

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE ASSEMBLY 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018**

There are 2 matters I want to speak about:

The first is on the issue of sport, as you know it is our philosophy that sport is an integral part of developing the whole man and is an essential component of the all-round education we offer at Bishops. It is important that all of you play a school sport, preferably a team sport in Grade 8 and 9.

Apart from the physical benefits, sport is a wonderful way in which we can also learn to deal with success and disappointment; we need to learn to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. The issue I want to speak to you about today is in dealing with the disappointment when you are dropped from a team. This is almost certain to happen to all of us who play sport at some time or another in our lives. I would encourage you to use these instances as an opportunity for personal reflection and growth. Engage with your coach as to the reason for them dropping you and work hard on playing yourself back into the team. It is not helpful to try and get your parents to intervene for you. In this way you will become a better player, more resilient and more skilled at what you do. Also remember to be happy and supportive for the person that has taken your place, he will have the same aspirations as you do.

The second issue is very important, and I want to listen very carefully to what I have to say. I have spoken a lot over the past few years about the need to make Bishops a more welcoming and inclusive place for everyone who works or studies here, irrespective of race, religion, gender or sexual persuasion. As you know we have engaged various focus groups of boys, staff and parents over the past year and it is clear that we continue to use words which are abusive and hurtful to minority groups both in casual conversations and playful banter. It is important for you to understand that it is not always easy for a person from a minority group to stand up against this kind of behaviour and so he or she may laugh or join in the banter even though it has been hurtful. You may misread this into thinking what you said is OK – it is not!

It is time we stood together against the use of offensive language on our campus. This will sometimes take courage. Look for that courage within yourself and do what is right.

I do not think it is appropriate for me to be specific about the words and phrases which are derogatory and hurtful. For the most part you all know what these are and if you are unsure please ask your parent, or your House Director or tutor.

I have spoken often about this and it must now come to an end. Please understand that use of inappropriate words is and will continue to be viewed in a serious light. We are all part of the same school, let us build each other up in a positive way.