

The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Theme for the week

The theme for next week is “The Value of Play”. I have written about it on the back of the newsletter.

Summer Fair 2017

I remember the very first summer fair of the Swaminarayan School as vividly as I have experienced this year’s summer fair. We were unique then because the idea of a school fair like ours hadn’t caught on yet. More than twenty years since, many schools are now copying what the TSS PTFA initiated. Yet no one can sustain it like TSS. It is a hard act to follow because of the commitment and time the volunteers from the Mandir give so freely, under the guidance of Pujya Yogvivek Swami and Pujya Satyavrat Swami. There are several committed parents as well; especially Mrs Shah and her family, who made almost all the cakes that were sold from the Cake stall. We had Harvinder Singh, who annually mobilises his entire family for the Punjabi stall – their level of service is second to none because they have never had any children in the school; the Crispy Bhajias, manned by the Morjaria family and friends who, despite their children having left many years ago continue to serve the school. We must thank all the parents of pupils who performed as well – I hope they enjoyed the gift of a free ride. The PTFA Committee members, too numerous to mention, for their support, stall holders, organisations and individuals who sponsored the many banners as well as the maintenance team of the Mandir which plays an instrumental part before and after the fair under the guidance of Pujya Muniraj Swami. Our thanks to all the trustees, governors, staff, parents and pupils. We are especially proud of the Lower Six, who helped with every request we made, including picking up litter. We have never felt more proud of a group of children; they have demonstrated the value of Sixth Form in a school. Finally, it was so good to see so many former pupils, who continue to come and help in the stalls. They have embraced the most important lesson of TSS, “Enter to learn and go forth to serve.” Even spending money at the fair is a service of a kind!

The Upper Six Class of 2017...

When an Upper Six group leaves it is emotionally more difficult than the departure of pupils at any other time in the school. The departure of this year’s Upper Six is no less so. Many of them have been in the school since their nursery days; many have joined the school at the beginning of their senior years from other schools; and a few even at the beginning of their Sixth Form studies from Africa and India. It has been a pleasure to watch them grow over the years into mature young adults.

Milan Bhandari

Gajhaanan Jeyachanthiran

Kiyan Patel

Urja Thakrar

Nylan Patel

Roshni Pattni

Manak Ahluwalia

Kirtan Patel

Sooruj Shah

Jayme Desai

Ria Mehta

Shivam Patel

Anisha Patel

Param Patel

Rhea Shah

Aditya Ladhani

Jai Rana

Ashwin Sundresh

Dhillon Hirani

Davina K. Patel

Shyam Ramsaroop

Chandresh Patel

Payal Patel

Dillan Vekaria

Hinal Patel

Jainee Shah

Parthiv Vakil

There is variety in the depth of talents they have, in the backgrounds they come from, their kindness to others, their charitable natures, their service to the community and our own pupils in the Preparatory School. We have all been very impressed with the leadership they have shown in every aspect of the school life – from the way they have taken charge of their duties, to the way they have led the Senior School Council, generating many new initiatives and ideas in the process, not forgetting the leadership of the Mentor Groups, where they pass on the wisdom of their many years of experience to the younger students.

Academically, I have no doubt that they will all surpass their potential, several will get A* grades in their examinations, a few might even achieve all A* grades! While all may not be equally talented, one thing I must give them credit for is their dedicated approach to their studies throughout their years in the school. I have often seen them working together in their special Sixth Form block, in our resourceful library, and even discovering a few in the many quiet corners of the school. You will be glad to learn that ALL the students have received multiple offers, with many from the prestigious Russell Group of universities. It is so pleasing for everyone when this happens because it is what we aspire for every child who joins the school. If there was one unique quality I had to identify in our school, it would be the diligence with which our pupils and teachers approach external examinations. This unique blend of pupil willingness and teacher support is invaluable to the success we achieve at both GCSE and A Level, with many far exceeding their potential.

I am indeed very proud of all of them. They have shown the way for many children younger than them; they have set an example for which the school and their parents can be truly proud; they have stretched the boundaries beyond those set by previous years; and they have, at all times got on with each other, a quality that has allowed them to get on with what they are seriously here to achieve. I am also proud of their involvement in the whole life of the school, for this has allowed them to develop in areas which academic studies alone does not allow a child to do. Our special thanks to our Head Girl, Hinal Patel and Head Boy, Sooruj Shah, who have led the student body with example.

I am thankful to their parents for the continued commitment to our school. On behalf of everyone who has played a small part in their journey through the years, I wish them all well for the future.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH SILVER EXPEDITION TO DARTMOOR

Mr.Pinto writes...

Many Congratulations to all the Seniors 4 and 5 who have successfully completed the Expedition element of the Silver Award. After a challenging Practice Expedition in March to the Peak District, the students have fine-tuned their navigation and camp craft skills over the year to achieve success in their assessed trip to Dartmoor. This year 34 students eventually succeeded in passing the Expedition element in this the ninth year of the Silver Award with, for the first time, Senior 4 attempting the Award a year earlier than normal.

Sunaabh Trivedi and Kajol Jain S4 writes...

We feel that special congratulations are in store for all the Senior 4 and Senior 5 students who successfully completed their Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award this weekend. We all strenuously endured the torrential rain, treacherous terrain and, more importantly, the wild unforgiving conditions of Dartmoor National Park.

After a six hour coach journey, fatigue took the better of us on our first day of walking yet we had to face the sheep, the cattle and the ponies, and walk for five hours until we reached our campsite or should I say our sanctuary. The light soon faded as we cooked over our Trangias with frozen fingers and only torch light for aid. Yet contributions from all members of the team allowed us to quickly cook our meal and enjoy the breath-taking star-lit sky over the campsite.



Senior 5 looking remarkably happy despite those looming rainclouds

When morning came, all groups decided to make an early start so that we could reach our checkpoints in good time. Yet the strong, high winds and heavy precipitation of Friday seemed to be pushing us backwards and further and further away from the Aquaduct wild camping area. But all three groups powered through and we all managed to reach the campsite by the early afternoon. That was of course except for the Senior 5 group who decided to test themselves further and follow another river for a more scenic route but I am pleased to say they got there in the end! We were then able to relax our sore muscles and get the closest thing available to a spa experience by dipping our blister ridden feet in the river. We spent the evening taking our time cooking, enjoying our meal and the view.

The sun always comes out when TSS are victorious!



All through our third day of walking motivation was in full swing in each team. We were told by our assessors that this would be our toughest day of all and I can honestly say that we were all physically and mentally challenged to our limits. As we trudged on, we were continuously in awe of Dartmoor. Whichever way we turned our heads, something else astonishing caught our eyes. The Tors, the wild ponies, the landscape. Exhausted by the end of the day, we finally reached our final checkpoint and I'm sure each group performed its own victory dance upon arriving at Princetown or Postbridge.

At that point, we were unsure whether it was our terrible singing skills or our overwhelming odours that were keeping people away from us. We reminisced on our expedition and relaxed before the long journey home while being filled with an immense sense of accomplishment at the same time. Aside from the ever changing weather conditions, myriad of insects, countryside hygiene and loud, nocturnal farm animals, I am sure that everyone who completed the Award would agree that teamwork, and a considerable amount of humour, were key parts to our success in our Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award!

This was clearly the most challenging physical and mental challenge we and our peers have ever faced. We now need to ensure that we complete all of the other Aspects of the Award, the Physical Recreation, Volunteering and the Skill to ensure that we achieve the full Award.

Many Thanks to Mr. Pinto and his team of Mr. Patel, Miss Morrison, Mr. Worth and Miss Guly for their invaluable assistance throughout the year.

The Value of Play

Think

The muscles of your body need to move to gain in strength as you grow up. There is no better way to do this than by playing sports. Apart from being fun and teaching you the skill of being in a team, socialising and strategy, it will also enable your body to grow stronger, fitter and healthier. Playing sports is also relaxing and allows you to forget the stresses of life. A healthy body is essential for success in life. Playing sports exercises your heart, it forces you to breathe harder and pumps more oxygen into your blood; it forces you to drink more fluid; sweat removes toxins from your body and cleanses it. If you are bodily fit, you will feel like working hard and excel in life. Success in sports fills your heart with excitement and a sensation of having achieved something. This gives you confidence in your ability to compete and succeed.

Feel

Competitive play prepares you for life, because there is play and games in life too. It teaches you the spirit of sportsmanship and fair-play. It instils discipline because your desire to be good at it will force you to strive harder and become better. Perseverance in the face of adversity is part of life's daily trials and playing sports teaches you not to quit.

Do

You will not always win in sports; all the greatest athletes have faced defeat but they have all picked themselves up and tried again and again to win. Yet losing will also teach you to face defeat with grace and shake hands with your opponents. No one achieves great things in life without sometimes facing defeat and failing. Losing has its place because it forces you to try harder and teaches you never to give up in the wider context of life.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani