

## Principal's Post – 15 June 2017

Dear parents and members of our school community

It is a very busy time at school with teachers completing reports and I have the pleasure of reading over every single one. I have noticed so many teachers mentioning that a student has learnt to set their own learning goals and that this has had a positive effect upon their progress.

At St Jerome's one of our goals in teaching is to have the students understand what they are learning and why, plus to take something away from each lesson. I believe that we are making genuine progress in this area. Another aspect of the report concerns the child's progress in Social Management and Awareness. Teachers have to reflect upon the child's respect for the rights of others to learn as well as how they deal with problems that occur during the day and how they can show care for others and maintain self-control. For any parent who had had to deal with a toddler in the throes of a tantrum, there are times in every parent's life when you wonder will your child ever learn to show emotional restraint. I understand just how busy parents' lives can be, but if you find the time, please look up [www.ahaparenting.com](http://www.ahaparenting.com)

The psychologist who writes on this site has a wealth of advice that is based upon positive parenting and is especially sound in regard to emotional regulation. I have included in full this post from last October on the most important thing you can teach your child.

*"Whenever I held my newborn baby in my arms, I used to think that what I said and did to him could have an influence not only on him but on all whom he met, not only for a day or a month or a year, but for all eternity - a very challenging and exciting thought for a mother." -- Rose Kennedy*

Most parents take their job as teachers very seriously. We teach our kids colours, ABCs, taking turns, right from wrong.

But sometimes we don't even notice a much more important lesson we're imparting to our children: how to manage their feelings, and therefore their behaviour. This is the basis of emotional intelligence (EQ), which will determine their quality of life much more fundamentally than their IQ.

Kids learn how to manage "big feelings" when we:

1. Stay calm and kind in the face of their upset.
2. Accept their feelings even while we limit their actions.
3. Respond to their anger with compassion, so they can show us the tears and fears behind their anger.

Research shows that their brains learn to self soothe through this process. Eventually, they learn to stabilize themselves even in the face of stressful situations and emotions.

That's the unconditional love that we all know every child needs.

- When we see past the bad behaviour to the overwhelmed, frightened child underneath.
- When we listen, difficult feelings and all, instead of sending them away until they can "act right."
- When we respond to their anger or neediness with "How can I help?" instead of letting ourselves get triggered.
- When we help them with their emotions first, and then wait until they're calm and can actually learn before we talk about appropriate behaviour.

When parents regulate their own emotions and accept their child's emotions, the child learns to manage his or her feelings and behaviour earlier than other kids. They're closer to their parents through the teen years and beyond. They're more skilled at calming themselves, and handle stress better, both as kids and as adults.

Unconditional love creates higher EQ. That means a child who can manage her emotions, and therefore her behaviour. A child who grows into a person who walks in love, follows his own inner compass, and acts with powerful presence. A person who makes the world a better place, just by being himself or herself. A challenging and exciting thought for us as parents? Indeed. It's the most important thing you're teaching, every day.

## Wonderful sentences from this week.

Jake M (Year 5R)

Being lucky is not about having the best house, the best car or even the best clothes. Being lucky is about having people that will support your dreams, accepting who you are as a person.

*(Wonderful sentiments there, Jake!)*



Isabella H (Year 2G)

"She saw a cruel and scary witch and she ran to the door and it was locked. The witch locked her in a room with only a bed and a chair!"



Kevin N (Year 2G)

On a sunny and wonderful day Alvin, Jake and Skipper went on a cruise. They were off to a tropical island when they found a doughnut connected to a kite.



Madison T (Year 3G)

Sarah is older and likes cats. Jake likes playing with random people and likes to play with cowboys.



Emma R (Year 3G)

Sarah and Quinn were pranksters. They were at school and it was one day before the holidays. They were going to do the biggest prank EVER!!

God give us rain when we expect sun.  
Give us music when we expect trouble.  
Give us tears when we expect breakfast.  
Give us dreams when we expect a storm.  
Give us a stray dog when we expect congratulations.  
God play with us, turn us sideways and around.

Amen

*(Leunig)*

*Helen M O'Toole*

Helen O'Toole  
Principal