

The Swaminarayan

EDUCATION IS THAT WHICH LIBERATES

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Theme for next week

The theme for next week is “**Introspection.**” I have written about it in the back of the newsletter.

Resources for Pupils of TSS

I had personally written to all the parents last term that pupils can get access to resources for all the subjects on line. The site contains all the information you will need in directory format for all the subjects, including syllabi for all the years, past GCSE & ‘A’ Level examination papers or links to the relevant examination board sites, notes for some subjects and helpful hints.

Parents are reminded that the site is still under development so more resources will be added as we develop more material specifically for the TSS community.

Parents can get the site address, username and password from the office. Please keep the username and password secure for your personal use only.

WRITER’S CORNER

I aim to educate and make you reflect on what I put in *The Swaminarayan*...so with lack of contribution from budding writers from our school, I turn to this very interesting view of Shaun Fenton published in TES...Why NOT getting into Oxbridge can make, not break, students. It is timely because so many exceptional students, including two from TSS, will not have received an offer due to the huge competition for places. Yet, lots of universities can offer students the same as Oxbridge – or better. Not getting in isn't a failure.

Anxious sixth-form students, and even more anxious parents, now know the outcome of their Oxford and Cambridge interviews. Some of the best and brightest young people of their generation will hear that, for perhaps the first time in their life, they have "failed".

A place won at Oxford or Cambridge is still, very much, a champagne moment in life.

But here’s the thing. Our ancient universities are still world class, but so are others in the UK and beyond, and there are more routes to success now than ever before.

Some other universities have different and (whisper it) sometimes more relevant strengths and offer more innovative courses in computer science, media technologies, art and design, to name but a few – but with real strength in traditional areas of study such as the sciences, history and creative subjects. Aerospace engineering, software development and industrial sciences...the options are growing and the subject titles signal their employability factor.

Some students will take blue-chip degree apprenticeships where they learn, earn, acquire professional experience, get qualified and be debt free. This is an idea whose time is coming – and fast. At Reigate Grammar School, we have more parents attending briefings on degree apprenticeships than A-level subject choices. The spectre of their children being in debt for years to come is having a marked impact on parental attitudes to traditional degrees – "even" in the independent sector.

Others will head abroad to university, with Ivy League institutions such as Harvard and Yale proving the main draw. Many of the top names provide a level of financial support to students quite unlike anything available in the UK. And in mainland Europe, some Dutch, German and Nordic universities offer English-language teaching at a fraction of the cost of our £9,000 tuition fees.

Students who choose to study overseas benefit from a double-whammy of living in a new country as well as studying for a degree. What employer could fail to be impressed by such a display of enterprise and resilience in a young person?

But how to choose? The routes are many, but remember: the best option is the best fit for the individual young person. And remember that personal qualities, what we sometimes call character, will always have a far bigger impact on life chances than A-level grades, university or degree class.

Ten of the worst things you can say to your children – This week two more things parents should not say to their children...

"Are you sure you need that second cake?"

Whilst it's a good thing to keep your child healthy, comments that can foster a negative body image should be kept well clear of under all circumstances, according to the UK's eating disorder charity, Beat.

If you are genuinely concerned about what your child is eating, start stocking your kitchen with healthier foods and introduce more physical activity into your family life. That way, when there are cakes, for example at a party, it doesn't matter if they indulge.

Lead by example too. If you're telling your kids not to eat too much when you're the one who is always chomping on crisps or biscuits, your messages will probably fall on deaf ears.

The main thing is to avoid turning food into a power issue and to keep food-related comments positive.

"You always..."/ "You never..."

"Why do you always spill your water at night?" "You never come down to breakfast when I ask you to!" Few parents will be immune from prefixing complaints about behaviour with "you always" and "you never." But says Jenn Berman, psychotherapist and author of *The A to Z to Raising Happy, Confident Kids*. "At the heart of these statements are labels that can stick for life."

Children become what we label them as, he explains, so telling your kid that she's the one that never tidies her room means she's more likely to become the child who, guess what, never tidies her room. Next time you're about to say it, take a step back and think about how you can help your child change. "I notice you have trouble storing your pens and making your bed. Is there anything we can do to help make that easier?"

The power of silence - Introspection

Think

You live a life where you are forever in a rush from the moment you wake up. You will rush your shower if you have one in the morning, you will rush your breakfast, and before you know it you will be out on the road rushing to school. At school you will go from one lesson to another and in between you will be chatting to your friends, possibly about football and television programmes.

At break time the boys may be busy playing football while the girls may sit chatting while eating their snacks. Some of you may be busy doing your homework that you have forgotten to do the night before. You may all be so busy in your own ways that some of you may even forget to eat your snack that your mother has carefully prepared for you. When the bell rings at the end of break you may pick up your bags and rush to your next lesson. The same may follow at lunch time, with a quick lunch and going back to your homework, football and aimless chit-chat about anything and everything. After school some of you may be involved in team sports, attend a homework club or other activities that your school may offer. The rest will go home and have a snack while watching your favourite television programmes. If your parents are home they may tell you to do your homework while your mother prepares the dinner. The conscientious amongst you may do the homework well while the rest may rush it. You may watch more television, read or play games on the computer, Xbox, Nintendo or other gaming machines and before you know it, it will be time for bed.

Feel

At no stage will you have sat down in silence or stopped to think about the events of the day. Finding time for silence is important for your life because it allows you to look within yourself, and it enables you to think about things before making important decisions in your life.

Do

There is a lot of truth in the saying 'silence is golden'. If you can learn to find some silent time for yourself every day, you will surely have a golden future because you will learn to listen to what your heart is saying.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani