

24 January 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians

During the holidays I bumped into a quite a few parents at different places – at the supermarket, at one or two functions that I attended and also at the school office when they came to buy items of school uniform before the start of the school year. During our chats, some parents said, "I can't wait for school to reopen!" – for obvious reasons... But interestingly, other parents said their *children* couldn't wait – and were excited – to go back to school. On the first day of school, while speaking to some pupils on the playground, I asked them how their holiday was. Many of their responses included the activities they enjoyed during their holiday but many also included a comment that went something like – "Fine, but I missed school and I'm glad to be back..."

Our school is probably not unique in that respect – where pupils enjoy school – but what is not common is when pupils with *weakness* (academic or behavioural) say that they enjoy school. And many of the pupils I spoke to on the playground that day, were pupils with varying degrees of weakness in some or other area.

After chewing on these observations, I wondered if our pupils' enjoyment of school might have something to do with them feeling a sense of belonging *despite* their weaknesses.

Charlotte Mason says the following in her volume *Ourselves: We learn from Society*. *In this way we learn, for most people have things to say that it is good to hear; and we should have something to produce from our own stores that will interest others – something we have seen or heard, read or thought... It is not only from the best and ablest we may learn. I have seen ill-bred people in a room, and even at table, who had nothing to say because they did not think their neighbor worth talking to... This is not only unmannerly and unkind, but is foolish, and a source of loss to themselves.*

Perhaps there is no one who has not some bit of knowledge or experience, or who has not had some thought, all his own. A good story is told of Sir Walter Scott, how he was traveling from London to Edinburgh by the stagecoach, and sharing the box seat with him was a man who would not talk. He tried the weather, crops, politics, books, every subject he could think of—and we may be sure they were many. At last, in despair, he turned round with, "Well, what can you talk about, sir?" "Bent leather," said the man; and, added Sir Walter, "we had one of the most interesting conversations I remember." Everybody has his 'bent leather' to talk about, if we have the gift to get at it.

At The Vine our teachers believe that every child at our school is made in God's image with immeasurable potential. Our teachers don't frown upon or punish weakness but embrace it as an opportunity to grow. A sense of belonging is fostered when teachers display a genuine interest in their pupils and in their growth regardless of their abilities. Our prayer is that God would grant us the wisdom and grace to 'get at' the 'bent leather' in every child.

Updating contact details

Please let the office know of any changes in your details, including home address, place of employment, telephone number, email address. It is important that we are able to contact parents, particularly in the event of an emergency.

Water resilience plan

One of our priorities is to provide quality education to our pupils in a safe and healthy environment. And so we are excited to share with you our plans to manage the school through the current water crisis. Gavin Graham, one of our parents, has devised an innovative and comprehensive plan which will not only serve to carry the school through the next few months of expected water restrictions, but will also form part of a broader vision to transition our school to becoming a 'green school'. The aim is to implement the plan as soon as possible **before** Day Zero in order to iron out any possible problems and to ensure its sustainability.

Mrs Susan Keegan, one of our school's directors, will share the water resilience plan with parents and staff at our Parent-Teacher Meeting on Saturday.

Parent Volunteer Association

Last year our PVA arranged several successful events at the school and also completed one or two worthy projects. We are grateful for the parents who have supported the school through the work of the PVA under the competent chairmanship of Karen Herring.

If you haven't signed up yet and are available to become involved, please speak to your class rep who will be introduced to you on Saturday at our Parent Teacher meeting.

Collection of pupils after school

For safety reasons, parents are required to collect their children immediately after school. Any pupils who are left unsupervised on the premises after dismissal time will be booked into aftercare and parents will be billed.

Parents whose children are dismissed earlier than siblings in higher grades and wait for their siblings, must contact the office for aftercare details.

Parent-Teacher Meetings Saturday 27 January

09:30 – 11:00

All staff and parents will meet in the hall after which parents have an opportunity to hear from their child's class teacher.

- Please note that childcare will be available **ONLY FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE CHILDREN IN MULTIPLE GRADES AT THE SCHOOL**. This is to ensure that parents with more than one child at the school get the opportunity to meet all their children's class teachers.

As we welcome you and your children to school this year, our staff members at The Vine School look forward to partnering with you in this noble work to which the Lord has called us.

For the children's sake,



Ian Smith
Principal