



HILTON COLLEGE

*A letter from*

# The Head

*No. 20-13 / 17 September 2020*

Dear Parents,

## **Conventions**

Every game has its conventions: a way in which something is normally done. I am often intrigued by these various conventions; and some require much explanation to the unschooled to understand their *raison d'être*.

The game of Golf has its fair share of peculiar conventions. These include: allowing the winner of the previous hole to tee off first, not walking over the imaginary line of a player's putt, not grounding your club in a bunker and a variety of dress code requirements.

I am intrigued to watch a non-golfer playing his or her first round of golf and finding some of the conventions strange at first. By the third or fourth round, however, a measure of familiarity has set in and conventions are adopted and perhaps even understood. Certain golf courses have their own unique set of conventions which can be very intimidating...especially when one is frowned upon for not adhering to them despite one's best intentions.

In fact, all institutions have conventions particular to their industry or in keeping with their heritage. People often choose a particular place based on their acceptance of the conventions associated with such a place. Restaurants, and one's choice of patronage, are good examples of such conventions.

Whilst there are some conventions that change with the progression of time, many remain and are akin to a particular sport or place. I have remarked before about the house rules at the Harvard Club in New York City which still prohibits mobile phone use in various corridors and common areas, and the Toronto Club in Toronto which prohibits papers in their meeting room - the meeting room is for meeting people, papers are allowed in the study - not to mention mobile phones!

I mention these anecdotes as a segue into talking about some of our conventions at Hilton College. Sometimes these conventions may seem tired and otherworldly to an outsider, they may even seem unnecessary in a new world order, but to us and to those who subscribe to our values, they remain our way of being.

These conventions cover a few areas of living:

- 1) **Manners** - Hilton boys are well mannered. There is no excuse for poor manners. Our young men stand when greeted in Assemblies, and greet visitors to our campus as two examples of this;
- 2) **Cleanliness** - Hilton boys present themselves with pride. They have neat haircuts that are appropriate for school; they are clean shaven; their uniforms are in good condition;
- 3) **Respect** - Hilton boys are respectful without exception; an attitude and articulation of gratitude are our expectation;

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At this point I'd like to thank the great majority of our parents who not only want our school to teach these conventions but who also display these in their interactions with our teachers and staff members. There are, unfortunately, a few parents who do not subscribe to our conventions and who make teaching these to your sons awkward, as the boys see two standards. Some touchline examples spring to mind!

To many, Hilton may seem other-worldly, old fashioned, even counter-culture. If this is as a result of upholding values that are timeless whilst employing conventions that may seem dated and peculiar to those looking in from a world that has lost decorum and decency, it is a label I would wear with pride.

Please join me, once again, in reaffirming conventions that we hold dear. The five years a boy spends here, as he becomes a man, are his years to practise the art of gentlemanly behaviour. We make mistakes but we get back up and learn to be the men we know we need to be in a world that would like to suggest that manhood and chivalry are dead and buried. If ever there was a time for being better at these conventions, it is now.

Thank you for teaching your sons alongside us.

## **Term 4**

As we move towards a more normalised 'post Covid-19' season, we have decided upon the following protocols:

**EXEATS:** Exeats will be allowed in the fourth term, however, the first weekend (10 and 11 Oct) is a closed weekend with all boys staying in.

**UNIFORM:** We will revert to boys wearing their uniform as per usual in the fourth term. These regulations were relaxed during the height of Covid for health reasons but we believe we can now revert to our normal approach.

**HAIR:** Boys need to return with appropriate haircuts as per usual. We allowed a measure of freedom in length of hair during the height of Covid but this season has now past and we now require boys to revert to our usual hair policy.

Regards,



George Harris  
Headmaster