

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Shared Vision

“ There’s nothing constant in the world,
All ebb and flow, and every shape that’s born
Bears in its womb the seeds of life.” Ovid [Publius Ovidius Naso]

The education scene has seen many changes in the last two decades. Schools, today have greater autonomy, receive more funding to embark on enriched curriculums and are encouraged to develop niche areas. All these changes are in line with helping students move on to the next stage of their lives when they leave the safety and security of the school environment to go out to the working world. Students need more than good grades and paper qualifications. A student needs strengths like resilience, steadfastness, tenacity to keep afloat in turbulent periods of his life but also an equal measure of compassion, empathy, courage, integrity and godliness to strengthen his inner core and make him a whole person.

The development of a child’s character starts in the home with parents but schools play a crucial role supporting, reinforcing the efforts of parents. Students spend much of their waking hours in school and the influence, teachers and the entire school system have on the student cannot be underestimated. The interaction and activities that take place in a classroom, the school tuck-shop or in the playing field promote traits like honesty, integrity and loyalty and also help develop leadership potential.

As an educationist as well as a parent, I recognise that the teacher/parent partnership is one that must be nurtured and cultivated because both parties share the same objective. I have, in my many years as a member of the senior administration, spoken at length with many parents. It never fails to come home to me that, in the parents’ eye, the student in question, is the centre of the universe. Sometimes it takes a while for the parents to appreciate ‘hard truths’. Jane Adams, an American author once said, “It’s a rare parent who can see his or her child clearly and objectively. At a school board meeting I attended...the only definition of a gifted child on which everyone in the audience could agree was ‘mine’.” Teachers are constantly reminded that they have to maintain good communication with parents. They need to be diplomatic when parents have to be told that their son is not performing or his grades are dropping or he is misbehaving. On their part, parents need to be cordial and respectful even where there is no concurrence how present problems are to be resolved.

There will be teachers whom your children particularly like and those whom they dislike and teachers who obviously like your child and those whom you think do not like your child. Whatever the case may be, personal feelings or bias must not get in the way of communication. There must be mutual respect because that is the basis on which the foundation of a productive partnership is built. The teacher is aware that parents need to be kept informed about school performance and the teacher needs feedback on the child’s social development.

We need parents to keep an open mind and consider other points of view and not be judgemental before the entire case is laid bare. This is especially important when the complaint is serious and calls for disciplinary measures to be meted out. Know that the account you hear from your child may not be the full story. Be prepared to hear that your child is the culprit or aggressor but do not let

that destroy your faith and belief in your dreams for him. Children are very perceptive. If they realise that their parents are reasonable, fair and people with high morals and have the courage to recognise painful truths rather than storm into the principal's office to challenge and confront, their esteem and love for their parents would be deepened.

I have good memories of wonderful parents I have had the privilege to come into contact with, here at ACS Independent. Happily there are many supportive parents who leave the teachers to do their job whilst offering help on the home front when problems surface. These are hands-on parents who do not have a 'just jump in to fix it' mentality and instead allow their children to find their own feet, make mistakes but all the while showing empathy and providing a listening ear. These role model parents are the school's pride. They can be counted upon to attend school briefings and they keep themselves well informed about school programmes, policies and school initiatives. It has to be said though, that there are some parents who can and do make life 'miserable' for the teacher perhaps misconstruing the school's best practices. If the teacher /parent partnership is weak, both parties need to work on that, as the young person in that equation, the student, will be the one who will suffer most. It would be ideal if all parents were more involved with the education of their children by reinforcing values taught in school – adherence to school rules, honesty, diligence and self discipline. Indulgent, absent and overly strict parents hamper the healthy development in their children and often times result in children who are lacking in social graces and self discipline.

Students achieve scholastically as well as in the CCA if there is a stable home environment and the school climate is conducive to learning. All parents want the best for their children. Teachers too want their students to excel in their studies and in their chosen CCAs. We continue to consciously create a caring culture and generation of young people who can adapt to change, be responsible for their actions and be innovative and resourceful when dark clouds appear. Through daily devotions and chapel, we hope to have our students appreciate and develop good Christian values in their lives for -The Best Is Yet To Be!

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