

Principal's Message:

***Mr Sin is Part of Our School Family...**

It was about 6.50am on a sleepy Tuesday. The key masters were trooping into the school office to sign out for their classroom keys. Almost every one of them would open the office glass door, realize that I was standing there and then acknowledge me in their own way.

Many would greet me with a 'Good Morning, Sir', some with a slight nod of their head to say "I see you Sir." Some would wave their hand.

A few reacted like they had seen an apparition - they would scramble to take off their earphones and then mumble what seemed like an incantation to ward off the evil they had just encountered and then run off with their keys

One Year 2 gentleman did a full bow and a greeting.

Again and again, we remind ourselves that our school is a family school. And at its heart should be a respect that we have for one another. That respect should be for ALL members of the family, irrespective of their job or role in the school.

What I noticed, however, was very few of the key masters acknowledged or greeted Mr Sin, our night watchman who oversees the distribution of the classroom keys. Most students would walk up to the office counter, sign the key collection book, collect the key and walk out. They would certainly have seen Mr Sin sitting behind the office counter but I saw only a few make any contact with him.

This little episode is disturbing and revealing. Again and again, we remind ourselves that our school is a family school. And at its heart should be a respect that we have for one another. That respect should be for **ALL** members of the family, irrespective of their job or role in the school. One way to show respect is by being polite and acknowledging others when we encounter them.

What does the Bible tell us about politeness and respect?

But if this episode is anything to go by, it would appear that some people are treated as more part of the family than others. If this is indeed so, our rhetoric may be about family but our practice is anything but family. In a family, every member is important and worthy of honour and respect. We cannot be selective about this.

Mr Sin has served in our school for 8 years. Every day, he reports to school in the evening, checks that our classes and special rooms are secure and locked. At 530am,

he starts getting the special rooms ready for the school day. From 6 am, he waits at the school office for our key masters to collect their keys. While waiting, he mans our phone line for urgent calls from staff, parents and students. Mr Sin is part of the school family and while his role in our school may not be obvious to all, he contributes to the smooth running of ACS (Independent) – just like our librarian, or custodian or accounts staff, or teachers or security guards or the Senior Admin. And each is worthy of respect and deserves to be treated with politeness.

What does the Bible tell us about politeness and respect?

1 Peter 2:17 says "Show proper respect to everyone." "Everyone" - not just certain people, not just people whom we feel matter to us or are important. We cannot be selective in showing respect.

Ephesians 4:32 says "Be kind and compassionate to one another." Again, no conditions are tied to the instruction to be kind and compassionate to one another. The verse does not tell us to be kind to people we like, or people who matter in our world. The verse simply says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another." Again, we cannot be selective about whom to be kind and compassionate to.

Our key masters are diligent, efficient and highly responsible young gentlemen and ladies. They come early and ensure our classes are open on time for their classmates – and we have much to be grateful to them for. Like many of our students, they are decent, polite and certainly respectful people.

But may I suggest that we learn to acknowledge *everyone* in our diverse school family - and not just the recognizable few. Some – like Mr Sin – may not be people entirely familiar to us - but they are part of the family no less. And our acknowledgement is a way to show our respect for them as persons and as part of our school family.



Winston Hodge
Principal

Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)

*Adapted from a Morning Devotion shared on 25 July 2014