



Principal's Interim Newsletter 6th February 2012

Dear Parents & Guardians

A couple of recent events have prompted me to write in a slightly different vein, styling this in the form of an interim newsletter rather than the usual more detailed anthology.

The coffee morning organised recently by the PSP was a most enjoyable and positive affair. I was greatly heartened by the positive views of the School expressed by parents both new and existing; it was also good to hear matters of concern being aired in a calm and reasoned manner. I left the morning satiated in both body and mind, and inspired to work even more closely with our parents in terms of ensuring the qualities of the School are both reinforced and better understood in a wider forum.

The need for this was thrown into sharp focus later in the week when I received a disturbing report that the reputation of the School, amongst sections of the ACS community and the wider population, was not good because of apparent indiscipline in the School. As you can imagine I was troubled by this news not least because I believe the view to be misconceived; however as our Theory of Knowledge Students know perception is so often, *de facto*, reality.

So it is my responsibility to ensure that all members of the ACS International community work even harder to ensure that we encourage positive perceptions of the School. As Oscar Wilde commented 'The optimist sees the doughnut, the pessimist sees the hole', so we must change the lens by which the School is viewed. This perception seems to centre on the poor appearance and demeanour of our students and the explicit assumption that this is both universal and indicates that the School is a poorly disciplined place. This view is not worthy of the praise it has received, not least from so many parents, the Council of International Schools and the International Baccalaureate Organisation.

All of this said I do acknowledge that the varied nature of our student body sets us challenges in terms of maintaining the standards of which Singapore is rightly proud. There are some students who are badly turned out and who do not always present the most favourable impression. Although this does not, of course, that the School is a poor one, let me assure you all that we are not content to allow this. To this end as we start this new year, we have placed a

particular emphasis on trying to resolve this issue. Specifically we have initiated the following procedures:

- Students are checked by senior staff on entering the School in the morning
- Housemasters and mistresses are supported by senior staff conducting inspections of appearance at morning devotions
- All students have been briefed about the need for good manners and appearance
- Senior staff will make their presence known in Holland Village and the surrounding routes at key times when many of our students are present
- All staff are aware of the need to ensure students are properly turned-out in their lessons
- Students who are persistently in breach of the School's expectations regarding appearance and behaviour will be suspended until they adopt an acceptable pattern of such

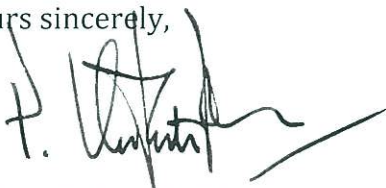
The School's expectations are made very clear in the *Student Handbook* but we are focusing especially on the length and tailoring of girls' skirts, the tailoring and fit of boys' trousers, the tucking-in of boys' shirts and the colouring and style of hair.

I hope that these actions will serve to both reassure and to start the process of re-educating people about our School. This must continue in a much more aggressive and effective campaign to inform the whole community of the excellence of the education provided here and the supportive nature of the community which provides it. Over the next few weeks and months I will be working on plans to initiate such a campaign with all sections of our community – especially our parents – to turn round the reputation of this fine School. I do not underestimate the challenge: American novelist Cherie Priest paraphrases many such quotes when she comments that 'Truth travels slowly, when rumours have wings of gold'.

I know that I can count on your support in both ensuring that you reinforce our expectations on dress and behaviour with your children and in trying to squash malicious gossip before it spreads. Thank you very much indeed.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely,



P. Kerr Fulton-Peebles
Principal