CIVIL DISCOURSE at SPENCE

At Spence, we value civil discourse, and believe in building our intellectual and moral capacity not just for school but for life. Civil discourse can be defined as conversations that are concerned with issues that are important for shared or common good. Spence commits to fostering the skills, values and habits required for mutually respectful conversations about issues that matter – conversations wherein students can bridge differences and diverse points of views to learn from one another.

Understanding that civil discourse requires consistent practice, we aim to create and maintain environments where we are open to sharing. When doing so, we hold the following guidelines:

- Listen to each other and seek opportunities to learn. Be willing to admit what you don’t know, and be open to changing your opinions.
- Respect diversity of opinions and value multiple perspectives. Be mindful of dominant narratives and opinions and seek to uplift other narratives.
- Enter conversations from a place of empathy. Extend grace to each other, knowing that we all are learning. When you can, find common ground.
- Be comfortable with contention and differences of opinion.

Created and ratified by Upper School Student Council and Upper School Equity Council, working with the Upper School Dean of Students Davida Farhat and the Director of Institutional Equity, Rebecca Hong on May 13, 2022

Approved by Head of School, May 15, 2022