

## **Some Gentle Reminders**

It is very important that we are sometimes reminded of the simpler things in life. Very often, it is these small things that make the biggest difference. As parents, we have to visit our children's school for a variety of reasons. Some are everyday parents who drop off and pick up their kids daily. Others visit only on the request of the teachers or principal while some make visits to chat with teachers. Whatever the reasons, all parents are welcome to the school. However, it is important that certain etiquette is expected in and around the school and if we are to truly consider our school as a professional organization, then this etiquette must be respected. This term, the handout is designed to remind parents about what is expected of them while on the school compound. Please help us to create and maintain a positive image of the school. Let us make it a better place for our children.

## **Dressing for a Visit at your Child's School**

As adults and parents, you must be reminded that you are entrusted with the responsibility of being role models to your children and others whom you encounter at the school. At El Dorado South Hindu, our aim far exceeds the development of academic skills. We hope to mould our pupils into becoming good citizens in the future generations to come. As parents, you play an integral part of this function.

Being aware of the way you dress and using discretion, especially during your visits to the school are of extreme importance to the impressionable minds of the children with whom you are in contact. Your manner of dress can make the difference in setting the right example to the very children in whom, you the parent, want to foster respect - respect for themselves and for others.

Although freedom is the right of an individual, always consider appropriateness of your attire since you may intentionally or unintentionally offend others. Being sensitive of what you choose to wear and where you wear it will create a public impression of your personality. Let that impression be a positive one in your child's school. Remember there is a time and a place for everything.

Think twice about:

- Clothes with inappropriate symbols, drawings and sayings.
- Clothes with offensive slogans (anti-religious , racial etc)
- Revealing or transparent clothing.
- Clothing which advertises the promotion of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes etc.

Basically, we are asking that parents pay attention to what they wear while on the school compound. Please dress appropriately at all times. Dress so that everyone respects you. Be a good role model ..... dress inoffensively.

## **Behaviour of Parents around the School**

If you want your child to behave well in school, then it is imperative that you set the right example. After all, your character is only as strong as your behaviour. There are many schools in Trinidad and Tobago that forbid parents from entering the compound. They claim, and rightly so, that the school and the school yard is exclusively for children and parents are only allowed in if they come to the principal on some official business. At the present time, we still allow our parents to enter the compound. As a matter of fact, we allow parents to enter the compound at any time of the day.

However, it is important that we ask our parents and all other visitors to conduct themselves properly while on the compound. The following should be observed:

- On mornings and afternoons when parents drop off and/or collect their children, they should do so quietly and quickly. Please avoid loitering on the compound.
- On mornings, when you drop off your children, there is no point in hanging around with them until the bell rings. Please settle them and leave. Your son/daughter has friends – they will quickly find their friends.
- On afternoons, when you return, if you arrive before school is dismissed, please wait quietly in the area of the Security Booth. Please avoid huddling in groups and speaking loudly. This disturbs the rest of the school. By all means, talk and socialize with other parents but be mindful of the fact that school is still in progress and any noise will create a disturbance.
- If you have younger children waiting with you, do not allow them to play and run in the waiting area. Once again, this creates an unnecessary disturbance. Please keep your younger children with you and in an orderly fashion.
- While on the compound you will meet other parents and visitor. Practice good manners and say “Good Morning”, “Good Afternoon”, or “Sita Ram”. Common courtesy is expected and this too will help your child to develop the same habits.
- You will also encounter teachers – your own child’s teacher or other teachers of the school. Please extend similar courtesies to members of staff – after all, your children are in the care of these teachers.
- Do not ever attempt to take up issues with other children. If ever there is a problem involving your child and another child in the school, you must discuss such matters with the class teacher or principal. Do not ask, discuss or confront another child. This is not allowed. It is totally unacceptable for a parent to question another child, as I am pretty sure that you wouldn’t want anyone questioning your child. It is noted that many children do not report incidents to their teachers but go home and give a detailed description of school incidents.
- Parents, reacting exclusively on what their children tell them, come to the school and want to resolve matters by talking to and talking with the child / children who were allegedly involved in some issue relating to their child. This is not acceptable – this is not allowed. As parents, you must encourage your kids to report school incidents to teachers. The teachers will investigate and try to right any wrongs. Trust in your teachers – they will deal with all incidents in a fair and just manner.
- Please keep in mind at all times that you are on the compound of a school. Act, behave and carry about yourself with the greatest dignity and respect for the personnel and premises of the institution.

Live so that when your children think of respect, manners and common courtesies, they think of you.

## **Communication Etiquette amongst Parents and School Staff**

Communication is essential amongst everyone in order to maintain a healthy relationship by providing understanding and fostering learning. At El Dorado South Hindu School, we wish to place significant emphasis on communication between parents and teachers in order to create, maintain and sustain a progressive and optimal educational environment. It is important that parents develop such relationships – your

teachers do have a lot to tell you about your child – you too, have important information to share with the teacher. This two-way communication is critical in the development of the child.

However, some formalities must be emphasized to achieve good communication between staff and parents. Greetings such as “*Good Morning*” etc should always be exchanged. Appropriate titles such as “*Mr.*” or “*Mrs.*” should be encouraged with references to teachers.

It is important to remember:

- Discussions with teachers during class - time causes the class to be unattended and in most cases, this contributes to time wasting. Please limit your discussions during class time to just a few minutes (no more than five minutes).
- Avoid trying to meet teachers during the Devotion period. At this time teachers are engaged with the children and it is inappropriate for a teacher to be talking with a parent while prayers are being offered.
- It is recommended that you make an appointment with your class teacher and a suitable time will be set up where you can have a proper and uninterrupted meeting with your class teacher.
- In cases of urgency, come to the principal’s office and he would organize for you to meet with the teacher.
- Please be courteous with the teacher at all times.

It is of utmost importance that one should remember that children look at their parents as role models, therefore, the manner in which you approach and talk with members of staff would be patterned by your kids.

## **Telephone Etiquette**

From time to time you may call at the school to get information on certain things. Whenever you call please:

- Identify yourself by name,
- State the name and class of your child,
- Indicate the name of the teacher with whom you wish to speak,
- Have patience as it sometimes take a minute or two for the teacher to come to the telephone.
- Please be brief as the teacher needs to return quickly to his/her class.
- Please reserve such calls for issues of importance.

It is important to remember that the Principal will not accept messages from parents for children unless these messages are of extreme importance. Calls to the school to tell your child you will be a few minutes late in collecting him are not deemed as important.

## **Written Messages**

Some parents write messages for teachers. While this is an acceptable and recommended form of communication, please be courteous and:

- Do not write notes on scraps of paper,
- Do not write notes on the back of exercises books,
- Address the letters properly,
- Please write legibly.

Please write to your teacher with respect. Your child will learn from these experiences. Some examples are attached to this handout.

## **Behaviour of Parents inside the School Building**

A school is building with four walls and a tomorrow inside. Parents, let this be your child's future – your child's tomorrow.

Discipline is a necessary part of school life and good discipline is based on an agreement between the school and parents.

If for any reason you have to be inside the building, please observe the following:

- Settle your child quickly and leave the classroom immediately,
- Do not stand in or around the classroom and chat and play with your child.
- Do not stand in the corridors between the classrooms.
- On evenings, when you come to collect your child, please wait for him/her outside. Do not come into the classroom.
- Please wait quietly for your child.
- Do not stand or sit in the classroom to copy information or homework from the blackboard. This is the student's responsibility.

It must be understood that the school building is for the school children and we must keep it this way. Parents should respect this. Parents are asked to refrain from entering the school building while classes are in progress. If you have to be in school at a time when classes are in session, please go to the secretary's desk and from there you will be directed.

If you need to meet with the teacher, please get that teacher's permission before entering the classroom. Do not just walk into the classroom and then walk up to the teacher. This is not allowed. Please announce your arrival at the door and the teacher will invite you in. These habits help to establish a desirable and acceptable behaviour pattern within the school.

Within a matter of weeks you will see that the children will learn quickly what is acceptable. They will begin to become independent, face situations fearlessly and confront problems and challenges. Remember, we are establishing a behaviour pattern and we are programming their subconscious. Let your conscience, as parents, teach their conscience about what is right and what is wrong. They will eventually develop a pattern of behaviour that will sustain them throughout their lives.

## **Punctuality**

Being punctual is one of the essentials of life. We always have to be at certain places at certain times. International flights, television programmes, movies, appointments with doctors, dentists, lawyers and bank managers are all set upon a specific time and if we fail to meet the time requirements, the consequences are sometimes severe. When we

ask and expect our children to be at school on time, it is the training that will assist them tremendously later on in life. There can be and should not be any excuses for late coming. Your estimated time of departure from home must take into account the traffic, weather and any other factor that could cause a late arrival. Please keep in mind that you choose this school, knowing in advance the time it will take from your home to school. It is imperative that you make every attempt to be here on time.

**Bell Times:**

First Bell : 8.20 am

Second Bell : 8.25 am

If your child arrives after 8.25 am, the Assembly would have already started. During the Assembly, the National Anthem is sung and the Pledge is recited. It will be rude for your child to join in during this time. As a result, he would have to stand and wait until the Assembly is finished before joining in. If, however, you are late and upon your arrival the National Anthem is being sung, please stand where you are, at attention, until it is completed. We must strive to develop a sense of national pride.

If you need to explain to the teacher the reason for the late arrival, please wait until it is an appropriate time to speak with the teacher. A parent must not go to the Assembly and disturb the teacher or the Assembly. We ask that all children make every effort to be at school on time.

## **Proper Use of the Roadway**

You will appreciate that the roads around the school are very narrow and most of the parents in our school population have vehicles. This therefore causes a lot of traffic on mornings and evenings. From our observations, a lot of this traffic can be avoided if parents:

- Obey the ONE WAY times on Wilkinson Street.
- Drop off your children quickly when you pull up to the gate. Remember there are cars behind you. Encourage your children to exit the cars quickly and once they have done so, please move forward to allow the parent behind you the same courtesy that was just afforded to you. There is no point to remain there to look at your child walk through the compound.
- If you wish to see your child as he/she walks through the gate and through the school yard, then please pull to the side and park.
- If you know that it will take some time for your child to get out of the car and get his bag and lunch kit (from the trunk of the vehicle), please be courteous to all and find a park on the street. Remember that if every parent takes two minutes in front of the gate, then a lot of children and teachers would always be late.
- Sometimes, parents become impatient and begin sounding horns in front of the school. Have patience please, and it is important to know that in and around a school, we should attempt to create an environment that is suitable to the school.
- We have noticed at times, confrontational situations arise with drivers. Sometimes, the language becomes abusive and even explosive. WHY? Is it the right example we are setting for our children when we as adults try to solve problems by arguing and quarrelling. If at times the situation becomes congested, it sometimes only takes a minute or two for the traffic to flow. Please have patience and encourage others to have patience.

- Please extend all courtesies to the Security Officer on duty. If he/she instructs you, please oblige, as his/her instructions are only to help you.

## **Homework**

Homework bridges the gap between learning at school and learning at home. It reinforces newly learnt skills and also allows pupils to ready themselves for further classroom learning through research.

Homework helps your child to:

- Learn how to organize and manage time.
- Take more responsibility for his/her own learning.
- Practice and build on what he/she has learnt at school.
- Develop confidence to deal with challenges and frustrations.
- Learn and work independently.

## **What can parents do to help?**

- Take an active interest in your child's work.
- Support your child in monitoring television viewing.
- Set aside time each day for homework.
- Provide a designated place for homework.
- Assist teachers to monitor homework by affixing your signature to the homework assignments.
- Praise your child's effort.

## **Did you know?**

- When school and families work together, children do better.
- Children learn something well when they talk about it or explain it to someone else, so asking your child about his homework really helps him.
- Homework improves your child's chances of success.

## **Spending Time with your Kids**

Is there ever enough time? Spending time with your children is one of the most important and fulfilling aspects of parenting. It provides the opportunity for you to learn things about your child – for you to teach them things that are important to you and wish to pass on. It provides you with an opportunity to share, discuss and understand your child's world so that you can better serve his/her needs.

You may want to consider the following:

- Sit down as a family to share meals together and discuss the events of the day. Allow each member of the family to have an opportunity to share. You may collectively share a joke, solve a problem etc.
- Have family meetings regularly where members share experiences with each other.
- Work on projects together.
- Set aside one day each week where all members of the family must do something together – play a Board Game, look at a movie, go on an outing etc.
- Read – reading can be fun – have a Quiet Time where everyone reads at the same time.

Use your imagination and be creative in ways to be together. The family bond must be clearly established from early. It must be maintained and sustained forever.

## **Conclusion**

This handout is simply to remind all parents that we, as teachers, remain committed to teaching your child, so that he/she will maximize the potential to learn. We will continue to provide opportunities and encourage our students to accept these opportunities. However, we must depend on the co-operation and support of the parents. You too, have a role to play. Let us accept our roles responsibly and work together to help your child while he/she is a student at El Dorado South Hindu School. It is our intention that his/her time at this school will prepare him/her for the global environment that he/she would soon be a part of.