

is important and so the last lesson of the day is important. So, in future, if you want an exit visa, you have to apply to me, through your Coordinator and the reason must be a very serious one – much more serious than Fantasy Kingdom!

And next year, Year 10 and 11 will have no ‘free periods’. It seems that many of you do not know what to do with them and then some of you leave to go to Coaching Centres which keep you busy all day. So next year, when you do not have any classes, we are arranging for you to have supervised study periods and you and your teachers will have to see that you have work to do in them. The present Year 10 will have their Mock O levels in November and, if they do well, they will be taking O levels in June 2004. This time next year, they may be leaving us for their ‘A’ level courses! Education is good fun but also serious! It will be very hard for us to win a reputation for passing O levels unless we keep some students who take them and do well. Everyone wants to go to schools and teachers that have a ‘proven track record’. As a new school, we have to earn our record so you and we have to work just that bit harder. Mrs Arefa is arranging for Year 10 and 11 to have extra classes between the examinations and the beginning of next term. We really want you to do well, both for your sake – and the school’s.

But we want *all* of you to do well in your exams. I hear that some of you get very worried and anxious about examinations. Well, *IF* you have been lazy and not worked properly, then you deserve to be worried and anxious. But, if your teachers have kept up with the syllabus, given you lots of practice in answering questions, and if, together, you have made sure that you understand the work, then you may be a *little* anxious about your examinations but there should be no need to get in a panic. Everyone wants you to do well but the most important person to want you to do well should be YOU! You have to be motivated. Do you know what ‘motivated’ means? Do you know what a ‘motor’ is. It is an engine. A motor-bike is a bicycle with an

engine. When the motor is going, then the bike is moving forward. If the motor is switched off, then the bike does not move. In education, if you have not got a motor, an engine, inside you, you will not move, you will not make progress. *Your* wish to improve, *your* wish to develop, is your motor, that ‘motivates’ you – drives you forward. If you do not wish to improve then you are like a car that sits in the garage and goes nowhere. Your teachers and parents may encourage you all we can. We can bribe you with prizes and treats, we can threaten you with punishments, but, if you are not motivated, then no power on earth can force you to move. Education needs parents, teachers *and pupils* to work together. It needs cooperation from you too.

Yesterday, I ended by quoting Camus, a French philosopher and said I had put some words by him outside the office downstairs. I wonder if any of you can remember the saying - “Don’t walk in front of me, I may notfollow. Don’t walk behind me, I may notlead. Walk beside me and just be my friend.” An awful lot of life is about cooperation between those who respect each other. We will think about that some more, tomorrow. God bless you.



LEARNING TO BE FRIENDS

Assembly 102 – July 23rd 2003

Let us think some more about the text that is up next to the office now – the quotation from the French philosopher, Camus, “Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me. just be my friend.”

In my life-time, in England, relationships of all kinds have changed so much – and many of them for the better and I am watching things begin to happen here also – between men and

women, in business and politics, education and health care. In England, in my life-time, men and women are much more partners in marriage. They discuss things with one another as equals. My mother and father loved each other very much but my father did not treat my mother as an equal to him in thinking. Nowadays, many of my friends and their children, discuss things and make many more decisions together, listening to one another's point of view. There are still some families, of course, where relationships are very top - down, with one of the partners expecting the other to do whatever he or she says, but, on the whole, I have seen marriage becoming much more of a partnership of equals. As a minister, I have interviewed many couples before their marriage and have asked them many questions to check that they understand the importance of their marriage promises. Many have said to me, "We were friends before we were lovers." That is not the only way to begin a strong relationship, but it is a very good way.

What is also good is that, in England, violence in a marriage is now considered totally unacceptable. If a man beats his wife, then the woman has the right to leave him and we have special secret houses where they can live, with their children, safe from being hunted down, until they have decided what they are going to do. Many people will try and help the violent man and his wife to begin the relationship again, in a better way, but, if the man will not stop his violence, then the woman has the right to leave him. There is some behaviour that no one has to put up with. In your culture also, slowly, the rights of a wife NOT to be beaten by her husband are being established. I heard of one man here who complained, "I used to enjoy beating my wife, but now I am not allowed to do it!" Good! I say. Sometimes the wife's women friends will go, in a group, to the husband, to ask him to stop being violent and learn to talk with his wife and discuss their problems without violence. That is the better way. Some of you

are great fighters. You too must learn to discuss your problems, without fighting – Year 3!

But I also hope that we are helping you, in this school, to understand one another better by being a co-educational school. Year 7 and 8 had a good debate on co-education the other day and it was very interesting to hear the arguments for and against. I know it is not easy. Some of you are teenagers – between-agers – between being children and being adults. Sometimes there is teasing that is not nice but you are learning where the borderline is and you can help each other by telling each other when you have gone too far. If boys and girls learn, in school, to treat each other as equals and as friends then, in your later life, you can be part of a revolution wherever you work – in hospitals and schools, businesses and banks, shops and offices – and your own homes. Wherever men and boys treat women and girls as though they have no brains and no skills and no feelings, then they will not do well in their own lives and work. Wherever women and girls do not communicate or go around with their noses in the air because they think they are superior to boys, then they are asking for trouble – asking to be teased! I hope that here you are learning to be natural and normal and healthy with each other as ordinary human beings who are quite capable of answering back firmly if someone is rude. If men and women stop playing power games and truly work together and use their different gifts, then any organization they work for, or any home they are part of, is much stronger. Learn to walk beside one another and be friends.

God bless you.