

### Entrustment service:

Good morning everyone and a warm welcome to the Gresham's family. You represent the newest additions to this family, one that has been here for over 470 years, and I hope that you will gain a great deal from being a part of this community.

I believe that a good education is a three-pronged affair, rather like a three-legged milking stool. The first leg is of course the child, who needs to do their bit, engage and take every opportunity that comes their way. I will be reminding you all of this repeatedly in this Chapel over the coming year. The second are the parents, who will have installed the values that have shaped and will continue to shape the character of their child. The third is of course Gresham's, we are here to make sure that your child is cared for pastorally, is well educated, has a strong sense of self, and a value set as they leave us to move to the next stage of their lives. When all three of these legs pull together, the outcome is assured. If one leg is withdrawn or doesn't support its weight then the stool will wobble, become unstable and may tip over. If that happens, and it regularly does in the teenage years, we will simply work hard to pick it up and strengthen the three legs again and ensure that we stabilise and go again. I can assure you that watching youngsters grow and develop as young people is the greatest and most rewarding aspect of this job. The changes that these young people will undertake are remarkable; rarely linear, often complicated and challenging.

This is called a service of entrustment and that is an important event for all of us. We as staff and this school in general understand the enormous trust that you as parents have placed in us. Your children are precious, and we absolutely do not underestimate the faith you have placed in us. I also thank you for choosing us, sending a child to Gresham's represents a huge commitment, both financially and emotionally. I can assure you that we do not take this commitment lightly and will do everything we can to give the best possible education to your child. There will be times when the relationships between school, family and child will be strained. Good, early and honest communication is the key. My former colleague at the prep school, James Quick used to say to parents, 'please don't believe everything that your child tells you about school and we promise not to believe everything they tell us about you', wise words indeed.

My own thoughts on school and education are really very straightforward indeed and I apologise to those of you that have heard this before. I believe in three simple rules which if considered will ensure success for your child, and I would argue throughout their adult life. There are of course a long list of school rules but I can distil my own rules down to these three things. Be honest, be kind and work hard.

Be honest with your peer group, be honest with staff and perhaps most importantly with yourself. A strong sense of personal integrity and worth is the single most important thing a young person can try to develop.

I believe it is impossible to be too kind and I also believe that acts of kindness will always ensure a warm glow of pride and satisfaction. I will talk to the whole school this evening in chapel and yet again I will talk about kindness.

Finally to work hard, I believe that whatever path you take in life, hard work will bring its reward. I believe that this is a simple truth and the field that you work in doesn't actually matter, but hard work will guarantee success. This is pretty easy to see in a school environment, but I feel it also translates into the wider world.. I believe you will mark yourself out by simply being smart, punctual and industrious.

If you follow these simple rules you will not disappoint me and even when you get it wrong, which you will at times, I will take your side and be your advocate.

Today is an emotional day, perhaps particularly for the mothers in this congregation.

We will shortly ask the children to leave this service with their housemaster or mistress.

Don't panic you will see them again shortly. We do ask that you leave them alone after lunch, I promise that I will find you if you hide in a tree somewhere on the campus with a pair of binoculars, a mobile telephone and a thermos flask; I will ask you, very nicely, to leave. Please be reassured that they will be busy and engaged for the rest of the day.

If they don't call it is because they are occupied and happy, if they do and they are upset, simply reassure them and call your housemaster or mistress.

I hope for all of you that joining this Gresham's family will be a great moment in your life. I believe that Gresham's will become a big part of your character, value set and ambitions. I will certainly look forward to watching and helping you to develop in your time here and will hope to stay in touch with you as you move through life. So good luck and please remember to be honest, be kind and work hard.

DR

1/9/24.