

Dear Parents

In our relationships with our children how wisely we act with regard to them will be governed to some extent by how much we feel the need to be appreciated and loved by them. If we feel this need too strongly we may well find ourselves literally spoiling our children by oversupplying things or giving too much attention or freedom. If we do not feel the need then we may end up being too restrictive concerning things or distant with regard to their daily lives and this can also spoil. I say “may” on both counts because, of course, what we feel does not have to determine what we do. If we approach decisions concerning our sons from the direction of “What is best for him as a person?” we will be better set to make the right choice even if it hurts us to do it. As pastoral staff at Bishops we see the damage of both extremes in parenting; too little and too much giving in terms of things, freedom and attention. As a parent it is quite hard to judge oneself in this regard and so it is important that we listen carefully to those who help us care for our sons; our spouse, housemaster, tutor etc – even seek their advice. Last term in the presentations I listened to by people applying for the new VP Discipline job it was interesting that all applicants believed that we face an increasing number of discipline issues because parents are afraid of their children. Maybe it is not just fear of them as such. Maybe it is also a desire to be liked and appreciated by them, and the fear of not feeling this, that leads us into making poor choices for our boys at times.

I hope you got your son’s reports and have managed to go through them with him. The postal services always seem to lose one or two (I wonder where they go?) so if yours has not arrived please let your son’s housemaster know. Feel free to contact your son’s tutor or housemaster (or specific teachers) as you feel the need, even if it is just to say thanks. I was impressed with the effort many teachers make to communicate with you. It is good to stay in contact.

Yours sincerely

Peter Westwood  
(Deputy Headmaster Pastoral)