



SMILE

A Holiday Message from David Young, Head of School, TMS

Do you remember the first time your new baby smiled? Has anything ever hit right at your core quite like that? What did you do? You smiled back of course, beaming. And then what did you do? Well, if you were me, you proceeded to do whatever you could think of to get another smile. There is an old video recording of me, captured on a device that was likely the size of a small suitcase, acting like a total, absolute 'numpty' (check Scottish dictionary) in an increasingly desperate attempt to get my daughter to smile. The grainy footage shows me jumping and gesturing, making all sorts of bizarre faces which I must have somehow thought would illicit another smile. And, as you watch, she smiles. Regardless of how unhinged you might think I was, what is not in doubt is that you are watching a deeply joyful moment. And, all from a smile.

Remember that glorious, delicious terror we each experienced as a child when you get the giggles in a setting where you know you absolutely shouldn't? It's the most brilliant feeling, at the exact same time as being the worst. You hover between desperately wanting to stop and continuing to giggle. And how does that start? A smile. A mischievous, hidden smile. It's all it takes. Before you know it, you're smiling too. Head down, shoulders shaking, you're in.

As a child, moments of change, newness and performance can feel incredibly nerve-wracking, even fearful. The gaping, daunting darkness of the unknown. I can remember those moments. I also remember the antidote – that upward gaze to my parents to seek their reassuring smile. That gesture that indicates it will all be OK. A smile.

As I think everybody knows, my father Skypes me all the time, with total disregard for the five hour time difference, usually right in the middle of a meeting. The first thing I wait for, as he shuffles around trying to get his screen to work, is that reassuring smile. Its impact is still powerful.

We live in serious, difficult times, times that have created a landscape in which anger, bitterness and intolerance seem to find increasing oxygen. Our children feel it, they hold its weight. And they balance it beside the ever increasing pressures and expectations that are placed on them, overtly and subtly, by society, social media, school, parents, themselves. It's a lot.

You have heard me get excited about the three mindsets we are building in our students as they journey through TMS. Mindsets of Resilience, Entrepreneurial Thinking and Positivity. I am firm in my conviction that intertwined, these mindsets will allow a young adult to thrive and do "good". At its center is Positivity – that most impactful but fragile of mindsets.

It is not my intent to sound gimmicky or trite, but I want to suggest that the gateway into creating a community in which Positivity flourishes may include the predominance of smiles. If we each give more smiles and receive more smiles, nothing other than good things will come of it.

Studies show that people who smile more often live longer. Smiles produce the same positive chemical impact on our brains as chocolate; smiling reduces the body's ability to produce the stress hormone cortisol; smiling is proven to be powerfully infectious; smiling provokes optimistic thinking.

This is a special time of year where we are afforded the chance to be with those we love the most. I'm hopeful that you are able to pause and rest. I'm incredibly thankful for your ongoing support of our School Community – it has been amazing.

As you watch your child charge out of school next Thursday, I hope you see their smile. And of course, it will make you smile. Your holiday will have begun in a powerfully infectious, positive way. I hope that spreads throughout your holiday season, one smile leading to the next, each smile evidencing moments of joy, fun and reassurance.

On behalf of all of us at TMS, I want to wish you a very Happy Holiday.

I have to go now...my dad is Skyping me.

David

P.S. If you are finding it in anyway difficult to get into the spirit of this message, just click the link below and you will be on your way in no time😊

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UctRZ91m9XA>