

School Meeting
September 8, 1998
Tad Roach

This afternoon I want to make a few more reflections about the culture of St. Andrew's and share with you all a few of my most passionate beliefs about our School and our responsibility as members of this community.

As an academic community, we value reading, reflection, intellectual exploration and curiosity, intelligent debate and discussion. We value intellectual honesty and integrity. We assume that the ideas you express, the work you create, are your own. If they are not your own, we expect you to cite the sources you have used in your work.

If you ever find yourself thinking that cheating, plagiarism or any kind of academic dishonesty might be your only solution to an academic dilemma, remember that we as a faculty value your integrity and the trust we have between us much more than any grade on a test or exam. Remember, too, that although the temptation to cheat may be a part of all of our academic lives, it can be and must be resisted. To have a school that values original thinking, intellectual curiosity and creativity, we must realize how absurd academic competition can be.

As a residential community that refuses to turn St. Andrew's into a campus full of locks and keys, we value personal honesty and integrity in the way we view School property, individual property. It is simply wrong to take something that does not belong to you, whether the item is a cookie or a computer. It is wrong to damage School property or to treat your campus with indifference or contempt.

Last year, following the end of the spring term, we discussed that a student had taken a School VCR out of the faculty room, used it for his own purposes in his dorm room, and had taken the VCR home with him for the summer. The student returned, met with Ms. Bride, Mr. Speers, Mr. Caldwell and me. He narrowly escaped expulsion from School. In the end, following a series of good talks and phone calls, I decided to suspend the student for two weeks, bring him back to St. Andrew's under a strict probation and have him meet with the Honor Committee upon his return.

My expectations for the coming year regarding the issue of stealing are very high. It is important that we all understand that you risk expulsion, even on a first offense, if you steal at St. Andrew's.

Because we value our relationships between faculty and students so much, it is essential that we develop a trust, a sense of honor between us. We expect students to tell the truth at all times, even when telling the truth may be difficult, awkward or painful. And in a community such as this, we expect not evasions or half-truths or legal quibbling, currently the ethic of choice in Washington. I have only admiration and respect for students and adults who tell the truth.

St. Andrew's since its founding has been a school of opportunity, open to all regardless of means. By our very foundation as a Christian school, we seek to bring our elitist instincts under control. Please treat every teacher, student, staff member, kitchen employee, visitor to the School with warmth, acceptance, dignity and respect.

Finally, let's remember all of us are temporary members of the intellectual, spiritual, moral community that is St. Andrew's. This is our School, but only for a time. Our responsibility is to preserve and enhance all that is good and has been good here, and to work to improve and develop this School for those who follow us. This is a wonderful and exciting charge and trust.