible to achieve buy-in from everyone but the more authentic the ethos is the more it ought to include everyone.

Prospective parents, school inspectors, and applicants for jobs look at such vision statements. Each studies them in detail. Many will dwell over phrases or examples and make decisions based upon them.

However, do those of us who work in these schools ever really spend any time looking at them?

I wonder whether you could outline your own school's vision, values or ethos as it appears on the school website, or – perhaps more importantly – could your students?

When considering your ethos as a living breathing thing, is it possible to see it at work in the school, helping to create a sense of drive and purpose for all concerned, or does it lie hidden in the policies and documents?

Bringing it to life can have real impact on the success of the school, and in driving aspirations for all. There are three guiding principles for using ethos to raise aspirations. When applying these principles we can benefit from applying two character traits. Each requires both empathy and compassion to make them work.

Empathy allows us to place ourselves in the situations of others. If some do not feel inspired by our ethos, values, vision or mission statement, we need to be able to see why. Asking may not be enough, sometimes we need to see with other's eyes. Compassion then allows us to think through this empathic understanding and act in a way that will keep those who feel marginalised engaged.

The ethos is owned by everyone

In some schools the ethos has been passed down through the generations. The stated ethos might centre on a Latin phrase or a saying engraved on the school door. In others it might have been provided by an central multi-academy trust or a zealous board of governors.

However it was written it may not reflect the reality. To believe we own an ethos when we write it does not make it real. A school may say they are inclusive, but unless the teachers, parents and community are inclusive then the ethos is only so many words on a piece of paper.

Acknowledging that everyone has a say in the ethos of the school is the first step to making the ethos real, inclusive and aspirational. When something about the school's ethos isn't working it is everyone's problem. When something goes right it is everyone's celebration. The ethos can be improved – it just takes everyone to make it happen.

The ethos lives because we acknowledge it in our lives

Once we have acknowledged everyone has a part to play in creating an ethos we can begin to make it what we want it to be. In character education we often talk about development as being caught, sought or taught. The same can be said to be true of an ethos.

If we let the ethos develop on its own everyone catches it as they go through their daily school lives. This can be fine, even a good thing, as long as the ethos is positive and encourages aspiration for all.

However it is out of everyone's control. It just happens to us. Some people may choose not to catch the positive vision and values that the school aspires to. When writing an ethos statement it becomes a matter of observing what is there already and writing it down. We do not influence the ethos, the ethos influences us.

If we seek out the ethos then we have a chance to make it what we want it to be. This sort of sought ethos can be manipulated by a coherent set of vision and values. As long as everyone buys in it is possible to look at what is already there, mold the best bits and scratch away at the bad, then we can shape the ethos in to something more.

As long as everyone buys in it becomes ours. So as we go through this stage we need to seek out ways to bring the ethos into everyone's lives, thinking about all stakeholders, especially those who may not have bought in to it before.

This is where teaching ethos becomes important. If we all educate each other on the parts of the school's ethos that we care about, and believe count, then we are all a part of its development.

The ethos matters because we make it matter

Teaching the ethos to each other makes the ethos matter. It becomes the thing we go to school for. When we walk through the doors we know what to expect and we feel a part of it. We can see the ethos on the walls, hear it in the voices of our friends, and feel it as we see the smile on a colleague's face. It can help us through the tough times, and bolster us to drive forward when we might otherwise have stalled.

We live in times of want in education, and many would say our needs are seldom catered for. We seldom have enough to make ends meet, and this can be reflected in prioritising those areas more traditionally seen to lead to success at the end of key stage 4.

Taking the time to focus on our ethos might be seen as a luxury few can afford, and yet by spending time on it we build the foundations for success in all other areas.



Reading: Teachers Write on Ethos-II

Teacher 2: James Handscombe

Topic: Meaningless words? How to build a genuine school ethos?

*(James Handscombe has worked in schools in South Wales, Australia and south-east London before becoming the founding principal of Harris Westminster Sixth Form in 2014. His new book *A School Built on Ethos: Ideas, assemblies and hard-won wisdom* (Crown House Publishing, 2021) takes readers through the school's development and illustrates its journey by sharing a selection of the assemblies that have underpinned and elucidated its ethos.)*

In an interview, I was once asked how the governors would be able to recognise that I had successfully developed a powerful school ethos.

“A school is like a tin of baked beans,” I said, theatrically.

“You know it’s a tin of beans because it says beans on the outside; you know it’s a tin of beans because when you take something out of it – it’s a bean; and you know it’s a tin of beans because when you put your finger in, it comes out covered in bean sauce.”

I didn’t get the job. I had to wait until I found a panel who shared my delight in the well-worked metaphor. But I still think that the tin of beans is a good framework for understanding ethos – and therefore a good framework for thinking about the work of building a good ethos.

Three elements of ethos

For me, ethos is a combination of three aspects of a school all working together.

First, what the school says about itself, how it is presented to the world, how it is seen in its community and how its branding looks is like the label on the front of the tin: it is absolutely not the beans itself (an extremely rookie error in student cooking), but without it you are left wondering, not sure what to expect.

Second, what is more essential is what the school does: each decision made by the senior team, each policy, each slot in the timetable and each deviation from it, should be a bean – it should be in line with and support the school ethos. If what comes out of the school

is different from the label that's on the front then staff and students will be confused (but will, eventually, conclude that the ethos is the one that is performed, not the one that is proclaimed).

Finally, subtly, ethos is more than concrete decisions and published mottos, it is something that permeates the building, that holds together the community: like the tomato sauce that coats the beans, ethos is sticky – it lies in every conversation, every interaction, every email, every display, and when you leave the school you find it is adhered to you; you find that you think about things a little differently because you visited.

Unpicking jargon

To create a good ethos you must articulate it clearly (which, inevitably, will be much harder than simply writing “BEANS” on the side of a tin); you must let it inform all the decision-making and fight against anything that is easy and expedient but out of ethos. And you must bring the whole community with you to show how it can be lived.

The challenge of articulation is bringing depth of meaning to words and phrases that might be jargon. Let's take “Ambition” – a fine plank of any school's ethos, but on its own potentially vacuous – or, worse, malevolent.

Do we value unrealistic dreaming or single-minded self-interest, or have we gone beyond the slogan to unpick the nuance of the word?

For me, ambition is not simply a goal – it is an understanding of the work that needs to be done to achieve it and a commitment to doing that work. This deals with the dreaming but not the self-interest: ambition is at best an ethically neutral quality; another word is needed to balance it – kindness, for example – although this then begs the question of what is meant by “kindness”. Is it different from goodness or niceness or gentleness, or is it a synonym for one or more of these?

Making your commitments

Words need to be fleshed out and used and discussed – when the language of the ethos is the language of the school the community can delight in finding new applications and nuances for those pieces of jargon. Ethos words can look good on a prospectus, they can form the basis of many an assembly (in fact they should do both of these things), but it is not until they get in the way of a hard decision that you know if you really believe in what you are saying. It is easy to say that you are a school of ambition until you are faced with the challenge of meeting a goal that has suddenly got harder. The pragmatic, expedient solution is to quietly shelve the project, but this means compromising the principles.

It is easy to say that you are a school that believes in the importance of social and emotional learning until the final exams approach and the temptation is to cancel sports clubs to put on extra intervention.

There is nothing inherently wrong with being pragmatic, nothing wrong with directing precious time to where it will have the biggest impact – the hardest ethos questions come when you are choosing where to put limited resources – but it is these decisions that show what a school really values. It is important, then, to choose the words of the ethos statements carefully: to make commitments that you are prepared to live by.

A question of time

Earlier I described ethos words as jargon, which I do not mean negatively. Jargon can be words and phrases that have specific meaning to a particular community that they don't carry in the wider world.

Schools should be places of jargon – if we speak of “Ambition” in the ethos then we should have a shared understanding and this sometimes confuses strangers. This is part of the day-to-day working of the school and a way in which ethos can become pervasive and unavoidable.

A headteacher I once worked for wanted to make respect part of the school ethos (having taken over a school where he thought it was missing). He walked the corridors and whenever he had the opportunity held the door open for students to pass through. Naturally they responded by holding the doors open for him and delighted in his courteous thanks. Other staff followed his lead and, over time, the school became a place where students and staff held the doors for each other, and said thank you. Twenty years (and two headteachers) later it is still that kind of place. Building an ethos that permeates a school is about time, it is about reinforcement, it is about ideas percolating through a semi-permeable medium, and it is about making the small interactions as in-ethos as the big ones.

A powerful school ethos is not something that just happens; it is not a question of getting a consultant to pick the right words or design the right logo; it is worked through and reasoned carefully, it is forged in the tight places of hard decisions, it is lived by the leaders and by the community.

It is a lot of work, but a school that is built on ethos is one that knows what it stands for and therefore one that stands when the wild winds blow; a school that is built on ethos is a community rather than just a building; a school that is built on ethos is an organisation in which every teacher, student, receptionist and technician knows how to respond to

the challenges that face them, where their guts tell them what the policy will say before they read it, where they make the right decisions even when they have not been told specifically what to do.



Activity: Statements of Ethos...

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives:

- To continue reflections on the meaning of ethos.
- To enlist words, people and actions often associated with ethos.

Group Size: The groups from the previous activity continues.

Resources Required: The displays from previous activities, aisle board/whiteboard, Handout-D1-S3A1

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The activity proceeds in two phases.
2. For phase I, the facilitator asks the groups to complete in 5 minutes the caption for their display in previous activity 'our ethos, our _____, our _____.' using words they deem appropriate as a group.
3. The groups read out their captions one by one, one member writes it on top of their display.
4. Meanwhile, the facilitator enlists all the words given by each group on the aisle board/white board available to them.
5. For phase II, the facilitator distributes the handout D1-S3A1 'Statement of Ethos' to each group.
6. The facilitator announces the following questions, which need to be answered based on each groups' reading of the handout.
 - Q.1: Which words do you see commonly associated with ethos in each example?
 - Q.2: Who are the people actively contributing to shaping the ethos in the given examples?
 - Q.3: What actions are found to be contributing to the shaping of an ethos?

7. The facilitator asks each group to go back to the ethos they had drafted in session-1.
8. The same questions are now to be answered for the statement drafted by them:
 - Q.1: Which words do you see as associated with ethos in your statement?
 - Q.2: Who are the people actively contributing to shaping the ethos in your statement?
 - Q.3: What actions are found to be contributing to the shaping of the ethos outlined by your group?
9. Debriefing follows.

Points for Debriefing:

- Could you find associated words, actions and people in the 3 given examples?
- What is a statement of ethos?
- What words featured repeatedly across the 4 examples. How do we understand this recurrence?

Key Takeaways:

- A statement of Ethos is an articulation of the ethos a school seeks to subscribe to.
- A careful reading can help identify the members the school deems as active participants, if any, in framing, shaping and living this ethos.
- Ethos is put in practice through people, processes and policies.



Worksheet-Statement of Ethos

S. NO.	Statement of Ethos	WHAT? Associated Words	WHO? Associated People	HOW? Associated Actions
1.	<p>The National Education Policy-2020</p> <p>envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society. Art-integrated education will be embedded in classroom transactions not only for creating joyful classrooms, but also for imbibing the Indian ethos through integration of Indian art and culture in the teaching and learning process at every level. This art-integrated approach will strengthen the linkages between education and culture. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions.</p>			
2	<p>A Residential School in Ireland:</p> <p>In line with our Mission Statement we work hard to create an ethos which will enable the girls and boys entrusted to our care to develop in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. We endeavor to promote the dignity and uniqueness of each person. We encourage students to become involved in the life of the school and their local community. The relationship between teachers and pupils is an aspect of life at Presentation College of which we are very proud. We work hard at building this relationship - the time and effort devoted by so many teachers to so many different kinds of extra-curricular activities is witness to this. Teachers work side by side with pupils in such activities. Teachers, parents and students by their involvement in such activities help to create a co-operative atmosphere and a pleasant learning environment where all members of the school community can grow and develop.</p>			

3	<p>A day school in Delhi-NCR, India</p> <p>Our school follows the best teaching practices, values and methodologies...we believe in the individuality and unique identity of each child, and our educational philosophy is emphatic about providing a child-centric education through a unique curriculum, and keeping this in view, the school offers learning that is both interactive and experiential. The aim is to create awareness in students and provide them with experiences that they can apply to real world situations. Spread over five acres of campus, the school provides children with a perfect environment for learning in a serene and sylvan atmosphere. A warm red brick building canopied by trees along its periphery and offset by lush green spaces, the school is ideally situated in a corner plot accessible by a wide road. The classrooms are spacious, allowing unfettered movement of children. Additionally, the ergonomic furniture in the classrooms facilitate the learning of children in a comfortable and well-designed setting. The school's unique curriculum – a blend of the best teaching practices highlighting a global approach that is deeply rooted within the fabric of Indian heritage and culture – will nurture each child to be a rational and responsible citizen of our society. The welcoming portals of our school will always echo with the laughter and academic curiosity of its students. We invite you to become a part of your child's exciting and enriching journey.</p>			
4	<p>Our group statement as drafted in session -1</p>			



Activity: Ethos: A Summative Account.

Time Required: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- To conceptualise ethos based on the preceding sessions.
- To draw upon this conceptualisation to reflect on school ethos.

Group Size: The groups from the previous activity continue.

Resources Required: D1/S3A2-Worksheet ‘What is Ethos?’, Summary Sheet created by groups in session 2, Summary Sheet D1/S3A2 Ethos Checklist

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The facilitator distributes the Worksheet ‘What is ethos?’ to all groups.
2. They are given 30 minutes to complete it .
3. Once done the facilitator ask them to work in pairs and refer to the summary sheet they had created in session 2 (based on readings ‘Teachers write on Ethos’ I and II)
4. Each group revisits their ‘what is ethos’ worksheet and make additions in light of summary sheet.
5. The Facilitator discusses the worksheet and makes conceptual additions wherever required.
6. Finally, the facilitator distributes the summary sheet D1/S3A2 ‘Ethos Checklist’ asks the group to read it as debriefing follows.

Points for Debriefing:

- Why is ethos inevitable in organisations?
- What do the key elements of the definition of ethos signify?
- How would you define ethos in light of the discussions so far?

- Though, we will discuss it in the next session, can you try to decode the phrase ‘whole school approach to ethos’ based on our discussions so far?

Key Takeaways:

- Coming together of people with shared aims requires working with certain common shared values.
- • Even when the effort is not conscious, certain overarching values do get established as ethos by way of tradition, hierarchy or external factors.



Worksheet-What is Ethos?

Complete the given worksheet using hints provided

All organizations have an Ethos, whether they work towards it consciously or not. (hint: why are organisations formed?) _____

From your experiences, think of an example of a conscious ethos, and an ethos which is not consciously created:

While all organizations have an Ethos; their time and manner of coming into being and sustaining may differ!

(hint: what are the possible ways/manner of coming into being, what may 'time' be hinting at ?)

Ethos is the set of guiding beliefs, attitudes, values shared by members of a group. Accordingly, two phrases require attention:

First, ethos is 'actively shared by all the members' (Hint: focus on each of the 3 words 'actively', 'shared', and 'all')

Can you think of a case/ example from school where ethos does not seem to be shared?

Second, Ethos is ‘underlying or guiding’ (Hint: focus on ‘underlying where’, and ‘guiding what’)



Summary Sheet: The Ethos Primer

- · Despite its frequent usage, ethos remains a term difficult to define precisely. It is often confused with terms like culture, climate, ambience etc.
- · A popular definition often encountered is ethos is the set of guiding beliefs, attitudes, values shared by members of a group.
- · All organizations have an Ethos; as ethos results from humans with shared aims coming together for longer span periods.
- · So again, all organisations have ethos whether they know it or not!
- · Also, the time and manner of how an institutions ethos comes into being and sustains may differ.
- · There is an agreement that ethos is more a matter of feeling, it is what even outsiders can sense if they spend some time with us. Ethos shapes and gets reflected in all aspects of the school, in actions of all people, in interactions of all stakeholders.

Ethos also gets reflected in all aspects of the school, in actions of all people, in interactions of all stakeholders.

A key point to note is that having an ethos does not automatically imply having a positive ethos, too.



Activity: Lecture- School Ethos: A Componential Understanding

Time Required: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- To develop and understanding of the componential model of school ethos
- To facilitate the application of this understanding to real life scenarios.

Group Size: Phase I-Individually, Phase II-Groups of 5

Resources Required: The D1-S4A1 Sheet, an internet image of the target group's institutional logo (for eg .the NVS logo)

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The session is to be conducted in two phases
2. For the first phase, the facilitator asks the entire group to articulate the symbolism of NVS logo for each of the stakeholders. Attention is also brought to understand how school ought to be understood using a whole school approach.
3. In PHASE I discussion the facilitator also touches on the need for symbolisms, choice and who gets to choose?
4. For Phase II, the facilitator makes groups of 5 members each and asks each group to choose an ethos focus area they would like to work with in the following activity.
5. The facilitator writes each focus area such that repetition in choice can be avoided and each group is working with a unique focus area. She can also provide feedback on the choice to ensure that the focus area will support the activity requirements.
6. The facilitator then proceeds with the second phase to deliver a 30-minute lecture on the components of School ethos basing her/his understanding of the theoretical underpinnings section of this module (especially section 2.4)
7. The facilitator is expected to follow an interactive pedagogy as the lecture proceeds.
8. Each group then drawing upon their understanding on phase I and II of this session, completes the worksheet in next 15 minutes.

9. Each group undertakes a brief sharing of their complete worksheet.
10. Discussion and debriefing follow.

Points for Debriefing:

- What is school in school ethos?
- What is the symbolism of your organisation's logo?
- How can this logo be made relevant to all stakeholders. What may we include, change etc.

Key Takeaways:

- The 4 fundamental concepts in understanding school ethos are: Coherence and consistency, values and beliefs, common experience and symbols.
- Each of the three concepts signify ethos, yet it is in their consistent and coherent interaction that ethos really emerges and flourishes.



Process Chart: Our Chosen Ethos is

Complete the given process chart, keeping in mind the principle of coherence and consistency

Values and Beliefs

- Which values and beliefs should your school subscribe to for furthering your ethos focus...

Common experience

- Give examples of how you will create common experience related to chosen ethos focus for:
 - Teachers:
 - Students
 - Support staff

Symbols

- Which symbols can be used for communicating the ethos focus throughout the school? How will you use these?



Closing Session

Activity: Session Recap and Consolidation

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives:

- To consolidate the day and set agenda for the next day

Group Size: Entire Group

Resources Required: Worksheet S6/A1

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The facilitator distributes the worksheet S6/A1 to each participant individually. They group is asked to complete the first 2 questions before they come for the next day. They will be discussed in the next session and inform further activities.
2. In addition to the assignment of the above task, the Facilitator is free to use this session for any activity deemed relevant including any of the following:
 - To provide buffer time to complete any pending activities.
 - To consolidate the day's learning.
 - To engage in doubt solving
 - To set agenda for the next day
3. The session does not require any debriefing.



Activity: A Stakeholder's View of an Inspiring Workspace

Time Required: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- To develop a contextual understanding of an inspiring workspace
- To facilitate an enlisting of the indicators of inspiring workspace for stakeholders.
- To initiate reflections on the role of ethos in creation of inspiring workspace.
- To initiate reflections on the role of school leader in creating a conducive ethos.

Group Size:

Phase-I Individually,

Phase-II Same groups as Session I from day 1 to continue with same roles descriptors

Entire Group

Resources Required: Charts, Markers, D2/S6A1-The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon sheet

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The session is divided into 2 phases. Phase one draws upon the Q. 1 and 2 of the D2/S6A1 worksheet, which the participants were asked to answer in advance and bring along for this session
2. The facilitator should lead the discussion towards understanding that being inspired results in wanting to do something or create something above and beyond one's regular responsibilities, skills and competence and so forth.
3. Also, the discussion should initiate reflections on the need for a school leader to know what inspires their school members and how the participating school leaders fare on it..
4. The Phase-II focuses on the sections of the worksheet to be done in groups.
5. The diagrammatic representation task when completed by each group is to be presented on a chart, and displayed around the place for all groups to see.

6. A discussion on the interrelationship between ethos and an inspiring workspace is undertaken and learning from it concretised.
7. Based on such learning, the last section of the worksheet is to be again done in groups.
8. Discussion and debriefing follow.

Points for Debriefing:

- What do we mean when we say ‘something is inspiring’? What does it mean in actionable term?
- What do inspired stakeholders do? Eg. Students, teachers, support staff?
- Look at answers of Q.2. Did the statement of ethos your drafted on day 1 consider addressing inspiration at workplace?
- What relationship do you reckon exists between school ethos and school being inspiring workspace?
- How can what we know about ethos so far come to our aid as school leaders in creating inspiring workspaces for all.

Key Takeaways:

- Something is inspiring when it makes someone want to do something or create something that is above and beyond one’s regular responsibilities, skills and /or competence.
- A positive ethos is conducive to the creation an inspiring workspace and an inspiring workspace in turn facilitates the reinforcement of such positive ethos.
- An inspired stakeholder will find meaning in one’s work beyond the external expectations and hence find it intrinsically motivating.
- A school leader must strive to create ethos which can help nurture an inspiring workspace.



Worksheet: The Inspiring Workspace Emoticon Sheet

Imagine your school. Now Imagine yourself to be the person in column 1 for eg. A student. Now complete the grid.

The stakeholder to be imagined	2 things about my school that inspire me and my fellows	Specific step that our school has taken to promote any or both of these dimensions	1 thing about my school that I and my fellows find uninspiring	Specific step that our school has taken to address this dimension
A Student				
A support staff, say the cleaner				
A teacher, say Language teacher				

- Answer as yourself. Search for definitions of ‘inspiring’. You can draw upon your experience and knowledge, even consult books, internet resources and each other. Finally arrive at a 1 line definition of the term ‘inspiring’ that you agree with. Something can be called inspiring when
- Hereafter, to be done in a group on day 2 with facilitator...



Draw Your Conceptualisation

‘WORKSPACE ETHOS AND AN INSPIRING WORKSPACE’

1. Use the space below as rough work.
2. Once you agree with a diagrammatic representation, draw the final version on the chart provided to you.

(Hint: Think of the definition of inspiring you created yesterday. Also think of people, policy, practices etc. Does context come in some way?)

An inspired student will...	An inspired teacher will...	An inspired support staff will
As a school leader, the ethos that I need to encourage in each case is...		



Activity: The Ethos Profiles Lecture: Towards a Conceptual Understanding

Time Required: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- To introduce the typology of ethos w.r.t the pervasiveness and footprint parameters.
- To facilitate an analytic understanding of how these parameters intersect to create identifiable ethos profiles.
- To develop an appreciation for conducive and non-conducive ethos profile w.r.t creating inspiring workspace.

Group Size: Individually,

Resources Required: Charts (for types) , Markers, Handout S7A1-1 The Pervasiveness Matrix, Handout S7A1-2- The Footprint Matrix, and Handout S7A1-3-The Ethos Profiles

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The session proceeds as an interactive lecture with the help of a facilitator made PPT and the Handouts.
2. The Facilitator will be served well by preparing a 3-slide PPT; each slide showing the Pervasiveness matrix, the Footprint matrix and the Ethos Profile Diagrams respectively.
3. The relevant handouts are distributed only when the lecture comes to address a particular concept.
4. For each bullet, the facilitator engages participants by asking the for explanations and examples for the said point.
5. The facilitator makes regular references to the Whole School Approach concept while explain both pervasiveness and footprint dimensions.
6. Once the facilitator discusses the 2 matrix and their indicators, they move on to the four profiles and asks individuals to think of as many defining characteristics of each profile as possible.

7. The same are recorded on 4 different charts (labelled Robust, Toxic, Tepid and Insouciant respectively) by the facilitators and any volunteers if required.
8. Once done, the facilitator steers the discussion towards the Robust Ethos profile as being the only conducive ethos profile for creating inspiring workspace.

Points for Debriefing:

- What can be understood by the use of the terms conducive/non conducive ethos profiles?
- What is the relevance of the whole school approach context in trying to understand pervasiveness?
- What is the relevance of the whole school approach context in trying to understand footprint?

Key Takeaways:

- **Pervasiveness: (Strong/weak):** Pervasiveness determines the extent to which the ethos permeates all aspects of a school: i.e. people, policies, practices and processes. The greater the pervasiveness, the stronger the ethos and vice-versa. A strong profile by itself does not ensure a great ethos profile of school. It has to be read in conjunction with the ‘footprint’ indicator.
- **Footprint:** (Positive/ negative) refers to the impact an ethos has on the whole school. To be perceived as a continuum, the two extreme ends denote a positive and a negative footprint respectively.
- **School Ethos Profile:** It is created when the twin criteria of the pervasiveness and footprint of a school’s ethos intersect. As a result, it can be of four types; robust, toxic, tepid and insouciant.



Handout-1: The Pervasiveness Matrix

PERVASIVENESS



1. Feeble Management Commitment
2. Core values diffused.
3. Ambiguity in understanding of core values.
4. Inconsistent dissemination
5. Selective expectations for follow through
6. Intermittent engagement mechanisms involving all
7. Pride not posited as a factor in following up
8. Incongruence between word and actions.
9. Limited linguistic internalisation
10. Limited use of symbols
11. Common experiences are rare.
12. Legacy not a motivator.
13. Selective buy-in.

Low Pervasiveness=Weak Ethos



14. Strong Management Commitment
15. Identifiable core values.
16. Concerted detailing of core values.
17. Rigorous Dissemination
18. Consistent expectations for follow-through
19. Year-round engagement mechanisms involving all
20. Systemic pride in following-up stressed
21. Congruence between word and actions.
22. Stakeholders internalise the language of ethos.
23. Extensive use of symbols
24. Consistently identifiable common experiences
25. Efforts at creating legacy

High Pervasiveness=Strong Ethos



Handout-2: The Footprint Matrix

FOOTPRINT

1. Prescriptive
2. Discernible hierarchies
3. Values and beliefs not shared
4. Provides external reasons to buy in like Incentivizing
5. Disconnect with senior leadership
6. Externally enforced discipline and compliance
7. Lapses invoke admonishing
8. Requiring monitoring and micromanagement
9. Operates through accountability mechanisms
10. Maintaining safe status quo

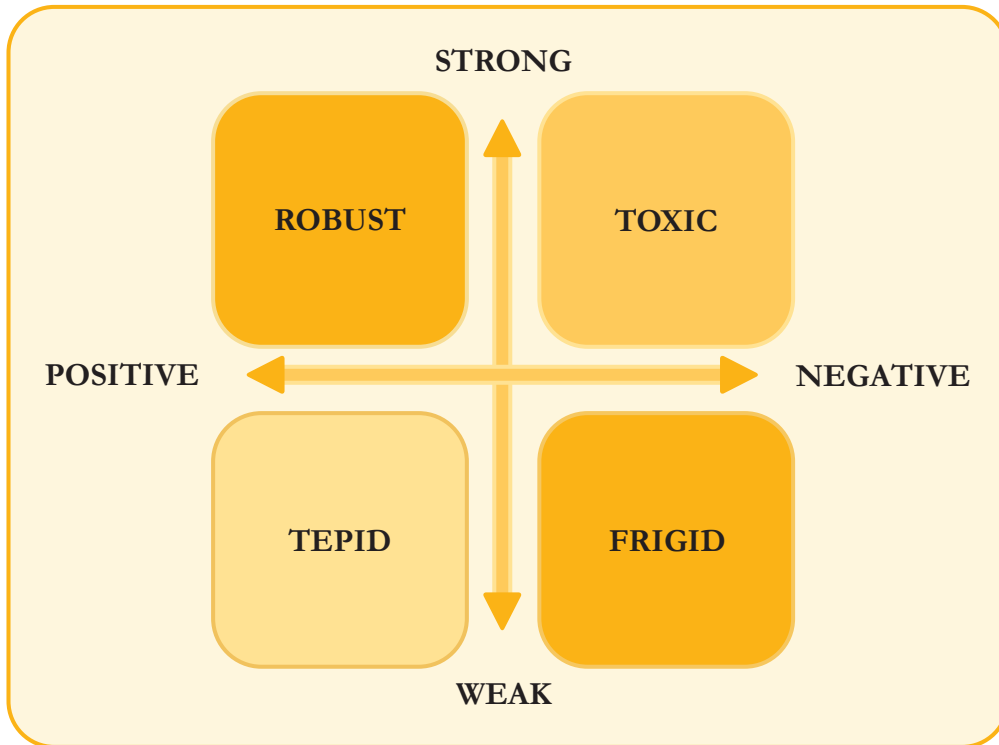
Negative Footprint

1. Consultative
2. Relationship networks encouraged
3. Values and beliefs shared by all
4. Thrives on co-ownership of ethos
5. Senior leadership encourages owning up
6. Self-discipline and authentic living of ethos
7. Lapses invoke reflections
8. Operates on trust and self-management
9. Operates through reflective mechanism
10. Transformational growth mindset

Positive Footprint



Handout-3: The Ethos Profiles





Activity: Deploying Ethos for Creating Inspiring Workspaces

Time Required: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- To analyze real life scenarios using the understanding of ethos typology and profiles.
- To examine how various ethos profiles impact the understanding of inspiring workspaces
- To develop an understanding of how the role of school leaders varies in the process.

Group Size: Previous groups to continue

Resources Required: Charts, Markers, D2/S8A1-Handout Work Ethos : 2 Case Studies, D2/S8A1-Work Sheet- From Ethos to Inspiring,

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The Facilitator distributes a copy each of the D2/S8A1-Handout Work Ethos: 2 Case Studies and D2/S8A1-Work Sheet- From Ethos to Inspiring to each group.
2. The activity proceeds in two phases.
3. For Phase I, the groups are asked to read the cases from the lens of definition of ethos i.e. values, symbols and common experience. The cases are to be further analysed from the reference point of ethos typologies i.e pervasiveness, footprint, profiles etc.
4. Part I of the worksheet is to be complete based on this two-fold analysis.
5. Discussion to consolidate understanding with regular references to the preceding sessions is undertaken.
6. This consolidated understanding is the deployed to complete part -II of the worksheet. Case studies can be referred back.
7. Facilitator undertakes consolidation and debriefing

Points for Debriefing:

- Which values do you find underlying in both case studies respectively.
- Which symbols and common experiences take these values forward in each case.
- How do you assess the two cases on the two typology parameters of pervasiveness and footprint for different stakeholders.
- How about inspiration? Which phrases stand out in this regard?
- What insights have the part II of the grid generated in your group with reference to your schools existing ethos.?

Key Takeaways:

- Each organisation has an ethos. A closer look reveals its components as well as how it fares on the two parameters of pervasiveness and footprint.
- A leader in any ethos profile may believe she is leading an inspiring workspace. Finding answers to some foundational questions can help decode which school profile does the school most closely resemble.



Handout : Work Ethos : 2 Case Studies

Phase-II Same groups as Session I from day 1 to continue with same roles descriptors
Entire Group

Case 1: *(A young teacher's narrative on a recent experience of being involved as a team in a collaborative inquiry to improve the academic achievement of students in a school that has never achieved 100% results in the past decades.)*

“Our principal had received a strong memo and we were expecting the same; instead he shared this concern with us openly –‘memo is not a solution to the problem’ he said. Our primary commitment has to be to facilitate learning for all students. We owe it to our learners to help them learn better and more effectively. All of us together need to plan for it and follow through as a collective.

He conducted a series of meetings with teachers and students both formal and informal, at school and in the hostels. Made small teams, for six months we had continuous classroom observation and feedback with teachers followed by meetings with students. Identified strengths of both children as well as teachers and made them work on it so as to revive their confidence. There were so many things happening. We ran subject special days, remedial and tutorials, in-house trainings in the form of collaborative lesson planning, pedagogical ideations. It was really quite a job but at each stage the principal was with us not as a sage on stage or guide by the side but as an active participant. We certainly learnt a lot about planning, about teaching, about ourselves, about ensuring basic physiological and emotional needs and creating that family atmosphere while doing so. I didn't see any senior and junior, any TGT and PGT division...I think it was being involved as a team that ultimately boosted the morale of the team and almost after more than a decade made the school achieve 100% results and that too not under pressure rather by creating collaborative work spaces, by developing a culture of trust and above all because the principal/school leader saw us all as a unit, a team not as separate divisions and focused on solutions than on looking for who to blame.

Case 2: *(A senior resident teacher on the verge of retirement shares her everyday experiences)*

“ Last last night, 11:00 pm to morning 5:00 am I was awake because children had picked up fight in the hostel. Morning 09:30 to 11:30 am we had a marathon meeting where the principal was reprimanding us because she found two teachers were talking while the principal was addressing the assembly. At 12:00 noon I am here for this meeting. Where is the breathing time? We are working 24X7 whether at school or in the hostel and if you are teaching 10th and 12th grade you may not get the Diwali or summer breaks too. There is no ‘me time’ or personal space for a teacher especially in a residential set-up. To add to this there is little autonomy, support or motivation in the system. As teachers we are stressed, our social and emotional needs are suppressed and we are constantly living with work overloads, isolation and little support from the system. Beginning of year we test children on multiple intelligence and aptitude tests to identify their interests, aptitude and intelligence and accordingly address their needs but towards the end we measure all on the same standard scale. Teachers are trained to reduce the pressure of meritocracy and subsequently the mental health concerns of students but if 100% result is not achieved the same teachers could be issued memos. Where is the motivation?

I have got more experience of working with adolescents than a lot of people who are telling us what I should be doing with them. And I think that is very frustrating...I think I could help and I could bring a lot to it but nobody ever asks. They just go ahead and proclaim and we have to follow... one training after another. I think that is really frustrating. There is a lot of dissatisfaction in teaching.



Worksheet: From Ethos to Inspiring

Phase-I

Dimension	Case Study-I	Case Study-II

Phase-II

Ethos Profile Must ask →	Robust	Toxic	Tepid	Insouciant
Inspire to what end?	To own and further the institutional ethos	To follow institutional ethos	To own and further the institutional ethos	To follow institutional ethos
Who is to be inspired?	Everyone	Teachers, students, staff	Everyone	Teachers, students, staff
Who is entrusted with inspiring?	Everyone	Hierarchical	No clarity	No clarity
When to inspire?	Ongoing	Ongoing	No clarity	No clarity
How to inspire?	Capacity building	Compliance mechanism	No clarity	No clarity
For a moment, imagine yourself to be the leader of a School with the given ethos profile type. List any 3 things you will be doing from such a mindset...	1. 2. 3.			

D2.S9.A1



Activity: Planning for Ethos

Time Required: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- To recognize what aids and ails the sustainability of a robust ethos.
- To consolidate the understanding of the preceding session
- To draw upon such understanding to plan for one's school

Group Size: Phase-I Individually,

Phase-II Previous groups to continue.

Resources Required: Charts, Markers, D2/S9A1-Handout-1 Sustainability Checklist, D2/S9A1-Worksheet The Principal's Primer, D2/S9A1-Process Chart-Our School Ethos

Steps for Facilitation:

1. All participants are given the D2/S9A1-Handout-1 Sustainability Checklist.
2. Participants are given 5 minutes to read the handouts with the instruction that after 5 minutes the participants will have to explain the points with examples
3. The session then proceeds with discussion on the handout.
4. Subsequently all participants are given D2/S9A1-Worksheet-The Principal's Primer.
5. As each point is explained, the principals have rate themselves in terms of to what extent do they do what is being suggested in the worksheet.
6. For the Phase II of the session, the groups get back and draw out an action plan as detailed in the D2/S9A1-Process Chart-Our School Ethos.
7. The groups are told to commit to any 1 value only to begin with.
8. The groups are told that they will be asked to share their 3 most innovative points in the discussion stage later, so they should identify these 3 points in advance. They may pertain to any step of the flow chart.

9. Finally, the process charts of all groups are displayed, discussed, specific challenges identified and specific innovations shared and appreciated.

Points for Debriefing:

- The session being a consolidatory session, no specific debriefing is required. The facilitator can exercise her discretion in steering discussions to address whatever may emerge as a common concern worth addressing.

Key Takeaways:

- Successful planning for ethos is founded on 3 pillars:
 - (i) A whole school approach
 - (ii) A commitment to ensure pervasiveness
 - (iii) A commitment to generate positive footprint.



Handout-1 Sustainability Checklist

What aids sustainability?




- School leadership which is authoritative and distributive in nature
- Teacher professionalism as an underlying value
- School positioning itself as a Learning organisation
- Recruitment commensurate with ethos
- Induction and orientation for students/staff
- Time and space allocations in sync with ethos
- Formal mechanisms to include students in all planning and follow-ups
- A jointly evolved code of conduct in line with ethos
- Periodical retrospection built in the system
- System level linkages such that the ethos is communicated and supported
- As far as possible infrastructural, financial provisioning in line with ethos,
- Regular professional development opportunity in sync with ethos






Worksheet: Principal's Primer

The following table summarises some actions that school leaders engaged in creating a robust ethos undertake.

Please self-assess

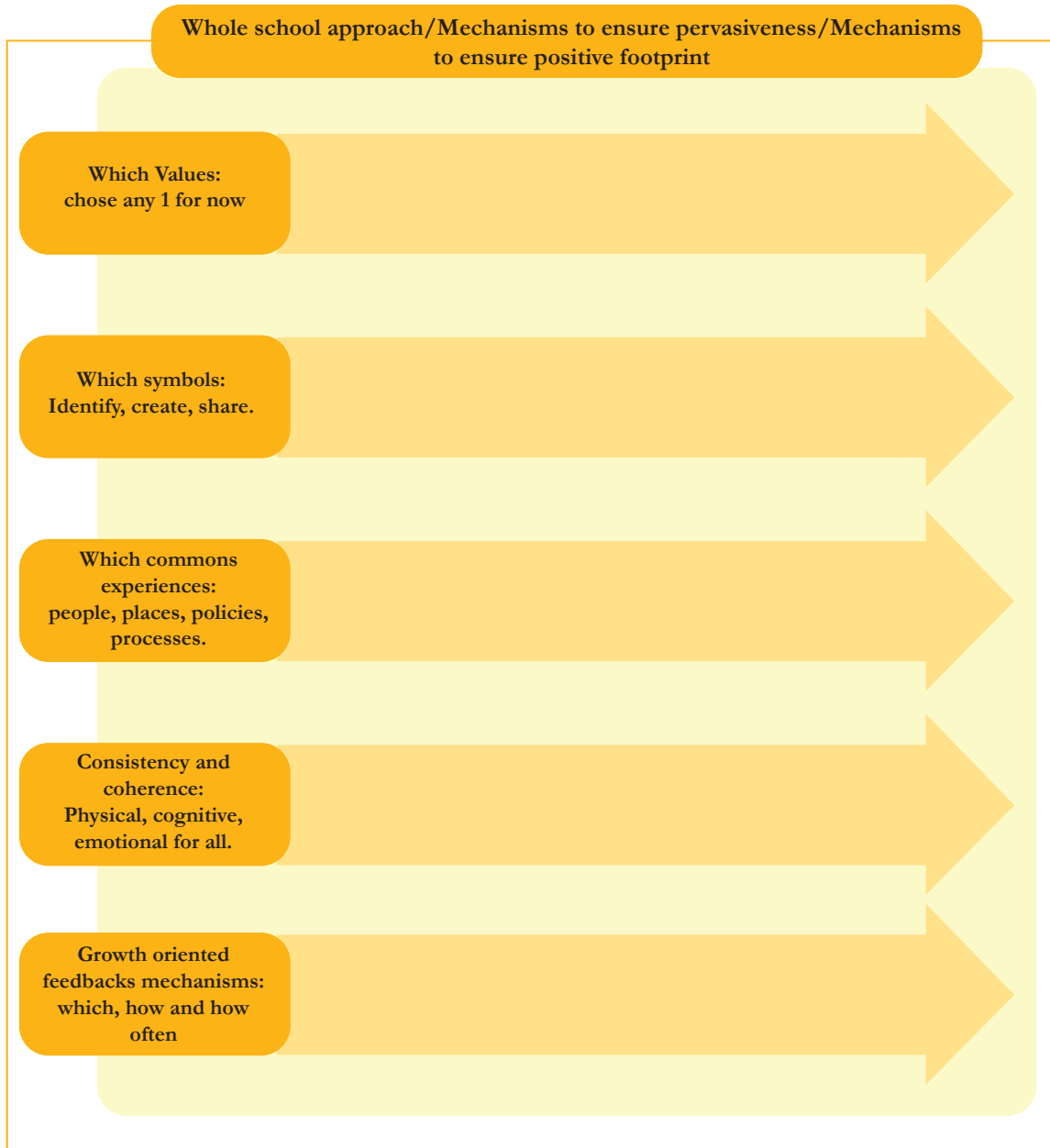
S. No.	Actions of an inspiring School Leader	 I do it well already	 I need to do it better	 I will start doing it
1.	Leads the school with a whole school approach at all times			
2.	Adopts an open door policy for ideation, review and feedback on school ethos etc.			
3.	Leads regular discussion and follow-ups on the coherence between school's ethos and its day to day functioning			
4.	Establishes an environment of dialogue and consultation			
5.	Leads discussions on the future vision and ethos of school and the respective roles all stakeholders must assume in it.			
6.	Champions equity and fairness at work place			
7.	Leads, encourages and facilitates a culture of collaborations			
8.	Demonstrates critical thinking in relation to school policy, processes and practices			

S. No.	Actions of an inspiring School Leader	 I do it well already	 I need to do it better	 I will start doing it
9.	Enables critical thinking among others on school policy, processes and practices			
10.	Is committed to the ongoing professional development of each and every member of the staff.			
11.	Endorses a flexibility in timetabling, day and yearly calendars to allow for time for consultative endeavours			
12.	Stresses the creation of yearly calendars in sync with school ethos			
13.	Leads discussion on year-round aligning of instructional program with school ethos			
14.	Prioritizes and roots for student participation in all planning forums			
15.	Creates a culture of regular sharing and dissemination of pedagogic and organizational best practices			
16.	Demonstrates emulation worthy code of conduct which is in sync with school ethos			
17.	Facilitates provisioning decisions in sync with school's chosen values			
18.	Leads a culture of sustained academic excellence			

S. No.	Actions of an inspiring School Leader	 I do it well already	 I need to do it better	 I will start doing it
19.	Engages in temporal, spatial and infra-structural facilitation required for pursuing academic excellence			
20.	Liaisons with community, academics and system level officials such that the school is at the fore front of knowledge, skill and attitudinal innovation.			



Process Chart: Our School Ethos



D2.S10



Last Session: The Road Ahead

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives:

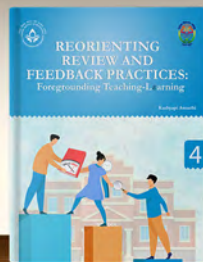
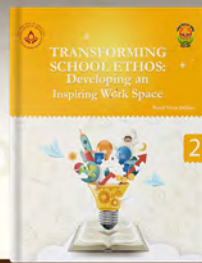
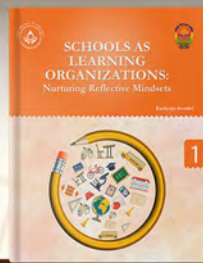
- Intended to be an informal session aimed at tying loose ends, seeking feedback and bidding farewells.

Group Size: Entire Group

Resources Required: None

Steps for Facilitation:

This is an optional session. The facilitator is free to steer the discussion in directions they deem fit based on their previous interactions with the group. If a closure has already been achieved in the last session, this session may be forgone.



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