

who come home in floods of tears saying, "Everyone, EVERYONE, in the class has Nike trainers and they are all laughing at me in these old shoes ! You MUST buy me Nike trainers!" Parents, even poor parents are put under terrible pressure to buy clothes that are not suitable for school and far too expensive.

Worst of all, the fashion changes – so, one month, this thing is in fashion and everyone MUST have it and the next month, it is something different that everyone MUST have. It is becoming so stupid and brings so much unhappiness that I refuse to let it happen here.

I had an expensive education because my parents wanted the best for me, as your parents want the best for you. But, in my home, we did not have enough money for a fancy life-style, fashionable clothes, going to restaurants, new cars and expensive holidays. My family lived very simply so that my brothers and I could have a good education. I think some of you have families like that and I want you to know that I am on your side. We do not want to play the games that some people want to play with fashions for this and fashions for that in this school.

A boy in Year 4 yesterday brought his Gameboy computer game into school and his teacher was very worried and brought it to me and I took it in my hand until he was in the school bus going home. Do not bring expensive things to school with you. It is not necessary. It is not kind to the other students to show off the expensive things that *you* can afford. Moreover, the school cannot take responsibility for such things if they are stolen.

Many people in the world today are going crazy for consumer goods. They *must* have this or that! Some of them do not want to think seriously about anything. They want high living and low thinking. I think that it is far better, in a good school, to model simple living and high thinking. I think the world needs people like that and I hope you are going to be like that when you are adults.

God bless you.



GROUP CELEBRATIONS MEAN HARD WORK

Assembly 12 – January 20th 2003

In our school prayer, we pray that we are saved from sin and selfishness and, in the next 3 days, we shall need a lot of unselfishness if we are going to have a good time together at the Foundation Day Ceremony. When we are part of a larger group, one of the things that a large group of people can do very well, is to put on very good parties – but it needs everyone to want everyone else to have a good time as well as themselves.

When I was about 10 years old, my school had a special function. Lots of parents came and we had lots of stalls and raised money for the school and, for some reason or other, I stayed behind and found I was helping to clear up when everyone had gone home. I never forgot that experience because I learnt how much work has to go on, before an event and after an event, as well as during the event, to make it possible for people to have a really good time. If any of you have parents that put on really good parties or have big families that have big family occasions, then maybe you too have learnt, how much hard work there is, making sure that everyone has a good time.

The day after tomorrow, Thursday, is our Foundation Day Ceremony – our 4th birthday. It will also be a celebration of the fact that, yesterday, we enrolled our 300th pupil. So now our school has over 300 pupils. On Thursday, I hope your parents and you and the teachers and all our visitors are going to have a very good time but it will demand very hard work from all of us. It will also need a lot of unselfishness because, if your wish to have a good time for yourself, is greater than your wish to give others a good time, then things can start going downhill.

I hope you are going to bring lots of visitors. Please tell people that they can have a good time even if they do not speak English very well because I have asked that nearly all the speeches and announcements will be in both Bengali and English. We are going to need you to work very hard today to make sure that your classrooms are interesting for your parents to visit, with your best work up. Today is the day when teachers have to get the final copies ready of examples of your best work to put up in the classrooms. Please help them as much as possible by writing out neatly what they ask you to do. Don't be late for Assembly tomorrow as we have a famous artist visiting us.

Tomorrow, some people will be working in your classrooms. Some will be helping with the Art work, and those of you taking part in the cultural events are going to be very busy – and those of you who are serving the food are going to need to know where to go and how to be good and gracious servers. Please make sure that no teacher wants you for a special purpose and then, if not, you can join me and my working-party which is going to clean up the field next door.

Then on Thursday, we will all come in our nicest clothes. You will come in nice clean leather shoes and uniform, please, unless you have been given special permission by a teacher for some special purpose to come in different clothes. But, remember, the day will be no good if we do not have lots of nice visitors so bring your parents and grandparents and others, either for the morning or the afternoon or both. Let us give everyone a very happy day and, in that way, give ourselves a good time also.

God bless you.



A VISIT BY A FAMOUS ARTIST

Assembly 13 – January 21st 2003

Thank you all for how hard you are working for our Foundation Day tomorrow. We are all looking forward to it very much. Do remember to give your invitations to your parents and grandparents and neighbours. Work is beginning to go up in the classrooms so that, after Prize-giving under the canopy on the field, you bring your visitors back from Prize-giving for lunch here, and then you can take them upstairs to the classrooms to see your work. Thank you to the boys of Class 9 and 10, (some of whom worked harder than others) for beginning to make a real impact on the rubbish in the field. We will need some more clearing up there and today is the day for the bonfire. I think that some of the local children thought we were mad to bother to pick up the rubbish – after all, they take it for granted. But we are role-modeling better values. Remember that tomorrow we come to school in our best clothes and uniforms, with our leather shoes clean and no sneakers or trainers. Those visitors who can come in the morning will experience not only our cultural programme at 10.00am but Prize-giving at 11.00am. The prizes will not only be given to those with top marks. Your form teachers have found interesting ways of encouraging others also. I am very impressed with the achievements of many of you and I am very pleased that such nice prizes have been bought. The cultural programme will take place again at 2 pm so that those who cannot come in the morning do not miss it.

We are very honoured today to have a special visitor, Rafiqun Nabi, who is not only Professor at the Institute of Fine Art here in Dhaka, but is also a fine artist in his own right whose work has been shown in exhibitions in many countries. Some of you love to