

# The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

## Theme for the week

The theme for next week is “**Food, Exercise and Health.**” I have written about it at the back of the newsletter.

## Sports Day on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July

Everyone is reminded that all the senior pupils should be delivered to the Willesden Sports Centre on Monday. We are planning to finish at about 2pm so that pupils can make their way home early to avoid the congestion on buses that is likely to arise with the release of pupils later on from large schools in the vicinity. I expect all our pupils to be sensible in going straight home once we finish. Parents, friends and guardians wishing to join us in the morning are of course very welcome.

## Prep Prize Day.

Parents are reminded that the whole school will close at 1pm on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019 for the Prep Prize Day in the evening.

## Physicist of the Year 2019



Dev Patel in Senior 4 receiving the Physicist of the Year Award at Queen Mary College, University of London.

## Behind the Scenes after the A Level results are published by anonymous

### The value of Music, LAMDA, Ballet

I've met thousands of potential students at university open days, as they arrive bright-eyed at the prospect of their new lives on campus. It's always an exciting, hopeful period. But once it's over, I'm left wondering whether I should tell them about what really happens behind the scenes after A-level results are announced.

I work at a leading university. Like many others, we pay close attention to university league tables. Although these tables are designed to help students choose what university is best for them, in reality some of them restrict student choice and hold back widening participation. The problem lies in the metrics, notably entry tariff scores, which reflect more than students' A-level results. This score is the decisive factor in who gets in and who gets turned down. While A-level results make a considerable contribution to tariff scores, so do all sorts of other things. Does the applicant have a good qualification in dance or a grade six in music? 12 points. Another qualification in speech and drama? A further 12 points. An A for an extended project? 24 points. Level 3 certificate in British sign language? 16 points.

To provide some context, a B at A-level is worth 40 points. Last year, as we looked closely at students who had not quite made the grades – BBB instead of ABB, for instance, or BBC instead of BBB – those with extras such as ballet and piano qualifications were offered places. Other applicants with the same A-level results who did not achieve an acceptable tariff score were denied a place. Speaking to colleagues from other departments revealed that this happened across the university.

This sort of league table game-playing by the university administration has an obvious impact on widening participation in universities. Students whose parents or guardians are unable to pay for piano or dance lessons, or whose schools do not offer extended projects, for example, ultimately lose out.

Last year, my department closely re-examined the applications of every student who had just missed their A-level grades. Their personal statements revealed that many had done remarkably well given their circumstances, and we felt they had great potential and would flourish at university.

But the university administration, fearing for the university's position in the league tables, denied them admission. Once the widening participation quota – this year defined by those receiving free school meals – was full, equally deserving students missed out.

### **Food, exercise & health**

#### **Think**

Every time there are chips on our school menu all I see students taking is a plate full of them! Sometimes we give them a chance to set the menu for a week, and always burgers, chips, pizza, cakes and fizzy drinks are among the first items they choose. While these foods are tasty, I think you will not be surprised when I tell you that they are not always good for you.

#### **Feel**

You see when you are young, your body can withstand almost any abuse; its capacity to recover is enormous. Even when you fall and cut yourself, your body heals much more quickly and because you recover so quickly many of you feel invulnerable. Yet you all know about smoking; one cigarette will not harm your lungs. Even the effects of smoking for years will not be obvious when you are young but all research shows that cigarettes cause lung cancer in people who smoke over a long period of time.

#### **Do**

Whether you are looking at your eating habits or smoking, the effects will not be felt when you are young because the harmful effects of any abuse to your body are cumulative; that is they build up over many, many years. While I am not asking you to stop eating what you like, I am asking you to eat everything in moderation. Eat healthy foods, do regular exercise, play sports, and you will enjoy a healthy life for longer. People often say that they will start to look after all these issues when they are older, but I can assure you, if you don't form good eating habits when you are young you will find it extremely hard to change when you are older.

Yours sincerely,

**Nilesh Manani**