

HEADLINES

January 13, 2011

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The Somersfield ARC

There was an interesting counterpoint made between two articles in today's Royal Gazette. In the first section was the latest in a series of reports about the recent incident at Saltus involving the boys who seriously injured a classmate in the process of giving him "birthday bumps". The story is well known enough not to need much elaboration. Farther back in the paper was a story about the two anti-bullying facilitators who are working with our students and staff this week.

In the first article, the viewpoint of the parent of one of the boys was highlighted as she called for some understanding and leniency for the boys involved. In the second piece, the representatives from *Dare to Care* strongly supported the decisive action taken by the school in expelling all of the perpetrators. As these starkly differing viewpoints highlight, there is no universally accepted "right" course of action in cases such as this.

Having said that, what took place at Saltus in December can, and should be used as a cautionary tale for our own students. I took the opportunity on our first day back last week to speak to our MYP students about what had happened and asked them to consider how one bad decision, made in the heat of the moment, could have such a life changing impact on so many students and their families. I asked them to leave the "politics" of expulsions out of their consideration and to think about what could have been done to head this whole incident off before it went so tragically wrong.

As part of the discussion, I asked both the students and their teachers to enter into a new and fresh covenant among themselves based on what we defined as *The Somersfield ARC*. So what does this entail? For our teachers, ARC stands for three commitments that they are making to our students. Those commitments are to be: **Accessible**—making sure that they are available for extra help, for personal counseling, or even casual conversation with students; **Responsive**—to student needs in class, to different learning styles, to

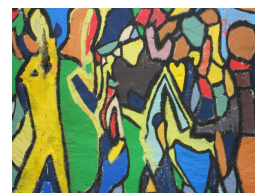
requests for clarification from students and from parents through email or the Portal; and, to be **Consistent**. Consistent in their expectations for homework, for behaviour, and for dress and deportment. Being consistent for us as a staff means being consistent from one day to the next and among teachers, classes and grade levels.

By the same token, I gave a similar challenge to the students. Their ARC commitment also focuses on three pillars. The Somersfield ARC asks them to be: **Attentive**—to stay focused and engaged in class, in assemblies, and in school-sponsored activities; **Responsible**—for meeting their deadlines, preparing for tests and examinations, reading assigned materials, and proactively reviewing their work on a regular basis; and, finally **Courteous**—demonstrating civility and respect in dealing with the teachers and their peers both in and out of class.

Teachers have been following up with these goals and we have definitely had an excellent start to the term for our MYP students.

Around the School

- Just before the holidays we were fortunate to have **Dr. Monique Mackinnon** spend a week at the school reviewing our Second Language programmes in French and Spanish and helping us to both enhance our current studies and to develop our extended French programme at the 6-9 level which starts next September.
- Rehearsals have started for the **Wizard of Oz** (May 19/20/21). Directed by Ms. Stevens with a cast of over 40 students, an additional chorus of P5/6 students, a large contingent of staff working on the backstage logistics, and our own pit band led by Mr. Dodd, it is truly a community endeavor!
- Special thanks goes to **Mrs. Judd** who organized this week's *Dare to Care* anti-bullying programme for our students and staff



A segment of our new 3-6 Mural.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Open House
January 27th

MYP Curriculum Series
January 27th

Personal Project Fair
January 28th

Science Fair
February 28th

Somersfield 6-9 Opera
March 4th