

beginning to care – maybe because we now see the faces of people on our television screens and we see that they are human also. They have children who want to go to school. They are hungry and sick. They are working very hard but they are not being treated fairly. We are getting angry about things that we should be angry about. And that is good. We are beginning to act as though we are one human family across all the nations of the world – and that is the right thing to do, isn't it? God bless you.



COACHING CENTRES – AGAIN!

Assembly 89 – July 2nd 2003

Let me teach you some English Grammar this morning! The verb 'to teach' has two objects. A teacher teaches a pupil a subject. (We can also say, "I teach a subject TO a pupil.") But the verb 'to teach' is about 2 things – it is about pupils and it is about subjects.

So teachers in a real school have to be very good at 2 things - they must be very good in their subject but they must also be very good about pupils. Yes, they must know a lot about Mathematics or Bengali, Drama or History but they must also understand their pupils, care about them individually and understand how they may all learn in a different way. A good teacher will help you to learn by thinking of ways to make a subject interesting and understandable. And a school full of good teachers creates a community in which you not only do well with your brain and understanding of your subjects, it will also help you to be a good person, a good member of society, a good citizen of your country. The experience of the social life of a school will help you to develop social skills so that you leave school having learnt how to mix with all sorts of people, from the teaching staff to the support staff and with the friends in your class and with older and younger

pupils also. You will have looked after visitors at school social functions and at other times. In a community like a school, all sorts of things happen, good and bad, just like life and so, in many ways, a good school should be an education for life.

I remind you about this because some of the pupils of this school have decided that they are going to stop coming to this school and go to a Coaching Centre instead. They were very clever pupils – so clever that I think they will be back in this, or another school, before very long. But maybe some of you – and your parents – are thinking of the advantages of attending a coaching center so I would like you to think very hard this morning about the difference between a school and a coaching center.

The fees for a coaching center can be lower because they only cover what I believe is half of a real education – passing examinations. You do not need to do any non-exam subjects – like Art or Music, Drama or PE – nor have playtime or field-trips, Foundation Day Ceremonies or Sports Day, or learn the social skills that you learn in a real school. You go to a coaching centre when you have a class and you go home when you do not have a class. Some pupils may feel very clever because they can rush through the syllabus so that they can take some examinations very young and then they drop the subject, as though it is no longer important to study Geography or English or Science as part of being an educated person. Moreover, a coaching center does not take responsibility for your general development.. If the pupil starts taking drugs or behaving in the wrong way – that is nothing to do with them. They teach subjects – they do not teach pupils as people for whom they share responsibility with the parents.

Because many of the best colleges and universities know that most coaching centers give a very poor general education, they demand the school reports of several of the last years or else you have to spend an extra year at university doing a foundation

course. Moreover, most colleges and universities interview candidates to see what you are like as a person and will ask you what you have been doing with your life and they read, very carefully, the letters that your school writes about you. They want to know how you have taken part in the social life of the school because good universities want students who can take part in the other activities of a university, apart from your studies. A good university knows that education is not only about passing examinations. When I was at Oxford, I took part in University Drama and sang in the Bach choir. Others took part in journalism and jazz, sport and debating, expeditions and travel. Education is not only about passing examinations – although of course, we must help you to do that as well. I do hope that you and your parents will think very hard before you join a coaching center instead of a real school. God bless you.



BAG CHECK!
Assembly 89 – July 3rd 2003

What happened after Assembly yesterday morning?
A universal school bag check! Every school bag was checked. Maybe some of you wondered what was going on.

Well, there are several things that should not be in your bags when you come to school. To start with, some of you collect an awful lot of rubbish. I wonder how many of you realized that your bag needed a good clean inside it! Then, I am sure that some of you smaller ones realized that you had brought many books to school unnecessarily – books you did not need for school that day.

But we were also looking for other things that should not be there – including expensive things. We found one piece of equipment, costing 2000 taka. Please do not bring expensive

things to school. When you have got something new and exciting and expensive, it is normal for you to want to show it to your friends in school. We understand that – but please think carefully. Think how you treat your bags. Sometimes they get dropped onto the floor – bang! Or kicked – thump! Or swung onto your shoulder and, just accidentally, it hits the chair or the wall – crash! It is very easy for expensive things to get damaged inside your bags. Think what you would feel, if something you had brought to school to show off, was broken.. You would feel awful. Maybe you would cry.... If someone else broke it by accident, it could lead to a fight. Also, if it is very beautiful and very expensive, someone might be tempted to steal it – and that would be horrible and very upsetting and, maybe, your parents would say that the school was responsible. The school cannot be responsible for the things you bring to school that are expensive. Also, if ONE person brings something to school to show off – then guess what can happen? OTHER people bring OTHER things to school to show off – and then those who do not have expensive things to bring, feel that they are inferior and SHOULD bring something to school that is expensiveOh! We just don't want to start those games!

We found some CDs and I have drafted a letter to your parents to ask if it is OK with them that you bring CDs to school to lend or exchange. If it is OK with them, it is OK with us – but we cannot take responsibility for them. YOU have to take responsibility for them.

Also, we found a knife. Evidently, this knife had just been borrowed and, for one reason or another, could not be returned when the owner was at home and so it needed to be brought to school to give back to the owner. But that is another game we do not want to play – because it can be a very dangerous game and if there is a fight, someone could get badly hurt.

Finally, and most seriously, we have heard that people who are selling drugs to schoolchildren are active in this area. I do not