

## Making the most of the Parent-Tutor Meeting

*The regular meetings between parents and their son's tutor are a valuable assistance to parents in the exercise of their privilege and duty as "first educators". The parents receive the tutor's full support through...*

- a) *his objective observations and advice*
- b) *his coordination of the professional services of the College*
- c) *his service of personal example, guidance and friendship*

*towards their son.*

*The greater the cooperation, confidence, and ultimately friendship, which exists between the parents and their son's tutor, the more effectively the parents will be able to carry out their own responsibility of directing the integral, whole-person, development of their son.*

*The success of the Tutorial System rests on this parent-tutor trust and on the regularity of the meetings with the tutor.*

### General Approaches

1. Make family life fun.

Use initiative to create enjoyable weekly family times, lively family meals, outings together, family customs and traditions.

2. Become good friends of the parents of your son's friends.

When he is a teenager, your son will sometimes pay more attention to his peer group than to his parents. A positive peer group, and families who are all good friends and a support for each other are the key to avoiding so many needless teenage complications.

3. Do your homework.

Read good parenting literature. Much is available for sale or loan from Redfield through your son's tutor. Consider attending the Redfield Parent Programme or a Family Enrichment Course.

4. Set yourself your own term parenting goal.

Talk with your husband or wife. Decide on something to be achieved by the end of the term which will help you be a better parent. (Hint: Start with the goal of being a living example of the goal you wish your son to achieve.)

5. Be cheerful and positive.

Work on a cheerful positive temperament for yourself. No matter what he gets up to your son must be able to turn to you and talk about it.

### Before the Meeting

1. Buy a notebook.

2. Have you organized your parent-tutor meeting this term?

Please return the booking sheet promptly. If you have lost it, simply ring the College office to make the appointment.

3. Evaluate last parent-tutor meeting goals.

With your spouse evaluate the goals set in the last interview. Consider causes for any failure of your son to achieve the goals. Was each goal specified realistic? Did your son see the goal as important? Did he remember the targets? What have you learned about your son from his efforts during this term?

4. Discuss the broader issues.

Consider: character strengths and weaknesses; growth in personal responsibility; the qualities that you would like your son to possess when he is a man...that he is happy, generous, self-directed, able to apologise, resolute, etc; virtues to be highlighted at your son's present age; intellectual, physical, social, cultural development; spiritual growth; career options.

5. Evaluate your own performance.

Did you set a strategy for ongoing follow up of the goals from the interview? Did you provide enough encouragement and incentive? Were you cheerful and even keeled? Are you giving good example in the specific area you want your son to improve in? Was your follow up regular enough? Did you and your spouse have consistent expectations? What have you learned about yourself from your efforts this term?

6. Be positive.

Parents' diligent efforts always bear fruit over time. Look on problems as opportunities.

## **During the Meeting**

1. Bring a notebook.

2. Review last term's goals.

The quality of this review largely depends on prior preparation. There will be much greater objectivity and productivity in the discussion if thought has gone in before hand. The tutor will have discussed your son's overall progress with his teachers and a senior member of the college staff.

3. Swap other impressions and information.

Review of last report, topical issues in the class and schools, etc.

4. Refocus on key issues.

Make sure that the parent-tutor meeting is coming to grips with character issues and growth in virtue. Your son's academic motivation is, to a large extent, a consequence of his character development.

5. Set goals for the coming term.

This may be a matter of refining earlier goals, or restating them with a change of emphasis. Don't get anxious if the same issues pop up in successive terms - it could be

a sign of superficiality if they did not. Recurrent issues however do require realistic, specific, achievable goals so that there is progress. Unrealistic goals make parental and tutor follow up ineffective, and the whole process rather discouraging.

6. Fix a follow-up strategy.

This may involve ways to help your son take responsibility for the goal, regular tutor-parent link up during the term, father-son time together, etc.

7. Restate and record goals.

Parents and tutor note the goals and the strategy which will be followed. Once written down, it is easier for the parents to talk about the goals as the term goes on, keeping them high on their own list of priorities, and generally to give their son all the help (daily encouragement, follow up, etc.) he needs to achieve it.

### **After The Meeting...Ongoing Follow-up**

1. Work together with your spouse.

Talk each week about how your son is progressing. Monitor your own efforts to help him reach the goal.

2. Implement the follow up strategy.

Remember that it is your son's goal, not yours. Help him to take responsibility for it. Help him to evaluate his progress frequently.

3. Spend time with your son, listen to him...and only then, talk to him.

Go to your son's level; understand what is on his mind; be a trusted friend whose advice is valued. Share common interests. Motivate and encourage rather than correct and lecture.

4. Link up with your son's tutor whenever it seems useful.

He is there to help you do your job...and, he is your first link with the College. Call him. The interview each term is really a minimum. A phone call at the right time, a brief update at a Saturday function, or an extra meeting can all do much to increase the effectiveness of the cooperation.

### **Remember**

An essential key to your son's full personal development is that your son has personalized goals. His goals must be easy to remember, specific, achievable, and able to be evaluated. If the goals he is seeking to reach at each moment are appropriate, and if he has taken these goals to heart, with your support and with God's grace he will develop his own unique talents and he will reach his own complete potential. He will be amazingly happy and successful