

# Principal's Message

## The Unnoticed Cup

Frenzied footsteps, flying frisbees and flights of footballs whizzed past the seemingly unseen plastic cup.

Thankfully, none of them came close to it. It sat on the astro turf, unnoticed, as the bustle of activities surrounding it went on with no heed to its presence.

It is a joy to see a lot more self-organised student activities going on at the astro turf. Teams between our students are quickly formed. Friendly matches are played between classes, among friends, or sometimes between strangers, with what is left of recess before time beckons the resumption of lessons.

Yet amidst the buzz of activities, this unnoticed plastic cup stood out. With all that our students have learnt about values, and in particular, the putting to action of values, would someone in the field take notice of the cup that is resting idle in the middle of the astro turf, and more importantly, take that first step to discard the cup?

**Mr Arene Koh**  
Principal  
ACS (Independent)



One of the five boys who were playing football seemed to have heard my thoughts. This very cup caught his attention. He pointed to it and seemed to ask his friend who was close by, a question. It was inaudible to me from the third-floor balcony where I stood, but from their gestures, it appeared like a question that probed the innocent cup's existence.

And then, both of them did the unbelievable. They scurried away. Their game was still ongoing. A ball came in their direction. They pursued it with agility and skill to put it to a desired goal.

The cup was now noticed, but untouched.

Then, the same boy who first noticed this unwanted cup returned to the spot that he had left off earlier. The plot thickens. This time, he was alone. Interestingly, he looked at the cup again for a couple of seconds. Again, I'm unsure of the thoughts that ran through his mind but this was his second chance to do something right. In a flash, without any prompting, he bent over, picked up the cup, and walked away with the cup in hand. Did he throw the plastic cup in a bin? I am unable to verify so. But that morning, he demonstrated to me the needful thing to do. He did what should have been done.

And he did it without realising that someone was looking.

It can sometimes be challenging to do the right thing. It can be even more challenging to do the right thing when no one is looking. While we should continually strive at being our best, and aim to do better than before, is our best only evident when we know we are being observed? In doing what is right, at the 'right' place, at the 'right'

time, for the 'right' person, is our primary purpose to showcase what we would like others to think of us? For to whom do we strive our best for? For what purpose do we continually do right? And are we the same person when no one is looking?

These are hard questions that most of us regularly grapple with. Yet this journey at staying true to the same self when no one is looking, though filled with its fair share of ups and downs, is not an unachievable mission. With our SHIELD values that keep us **A**nchored, an ACS family that helps us to stay **C**onected, and a God-defined purpose that galvanises us to remain **S**teadfast, we learn, re-learn and un-learn what consistency in behaviour and the application of values mean. Through this, character is defined, and we will be one step closer in our growth as Scholars, Officers, Gentlemen, and Scholars, Leaders, Global Citizens<sup>1</sup>.

***PS: This incident took place in January 2020.***

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<sup>11</sup> Our School's Vision for Year 1 to 4 students is Scholar, Officer, Gentleman; and Scholar, Leader, Global Citizen for Year 5 and 6 students.