

Assembly 7 September 2009

Being a Prefect

Today we have sitting on stage the new Committee Prefects. I would like to welcome them, on your behalf, and congratulate them, and all the other Prefects sitting in the Hall, on their appointment. The Prefects play an important role in the life of our College and we acknowledge the work that they perform. At the back of the Hall there are two Honour Boards; one listing the names of all the Head Prefects since 1957 and one the names of the Students' Association Presidents from 1963.

I would like to spend a few minutes outlining what I believe makes a good Prefect. I shall be making reference to material contained in an excellent publication, *The Perfect Prefect?* from Aurora TDS.

In broad terms, a Prefect needs to undertake four roles in our College:

- Maintaining discipline
- Helping staff
- Supporting younger students
- Organising events

In maintaining discipline, a Prefect must know the school rules very well indeed. They are expected to be the guardian of those rules and be prepared to challenge students who break the rules. A Prefect is often called upon to assist members of staff and to follow their instructions. Younger students may turn to a Prefect for support if they are lost, worried or need somebody to listen to their problems. Life in our College is extremely busy but a Prefect is expected to give of their time to organise school events when the needs arise.

Each Prefect has particular skills and qualities that they bring to their position. As the Chaplain, the Rev. Martin, said last week; each person is unique and possesses many blessings. But there are two particular skills that are absolutely essential to being a Prefect:

- Communication
- Assertiveness

The thing to understand about communication is that it is a two-way process. A Prefect must communicate their message clearly but must also have the skill of listening to what another person has to say. The action that is then taken by a Prefect needs to be fair and just.

The skill of assertiveness is fundamental to being an effective prefect. Some people are naturally more assertive than others. However, assertiveness does not mean being a bully, nor does a lack of assertiveness mean that you are weak. Being assertive means that a Prefect must be bold, show courage, display confidence, or put simply, be a leader.

Each Prefect will be viewed, particularly by younger students, as a role model. That is why all Prefects must accept the responsibility of setting a good example. A Prefect is a role model to every student in the College. They will watch what each Prefect does, and what they say, and they will follow their lead.

We must also play our part. It is your responsibility to recognise the position of Prefect at St. Paul's College and to assist the Prefects as they conduct their duties. We hope that they enjoy their new role. But we also hope that each Prefect is proud to have been appointed to the post and to join a long list of fine young leaders that have served at St. Paul's College over many years.

J.R. Kennard

Excerpts from *The Perfect Prefect?* published by Aurora TDS, April 2006.