



HILTON COLLEGE

A letter from

The Head

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Dear Parents and friends of Hilton,

What a terrific start to the year we have had! Our new boys are fit and flourishing, albeit with wide eyes as they begin to understand this, their home for the next five years.

The beginning of every year brings an air of expectation and promise; we should bottle this positivity and distribute it widely.

Working with young people is exhilarating. We are kept on our toes in every aspect of living. Sometimes this process can be frustrating when we (the adults) can see something up ahead but the headstrong teenager is convinced we have rocks in our head and blinkers over our eyes. Yet we persevere.

We persevere because we believe. We believe in their promise and in the many possibilities for success and greatness.

Built into this belief are hope and trust: essential ingredients in the growing of anyone - but especially children. So, we hope for the best and we cultivate this expectation - a task often more difficult given the old adage that 'boys will be boys'. This is a daily practice, which we believe becomes a habit.

Everyone of our staff who works with your sons is required to be an optimist; we are a curious band of people who peddle hope. We do this unashamedly and with as much enthusiasm as we can muster day in and day out, as it is the lifeblood of our profession. Optimism can only exist when twinned with hope - the two are inseparable.

It is this hope for every boy at Hilton that we share, parents and teachers. In this way our 'plan for every boy' is more than a catchy phrase; it is a deliberate attempt by us to give each boy the platform to find his own particular way, his own particular pursuit, his own particular sense of self even whilst thriving in a boarding school where the idea of community-living is also predominant.

It is my constant message to all your sons to embrace every opportunity that Hilton offers in his five years here. If your son is a gifted sportsman, ensure that he also attempts a part in a play, or becoming a member of a musical group, or he tries his hand at debating. There is a saying among educators that education is wasted on the youth; if we were all afforded the chance to study again, would our approach be any different? Here, your influence over your son is essential. I need you to encourage a broad range of experiences.

Our boarding construct creates unique learning opportunities which are part of what is sometimes referred to as the 'hidden' curriculum. My contention is, rather, that this is front and centre of our offering and, as such, a most critical part of the Hilton experience. Our aim is to encourage breadth in relationships among peer groups and across grades, this is sometimes frowned upon by boys but we, the adults, know that how old one is, is fairly inconsequential later in life especially when the difference is only a few years.

I mention this in the hope that you can assist me in reinforcing the message to ensure that the notion of unhelpful hierarchy is managed appropriately. To be clear, our seniors are leaders at Hilton and we expect them to lead and to guide - every one of them - but we want the predominant ethos to be one of belonging above all else. Our world is composed of different people with different backgrounds and different understandings; this makes life's experience rich. Schools thrive in understanding otherness - it is a hallmark of an excellent and stretching educational experience. At Hilton, an overriding sense of belonging for every boy is critical in our measure of our success.



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Our sense of belonging requires us to subscribe to the values of a particular place. At Hilton these values converge in a classic picture of gentlemanly behaviour. This picture holds exemplary manners at the forefront: respect for elders and for each other; others before self; humility superseding arrogance; sportsmanship over winning-at-all-costs. We wear a uniform with pride to enhance the understanding of being a part of something far greater than any individual; something that has stood the test of time, something that holds value beyond the here and now.

What a shared privilege!

I look forward to a superb 2019 expectant with every promise that each of our boys offers as they form part of our collective this year.

Regards,
George