

# The Swaminarayan

**Education is that which liberates**

[www.swaminarayan.brent.sch.uk](http://www.swaminarayan.brent.sch.uk)

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**Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,**

## **Theme for this week**

The theme for next week is specifically for parents but also for schools to understand the reason for their existence as reminded by Abraham Lincoln. The theme for the week after the half-term is **“Have a dream!”** I have attached the thoughts of two great men on the themes at the back of the newsletter.

## **Half-Term Next Week**

As always, while the office will remain open for the half-term next week, pupils and teaching staff will be on holiday. I hope S1-3 take the chance of a well-deserved holiday after the internal examinations; also S4, 5 and 6 will welcome this break in preparation of the remainder of the external examinations to follow in June. If parents have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ring. The office staff always alert me for any urgent matters and I shall endeavour to respond as soon as possible. We hope to begin the work of the next academic year with S1-3 after the half-term, so don't rush into booking your holidays yet!

## **Piyush Amin, Chairman of Governors writes...**

The Swaminarayan School's Annual Summer Fair takes place over the weekend of 20 & 21 June. This is the time the school community comes together to raise much needed funds for the school. This year the funds raised will go towards the Children's play area outside the dining hall and also for the refurbishment of the laboratories in the science block. Over the years the fair has raised funds for our school mini buses, inter-active white boards, safety ramps in the car park, books for the library and computers to name just a few. Funds raised over the last two years were earmarked for the refurbishment of the school gym. These funds have not yet been spent but will be, once the refurbishment project commences. I would like to take this opportunity in requesting ALL parents and friends of the school community to give a few hours over the weekend. It's our school, our community.



## **TSS proves tough competitors in the rain – Miss Loten writes:**

The Year 7 TSS Athletics team competed at the Brent Regional athletics competition last Thursday, battling wind and rain to put in some fantastic performances. Many of the Year 7's were competing in their first competition and they proved they were tough and resilient athletes.

The girls competed well in the field events, which included the shot-put, discus, long and triple jump. Many of our girls finished in the top 5 in their event. The boys' team also had successes in the field events, putting in some great distances. The notable star on the day was Tai Chi who made the final of the Year 7 Boys' 200m, beating many fast athletes in the heats. He finished 5<sup>th</sup> overall for the Brent region running a fast time. Well done.

Overall a great day and many schools commented on the great sportsmanship of our athletes and how supportive and well behaved they were throughout the day.

## WRITER'S CORNER

**The standard was said to be particularly high for the ISA essay 2015. Our very own Shyam Vyas, Senior 1, was highly commended by the judges for having "argued a strong case for competition, which he believes is one of the forces that drive us to achieve." Enjoy.**

### **Competition – Good or Bad? By Shyam Vyas**

In the outside world, all people are very competitive to get the job they want or just to make them better. In reality people don't care who or what you are, they just want to be the best of the best! However, other people also want to be the best; and this is where competition comes in. No matter if you're friends, you too will compete with each other to be one of the best. However, this could result in a loss of friendship and could cause a lot of sorrow. So beware, that the competitiveness could follow into misery! Usually this does not happen although some people may be sensitive so just watch how you approach them. (With what I've said, do you think competition is good or bad for you?) On the other hand competition is a good thing. Everyone knows the saying, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer". This is a tactic from the Art of War. Do you ever wonder why people say this to you over a million times? Well, it's because you can learn from your enemies and use their good habits and points and store it in your brain. This could help you to improve in subjects and socially. It's only natural; if you want to compete with someone else you have to grow. Whenever I want to become good at something I make effort to make friends with people who are already better than me. Winning isn't everything, but wanting to is. I always look for people who are better than me at something and competing with them helps me to grow enormously, consequently they both lead to a great friendship as well. That is why I believe if you want to become good at something, one of the things you need to do, is to look for people who are better than you at it and compete with them. If there was no competition we would have never landed on the moon. The main reason America even went to the moon was because of national pride. America simply had to beat the Russians and show their biggest competitors that they were number one. As a race we owe so much of our current advancements to competition between people, between companies, and between countries. As people compete, they create and the whole world grows in general, as a result. The spectacular thing about having competitors is that you have to be more innovative. You'll have to think outside the box and go after new options in order to get ahead. Also it makes us more goal oriented. Communism is a great example of what happens when you take the competition out of society. In communism everyone makes the same amount of money whether they are performing brain surgery or sweeping the floors at McDonald's. The result? Less people want to achieve great things. Who wants to go through all that schooling and become a doctor when you can get the same amount of money by becoming a caretaker or working at a fast-food restaurant? Having competition makes us want to achieve more things and to do more simply because we can grow ourselves compared to other people. Take away competition and we become lazy, and it becomes harder to motivate us when actually it really shouldn't. Competition is one of the forces that drives us to achieve. So now, do you really see and understand how important competition really is? Do you see where we would be without competition? Competition is SO important! We need it to be successful and achieve greatness in life. Although it is good, it's the way you compete and it doesn't mean you have to win and someone else has to lose, it can be a win-win situation! In life, suppose the Swaminarayan School students all compete in a test, to get a really high mark, all the students can achieve really great marks. Although we might all compete individually, collectively we can all still achieve our aspirations, which also make our school proud!

### **The worst things parents can say to teenagers taking exams**

By Sean Coughlan Education correspondent BBC

**The exam season is here. For families living in the exam zone, it's a tricky time. Emotions are running high. Nerves are frayed. Parents try to be encouraging and supportive - and that's usually a sure-fire way of starting an argument. There is nothing that says it's the exam season better than the sound of a teenager's door being slammed.**

So what are the worst things you can say?

1. **There are only two things that parents can ever say to teenagers taking their exams.** The wrong thing. And the wrong thing. Whatever you say is going to irritate them. Accept it. Even accepting it, that's irritating too.
2. **"Don't worry, it's not a big deal, it's only a bit of paper, and whatever happens we still..."** Wherever you're going with that, it's not working. Think hole, stop digging. If you say, "Don't worry," this is interpreted as really meaning, "Relax, you're in a ship heading at full speed towards a colossal iceberg." But if you say it "really matters", that translates as: "Why are you piling all this pressure on me now, like I really need any more?" Wrong and wrong. Again.
3. **"Remember how well your sister did."** Few things could be as provocative. It sets off a series of explosions all over the house like in a Sunday afternoon war film. Never mention siblings, dubiously-gifted cousins, unbearable child-prodigy neighbours.
4. **"How can you do any work with all those screens running at once?"** The generation gap is now measured by the number of screens being used simultaneously. It's safe to write this because no teenager will ever read this far down an article. They are too busy playing with YouTube, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat and something really retro like Facebook.
5. **"At least the exams are much easier now."** This little gem could dig you into a corner tighter than a Hatton Garden deposit box. Allude vaguely to "proper" exams like O-levels and then say: "It's great that these days they more or less give out the answers as well as the question papers."
6. **"It's lucky you've only chosen easy subjects."** Whoosh! So inflammatory that entire postcodes are laid waste.
7. **"You can only do your best."** Patronising, with subtle shades of disappointment. It sounds like: "You can only do your best... for someone who would lose an argument with an earthworm. But well done you."
8. **Stupid 'brain food' ideas.** Like it's going to make a difference, eating fish pie the night before an exam. Or a bunch of bananas or gallons of water to rehydrate the brain. Advice on sleep can also be annoying, oscillating between "Make sure you keep revising" and "Don't stay up all night revising." Maybe the last two years of not reading anything longer than a party invitation might have a bigger impact. And anyway what's the connection with fishes and intelligence? A lot of them are no better than sea grade.
9. **"Do you want me to test you on a few things?"** This begins with good intentions, in the same the way that wars and major humanitarian disasters probably begin with good intentions. But you've stepped inside the dragon's cave. You've offered to help. What could go wrong? Apart from everything? You're going to ask the wrong questions, or give the wrong answers. And you'll ask them in the wrong way. Then you'll get annoyed and say: "Can we turn off the music so I can hear myself think?" or "Why are you watching Game of Thrones on the laptop?" or "Are you having another break?" Hope the door frame is more robust than their speaking-and-listening skills. Bang.
10. **"You'll kick yourself if you've only missed out by one mark."** Really, really irritating. Guaranteed to leave them angry until August. Infuriated teenagers will add it to the bulging file marked "I've tried my hardest but nothing is ever good enough for you." Best of luck everyone. Sorry, was that the wrong thing to say?

### **Lincoln's Letter**

The 16th President of the United States of America once wrote a very inspirational letter to the Headmaster of his son's school:

"He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, and for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader. Teach him that for every enemy, there is a friend. It will take time I know, but teach him, if you can, that a dollar earned is of far more value than five dollars found. Teach him to learn to lose and to also enjoy winning. Steer him away from envy, if you can. Teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that bullies are the easiest to lick. Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books, but also give him quiet time to ponder over the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a garden hillside."

"In school, teach him it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong. Teach him to be gentle with the gentle people

and tough with the tough. Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the band wagon. Teach him to listen to all but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.”

“Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness. Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders, but to never put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob, and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.”

“Treat him gently but do not cuddle him, as only the test of fire makes fine steel. Let him have the courage to be impatient and let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself, because he will then always have sublime faith in mankind. I know this is a big order, but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son.”

### **I have a dream – Martin Luther King**

This extract from Martin Luther King’s speech exemplifies what can be achieved if we are truly passionate about pursuing our dream. Read it, you will feel inspired.

“...Though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed; ‘we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal’. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!”

“I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of ‘interposition’ and ‘nullification’, that one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!”

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and ‘the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together’. This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that one day we will be free.”

### **Being ready for exams – Ria Mehta (S5) writes...**

I know that I haven’t exactly been keeping up with the deadlines for the newsletter and I do sincerely apologise. I also know that this week’s theme is ‘Be ready for opportunities’ but I feel like after talking to Mr Manani I could say some more about ‘Being ready for exams’. Now before anyone tells me ‘Ria, exams have already started so this is literally no help!’ I’m not talking about revision tips as I wouldn’t be much help even 3 months before the exam. I’m talking about just being ready for what may come your way. Last week Mr Manani told me that ‘Everyone has exams, it doesn’t mean you can’t write something.’ I realised that we all do have exams they just come in different forms. It could be that biology quiz on page 28 or it could be your GCSE exam. We can’t put our lives on hold just because we have these ‘exams’, I know it’s always great to dedicate our time on an exam but we have to realise we’ll always have exams and so will other people.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Nilesh Manani**