



Morning Comment

Head Prefect, Meg Simpson

Assembly, Friday 31 May 2024



Kia ora koutou

Here at St Andrew's College, we have a sporting framework made up of the four different parts of the thistle. As you can see, these are the 'deep roots', 'strong stem', 'mighty thorns', and 'vibrant flowers'. Over next couple of terms, Holly, Carter, Hugo, and myself will each be addressing one of these four elements. Today, I'm going to cover whanaungatanga; why is it important to show respect?

I first started playing football as a Year 4 here at St Andrew's. As a competitive person, I'll be the first to admit that one of the reasons I play is because I enjoy winning. I love being challenged, putting in the hard work, and making those tough split-second decisions. But most of all, the reason I play football is because I love being part of a team.

This brings me to the focus of this speech – respect. Respect is the foundation of any good sports team. The way we conduct ourselves as people, our relationships with our teammates, the way we speak to referees, and the respect we show our coaches is so much more important than any goals scored or trophies won.

I can still vividly remember playing my first game with 1st XI as a Year 9, terrified and in complete awe of the older girls. I don't remember anything about how I played, whether we won or lost, but what I do remember is the support and respect my teammates gave me. Cheers of encouragements, hi-fives, and pats on the back from players like Jaz Donald (OC 2020) and Charlotte Roche (OC 2022) meant the world to my Year 9 self.

We don't realise it, but the impact we have on our teammates – especially those younger than us – can be immense. As a Year 13, I'm now in the position where I can pay this respect forward and help to make sure every player feels safe and included.



But it's not just up to the senior students. Respect is something that requires a collective buy in from all members of the team. When we wear the thistle, we represent more than just ourselves – we carry the legacy of St Andrew's and the thousands of players that have come before us. Yes, St Andrew's sport has a long and proud history of success. But more than that, playing for the thistle is about being a good and respectful person.

I'm sure you can all think of clubs or schools that you don't like playing. Maybe they talk back to the referee or play dirty. But that's not us. Here at St Andrew's College, we are the teams that other people enjoy coming up against, regardless of the result. We play hard but fair, and at the end of the day will shake hands and be gracious no matter what.

At this point, I think its worth noting that respect doesn't come at the expense of winning. In fact, more often than not, the two go hand-in-hand. A team who respects each other, who exhibits trust and unity, will play far better together than a team who is unsportsmanlike and disjointed.

So, as the winter season kicks off, what are some visible actions we can take to show respect? I'm sure every team has their own customs but here's a few ideas:

- shake hands with your coaches after every training and game;
- say thanks to your parents for being your personal Uber driver;
- listen when someone else is talking;
- treat your teammates as equals;
- help to pack up any used gear or equipment;
- and remember that the referee is always right.

Whilst these are just a few suggestions, one thing I would like to point out is that respect isn't just limited to the sports field. Whanaungatanga is an all-encompassing concept which means being a good person both on and off the pitch.

I promise you that 10 years from now, as you look back on your experience here at St Andrew's College – both in sport and in general - you won't remember whether you scored that goal or won that game. But what you will remember is way you conducted yourself, the respect you and your teammates held for each other, and the memories you shared together along the way.