

good friends because no one likes a cheat. Not cheating is part of being an honest person.

In later life, it may be very hard for some of you to keep yourself clean from certain forms of corruption, if you work in Bangladesh in some businesses. But we want you to learn, while you are in this school, to like being honest and good people, in an honest and good society so that you can go into the life of Bangladesh as people who will help to make it less corrupt and to have less cheating.

God bless you.



FIRE DRILLS AND DISCIPLINE – 1

Assembly 48 March 23, 2003

I like your tradition of celebrating birthdays. I have eaten some very nice cake, have you? But I do want you and your families to feel free to celebrate your birthday in whatever way you find appropriate – *upojukto* – yes? If you do not wish to bring to school enough food to feed an army, then that is fine. If you do not wish to bring a cake, that is fine. Do not feel under pressure to do what everybody else is doing. Each of your family situations is different. Do not let us start a competition between pupils for who brings the most food! Birthdays are about being happy – not about people feeling under pressure!

As some of you may have noted, we are starting our fire drills. The first one, for the classes on the 3rd floor, illustrated very well the problems of beginning drills. The first thing that some pupils think is, “Oh, this is funny!” or “This is a special sort of playtime!” We all have to take this sort of learning much more seriously. You see, we are trying to train you in an important skill called ‘how to behave in an emergency’. It is as much of a skill as

learning to do Maths or write Bengali. This is education for life. None of us can say that we will never be in an emergency situation, ever, in the whole of our lives. If just a few people know how to behave in an emergency, they can save a large group of people, if they exercise their leadership. Sometimes fires have broken out at parties and discos and many of the young people have died who could have lived, if they had known what to do. Let me tell you a story.

One day in the last century, a ship carrying passengers on a cruise had a serious accident in the engine-room. The boiler blew up. The ship sank and hundreds of tourists drowned. The world was very shocked. I think the name of the ship was ‘The Lusitania’. But exactly the same accident happened in the Second World War in a cruise ship that was carrying soldiers. Again, the boiler blew up - but the only people who died were those in the engine-room who were killed in the accident. Why were not more people drowned? What was the difference between the tourists and the soldiers? The soldiers were disciplined. They did not shout and scream and run around in a panic. They were silent so that they could hear the orders that their officers shouted to them. They lined up properly by the life-boats. They did not panic.

I hope that, as we practice, so you will learn and you will begin to understand the reasons for the orders – in the classroom, turn off the fans and the air-conditioning and close any windows that are open. Do not rush, do not shout, move quickly but not too quickly. Line up outside quickly in form order and let someone check all your names. When all the names have been checked, THEN you can relax and chat. Actually, it would be much quicker to check your names if you lined up in roll number order but maybe you will have to practice that also.

In particular, you must be very careful on the stairs. I watched a line of Senior boys going down the stairs, each with a hand on the shoulder of the one in front. If the back one had fallen, they would all have gone down like a pack of cards! Remember, when

we have had fire drill in floors, we will then have a fire drill for all of the school together and our very small children will be on the stairs. You bigger ones must be very careful. Move quickly but not too quickly. Above all, do not talk. If instructions have to be called out, no one would hear them if you are making a noise. Also, it is much easier to concentrate when you are not talking - which I am sure most of you know in class! So please learn this lesson well and, of course, we all hope you will never need to practice this skill - but you must have it. God bless you.



FIRE DRILLS AND DISCIPLINE - 2

Assembly 49. Tuesday, march 25th 2003

I hear that it is the Foundation School that deserves top marks for behaviour in fire practices. They were much better than either the Senior or the Junior School! Never mind! Slowly, we will get better. Next week we shall practice with the Junior School and Foundation School together and then altogether. We shall continue until we are so excellent, so quiet, so smooth so professional and so proud of ourselves - that we shall start thinking of earthquake practice, which is quite different but also a special skill.

But there are some people who say, "Why bother to think of these things?" People say this for two reasons - firstly, they say that if we are going to die, we are going to die and that it is the will of God and we can do nothing.

Yet, if such people are ill, they do not say that. They go to a doctor. If their tooth hurts, they do not say, "It is the will of God that my tooth hurts so I must do nothing!" No! They go to the dentist. God be praised for dentists! Who gives us our power to think - it is God! Who gave people the desire to stop the agony of tooth problems and to invent the skill of dentistry - it was God!

People who say we can do nothing about any of life's problems and difficulties are called fatalists. Their god is fate. If something awful happens they say, "That is my fate!" But fatalism is not true religion. It can also be the most wonderful excuse for being lazy and doing nothing.

People do get killed in fires and earthquakes but not all of them. Some people can be saved, by sensible ways of preparing the places they live and work and by preparing themselves by learning some skills. If we can do something, we should.

The second reason that some people give for saying that we should not train children for emergencies have a stronger argument. They say that it is quite upsetting to think of fires and earthquakes and while children are young, we should not talk about such things! Such people say, "We should not upset our children. Let them enjoy themselves and not think of the difficulties of life." Let them stay children a little longer."

It is very understandable that those who love children think like that. Sometimes we want to wrap you all in cotton wool and protect you from the difficulties of life. But I hope you agree with me, that the best protection for you is to train you in what is possible to do in an emergency, like a fire or an earthquake. We do not do this to keep you awake at night worrying but so that you have more confidence because you have more knowledge. It is amazing what even quite small children are doing today in many parts of the world to improve their society because of what they learn in school. The book we have been given on the responsibilities of schools in earthquake areas is quite exciting. You will be able to go home and say, "Is that tall bookcase screwed into the wall? If not, why not? In an earthquake it could fall on top of someone!" Children in the more developed world where the anti-cigarette information is much more available are telling their fathers, "You should not smoke, daddy! Your smoking could give me lung cancer because I am breathing in the smoke of your cigarette!" And parents ARE stopping smoking