



Prefects' Investiture and Leadership Assembly

Rector's Address

Friday 31 January 2025

Mark Wilson



E nga mana
E nga reo
E nga iwi
O te motu
Tēnā koutou katoa
nau mai, haere mai

A very warm welcome to you all, to this morning's Prefects' Investiture and Leadership Assembly, when we honour our student leaders for 2025.

Firstly, my thanks for the Pōwhiri yesterday to welcome myself and new staff and students into St Andrew's College. I perhaps should also acknowledge the drone which puts its life at risk with the seagulls while trying to film the occasion.

Ceremonies like yesterday are important. They provide the opportunities for communities to gather together; they foster a sense of belonging, reinforce our customs and traditions, and what we value; they are a time to celebrate, and to mark significant moments and achievements. In this, our first official assembly for the year is also a very special ceremony.

Here we recognise the importance of leadership development in all young people, and we hope that you will all continue to seek opportunities to grow and develop your leadership capacity.

It gives me pleasure to welcome Mrs Felicity Odlin to this assembly as Chair of the Board of Governors. Mrs Odlin, I thank you, and all of our Board members, for your voluntary time and your dedicated work in creating such strong governance here at St Andrew's College.

Thank you for prioritising being here today, to help award and honour today's and leaders, our young leaders of the future.

It is therefore very appropriate that we welcome back last year's Head Boy and Deputy Head Prefect, who are here to support and hand over to our new leaders.

Thank you to Hugo Ranken and Holly Maraki for joining us today and being part of this special service.

While we recognise there are a wide range of leadership styles and approaches, at St Andrew's our founding values and Christian heritage supports the servant model of leadership.



This approach sees leaders focused on serving their community and thinking beyond themselves to prioritise the welfare and interests of others. The team or community comes first.

Research confirms the servant leadership approach creates real and tangible benefits, such as:

- focusing on your team and community gains greater engagement and connection, which results in higher achievement;
- showing empathy and support builds trust, loyalty and strong culture;
- it fosters more open and clearer communication;
- creates a greater shared ownership and responsibility;
- it can unify the community and create a sense of belonging.

Leadership exists within formal and informal roles and positions, and although people may not have an official title, they can still act and behave in a manner in which others recognise them as leaders.

Put simply, leadership is the action of leading a group of people, and includes being able to influence, support and guide others. As senior students, you all actually have awesome powers of influence. Research confirms that younger teens look towards those just a few years older than them for role modelling. The younger students watch you and learn what is socially acceptable. What you say and do has a powerful influence on younger people. Therefore, what we *choose* to do, and sometimes what we choose *not* to do has real impact. All our actions have consequences.

For example, as a senior student if you see some other students hassling another student – what do you do? Do you walk by and pretend you didn't see it? Or, do you intervene, and risk getting into a conflict over a student you may not even know?

By choosing to walk by, you send the message that you don't care, you actually support the bullying behaviour, and the student being hassled loses a little hope in humanity.

By choosing to intervene you show **courage**, you also send a message to those involved and others who *will* be watching you, that this behaviour is not okay. Your positive actions mean the student being hassled will be grateful and have a greater sense of hope in life. The perpetrators are made to feel uncomfortable, will be less likely to behave like this again, and they learn that genuinely good people are courageous.

A famous Christian monk, St Francis of Assisi, once said: *“Preach the Gospel at all times and **when necessary, use words**”*.

This quote reminds us all that our leadership and relationships will be judged by our actions – *what* we do and *how* we do it.

Our actions so often speak louder than our words. So, we are all leaders. We all live in a community. Our younger students will watch you, you *will* be an influencer, you *will* be



judged, and you *will* influence the lives of others, based on what you choose to do... or choose not to do.

What we believe and value guides how we act and behave.

For our student leaders taking on roles and responsibilities in 2025 we recognise that our College values of Truth, Excellence, Faith, Creativity and Inclusivity must guide not only what we say, but what we *do* in our everyday actions and relationships.

And now to our celebration of leadership for our prefect group, and the presentation of our various leadership roles for senior students.

No reira,

Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou Katoa.