

The School as Family & Community: From Rhetoric to Reality

“A school is a family and a community.” I shared this thought with my colleagues and students at the first chapel of the year.

“We are a family in the sense that everyone in the school should feel accepted as individuals and comfortable to relate to one another in a positive and supporting way. As a community, the school is a place where members can love and be loved, encourage and be encouraged, accept others and be accepted and to forgive and be forgiven.”

Even as I spoke to the school, and looked at the faces in front of me, I knew the immense challenge before us. How do we translate rhetoric and fine intentions into action and reality? How do we create an environment where we not just hear about the aspiration to be family and community but also experience its warmth, acceptance and support in real ways?

To have even a sliver of a chance to succeed, we need to have two key factors present. Firstly, for our school to grow stronger as a family and community, it will require everyone’s effort and commitment. Whether as teachers, students, support staff, parents or alumni, we have different but complementary roles to play and to contribute to that sense of family and community.

Secondly, being a family and community is about both *attitude and action*. Individuals and groups must step out and act on their convictions. At the heart of being a family and community is respect and the regard for the welfare and wellness of each person in our midst - demonstrated in thoughtful action.

ACS (Independent)’s theme for 2012 is drawn from Hebrews 10:24: “...let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” It is a call to sensitise ourselves first to be agents of positive action, while encouraging others to do the same. It is my prayer that this verse will inspire and guide us as we take action to make ACS (Independent) a school that is truly a family and community in word and deed.

To God be the Glory – the best is yet to be.

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