

Dogs Shouldn't be Allowed in Housing Estates

Many people who live in Hong Kong's housing estates are also dog owners. However, nowadays, more and more people think dogs should not be allowed in these estates. I agree with these people and in this essay, I will tell you the reasons why dogs should not be allowed in housing estates.

First, dogs are both dangerous and noisy animals. They bark all the time, especially at night. If they do this it means that many people can't sleep. My neighbour's dog is a good example because it barks almost every night but the owners don't do anything about it. This means I can't sleep and so I am always tired when I go to school. Also, many dogs are aggressive and like to bite people. Again, I use my neighbour's dog as an example. If I go outside, I have to be careful because last year it bit someone on the leg and he was sent to hospital.

Next, dogs are dirty animals. They have to go to the toilet like all living creatures but often their owner doesn't pick up the waste. I have seen this happen before in public parks. Dog owners need to take their dogs to special dog parks such as Kwong Fuk Dog Park in Tai Po. This park is very big and is designed especially for people to take their dogs there.

Also, it is best for the safety of dogs if they don't live in housing estates. If someone doesn't like a dog and they feel angry, they may want to hurt it or even kill it. Actually, one day I saw someone kicking another person's dog. The person who kicked the dog was drunk. He not only kicked the dog but also yelled at the owner.

Some people may say that dogs should have the right to live anywhere they want. I think this is wrong though as they will cause inconvenience to other people and surely human rights are more important. They should not have to put up with noise, dirtiness and dangerous dogs.

In conclusion, people should not be allowed to keep dogs in housing estates. If dogs are kept out of these places, people will be happier as they will find it easier to sleep, they will feel safer, and their environment will be cleaner.

Pocket Money—A Blessing or A Curse?

Nowadays, many parents pamper their children with luxurious gadgets and clothes. Some parents even give too much pocket money to their children. Why are some parents willing to give so much money to their children? Is giving an excessive amount of pocket money beneficial to them?

In the past, children were nurtured by parents, especially mothers. And now Hong Kong is a money-oriented society, so many parents spend a lot of time on their work in pursuit of a better life. As a result, they rarely have time to take care of their children. Some parents hope to give money to their children for compensating for the loss of family time. They therefore try to give more money to satisfy their children's wants and then they will feel less guilty to work overnight or at weekends. Another reason is the drop of the birth rate in Hong Kong. Many families just have one child. Consequently the parents put all the resources to nurture their only child by giving what their children want. These parents consider giving money is the best way to help their children.

Second, peer pressure and social values are also important factors. Many people believe brand names can represent their status and it is a way to widen their social network. Seeing schoolmates and friends having those expensive goods, the children will ask their parents to purchase these goods for them even they may not need them. Sadly, these children are under the impression that using brand name goods can make them be more confident and a way of being accepted by their buddies.

Certainly, too much pocket money cannot benefit their children as their values will be distorted. Children think that they don't need to make effort to earn money. They just ask their parents when they are out of money. What's more, children think that giving money to them is their parents' duty, so they will just take it for granted and will never understand their parents have been working hard to raise them. Recently, a secondary two student distributed \$1000 banknotes to his schoolmates as long as they said something to please him. This situation reflects that children think money brings them self-esteem. When they have difficulties, they just think that money is the key to solve problems.

An appropriate amount of pocket money can help children build up a habit of using money wisely. However an excess amount will go the other way round. Parents should spend more time to look after their children. More importantly, they should teach them the importance of financial management. After all, it is not suitable to give too much money to the children.

Corporal punishment is a controversy over the world

“Spare the rod, spoil the child” is a maxim throughout Chinese history. Nowadays, as Western thinking is prevalent, corporal punishment becomes much debatable, some people criticize that it can cause an untreatable wound to the child. Is corporal punishment a curse?

First, corporal punishment does not mean child abuse. Corporal punishment is normally the spanking or slapping of a child with the parent’s open hand. The parent who uses corporal punishment on his/ her child does not mean to hurt them deliberately, the parent just wants to give the child a lesson rather than abusing them.

Second, corporal punishment does not mean to establish an authoritarian parenthood. Some protesters said that corporal punishment can destroy the parent-child relationship. But the true picture is that corporal punishment does not mean to establish an authoritarian parenthood; physical punishment is not only used by the parents. Parents have other ways to nurture the children, for example, chatting and caring. Corporal punishment is one of the methods for parents to ‘lecture’ their child; it doesn’t mean parents want to discipline their child like an officer. There is no absolute magic formula applicable to all children. It all depends on the style of parenting.

Third, corporal punishment is workable. The majority of the previous generation received corporal punishment as a child while most of them have no scars physically or psychologically, no disadvantages can be seen. Corporal punishment is a feasible teaching method in Chinese history. Confucianism believes optimal corporal punishment can make children behave properly. Indeed, it is. Sometimes parents can’t be friends to their children; they have to give their child appropriate punishment rather than spoiling them. Inevitably, parents have to use corporal punishment to their child.

Undeniably, communication and care are the most effective methods to educate a child. However, they are the pathogen of spoiling a child. The superior condition can pamper a child to be reckless and coarse. Slight slap is needed to be a punishment for the child, it makes the child become more obedient and self-disciplined. In addition, the child can correct the fault immediately. An optimal corporal punishment is beneficial to children’s development.

There is not any absolute method of parenting. The most effective way of parenting is communication and care. Conversations are indispensable for a successful parenting; it builds up a bond between child and parents. For instance, parents can share their concerns with their children; let the children think that parents treat them like babies. Also, parents should let their children know that you are interested and involved and that you will help when needed. Communication and care might be the practical method of parenting if parents make a good use of it.

To restate, there is not any flawless teaching method applicable to all children, corporal punishment is purely one of the methods of family education. Undeniably, communication and care are the most effective methods to educate a child.

Internet—Powerful tool for criminals

Nowadays, if you don't know how to use computers, you would probably hit the ceiling, right? The internet is the most popular tool in today's society, but do you know there are many pitfalls in the virtual world? How can we prevent falling prey to these traps online? The government, parents and each of us should do our parts.

First and foremost, students should never reveal their names or personal profiles online. Today, Facebook, QQ and Twitter are the most common social networking sites, especially among young people. It is dangerous to post your photos, videos, birthday, real name, address, mobile phone number or even the school you are attending on the web. Criminals can make use of the information for illegal activities. Recently, a crazy man killed a young girl as a result of her posting of her address in Facebook, and the man wanted her to stop gossiping about him. At last, she was killed. Now, can you feel the devastating power of the internet? So, you should regularly contact with your internet service providers to see if your personal details can be accessed online, I reckon.

Another major issue is Cyber bullying. The problem is not uncommon in the world, and the cost can be your life. Choi Jin-sil, a South Korea pop star, died in 2008 because of cyber bullying. Now, do you realize the devil power of cyber bullying? So, if you get into troubles, you should tell someone who is able to help you or you can report the case to the police.

Besides, students always wrongly think that the internet is trustworthy. Online purchase is so convenient on the internet. Therefore, many students want to buy online using e-Bay, Taobao or Yahoo's Auction. Sometimes we may buy counterfeit products on the internet because of all kinds of people and products available on the net. To be honest, I was one of the victims. I had tried to buy a second-hand i-Pad on a website before, but I only got a "T-Pad" made in China. That was a profound lesson to me. So, what can we do when we bought sub-standard goods? Of course we can report the case to the police and let them deal with the problem, but it is less likely that I can get a refund or any compensation.

At last, students don't know how hackers can track them down. Have you ever been tracked by hackers? According to the research of US's Get Safe Online Campaign, cyber-crime is now the fastest growing sector of global crime. Identity theft is increasing at a rate of some 40 percent per year. The same study revealed that in 2009, 22 percent of internet users fell victim to phishing attacks, which was a huge increase from merely 18 percent in 2007. So, you should be cautious to meet the people you get to know online.

In a nutshell, you should look before you leap when you play or post anything on the internet. Protect yourself! Act now and never become the prey of offenders!

When Internet Turns Nasty

The Internet is a common tool for teenagers to meet or know their friends, but Internet crimes are growing rapidly worldwide. If we don't know the traps of the Internet, it could be harmful for our schoolmates. As prevention is always better than cure, we should know every possible danger of the Internet.

Recently, a foreign institution, UK's Get Safe Online Campaign, held a research about crimes happened online. According to this research, cyber-crime has been the fastest growing sector of global crime. It has increased for more than 40% from the previous year. It is a warning for us to alert the crimes online and prevent their invasions.

Usually, the offenders send e-mail to your mailbox which looks like clean but contains lots of virus and Trojan horses. If you open it, your computer could be hacked by those offenders. Moreover, they will spread these viruses after hacking your computer through your email to all your friends.

Meanwhile, a piece of news published on South China Morning Post on 4 March 2010 reported that 3,000 Apple Inc. users' information was sold on different public websites, including e-Bay. Although the Federal agents caught the seller within a short period of time, the investigation held by FBI said the main reason why villains could steal users' information easily was because users did not build up a safe password or logout when they were not using a computer.

Also, many people have not installed an anti-virus program because of different kinds of reasons. Maybe it is a bit expensive for lower-income families, but we should consider that it can fight against any viruses and it will always be updated by its producer. The most important is, it prevents attacks from hackers.

In reality, Internet is an angel if we use it properly, but it can also be a devil which promotes evil activities. Here is the most important advice when you are using a computer:

Be aware of what personal information your online name/ profile reveals.

Be careful of how predators can track you down

Research social networking sites before signing up

Regularly conduct Internet searches to see if your personal details can be accessed online.

Help keep your friends' details confidential

I hope the advice above can help you avoid your computer from being hacked by those offenders. Thus the Internet can provide a safe platform for us and our next generation.

Where's our blue sky?

"2012 will be the end of our earth!" some people said. It's a terrible remark. Do you believe it? Maybe it is true because of the existing pollution problems. We are being threatened by many kinds of pollution in Hong Kong. I think air pollution is the most serious one and it will make our blue sky gone.

Ten years before, there were more than 80% days of a year we could enjoy a blue sky in Hong Kong. But nowadays, there are only under 45% of days we can see a blue sky. Our sky always looks dark and grey because of air pollution.

The reasons for serious air pollution in Hong Kong are emissions from cars and the operation of power plants. First of all, there are more than 1,250,000 cars running in Hong Kong every day. These cars bring us considerable exhaust fumes. The main emissions from car engines are nitrogen gas, carbon dioxide and water vapour which are making our blue sky fade out and more people suffer from respiratory diseases.

Second, the other culprit is power plants. According to statistics from the WHO, 25,004 MWH electricity is consumed every year in Hong Kong, while CO₂ is emitted for 9,850 tonnes, and sulphur dioxide for 30 tonnes. After seeing these terrible figures, what do you think? Yes, Hong Kong people are using much energy. Because of that, power plants have to use more coal to generate more electricity. This not only damages our health, but also causes global warming. At the same time, our blue sky disappears. If we keep the consumption of such a huge amount of energy, our future will be dire.

To solve these problems and keep our blue sky, we should strive together. There are many things we can do to save the blue sky. First, let's talk about the use of private cars. We should travel by public transport instead of our own cars so that there will be less emission from cars. Another way is switch off the engine when you stop the car. These ways seem useless to make a big difference, however, if everyone can do that, it can improve the air quality.

Next, watch our power plants. Using less electricity is the most important thing. To save energy, there are many things we can do, such as using energy saving bulbs, which use 1/5 energy of ordinary bulbs. Moreover, we can set the time limit for using the computer or other electrical appliances, for example, television sets, and switch off the lights when we leave the room. These things are easy for us to do.

Besides, the government should do something to improve the air quality. First, the government should introduce laws to control the amount of electricity used. For example, the government can set the usage amount limits for residents and offices. If they overuse it, they should pay more tariffs for it. Second, the government should promote the use of renewable energy, such as solar power, tidal power, wind power instead of burning coal. In this way, our environment can be protected and the emission of greenhouse gases can be minimized.

Curbing air pollution is very important for us. If we do not start it immediately, we will have no more blue sky. Let's start to reduce the emission from cars and power plants and save our blue sky!

The Internet Is Not to Mess With

Internet is believed to be one of the greatest inventions in the 20th Century. Nowadays, on the internet, you can find many social networking sites like Tweeter and Facebook. They are new ways to communicate with others, make new friends and keep in touch with your friends and relatives. But is the internet safe for teenagers?

The social networking sites may be a place where criminals get your personal information. People post their date of birth, address or even bank account password on the internet. They do not know there are fake websites. You sign in and enter your personal information. Hackers may steal you identity and engage in illegal activities.

The social networking sites may contain false information. People lie about their true identity. Teenagers may lower their guard and go out with people they have never met face to face. Girls may be raped and robbed when they go dating with people they met online. They will regret for the rest of their lives.

What should we do in order to protect ourselves? Never log into bank websites at computers in public places. Remember to look around you when you enter sensitive information. We should never put our personal information on the internet. We should not go out with people we do not know, or we should meet strangers in public places. We should tell our parents where we are going or who we are meeting. Schools should also organize some workshops for students to let them know the security measures on the internet. Only if schools and parents work together can we protect teenagers from the dangers on the internet.

Want to know more about eating disorder?

Have you ever heard of some girls saying that slim is equal to beauty? 'There is a drastic increase in the number of eating disorder patients,' said Dr. Tong. 'We received many cases asking us to help them release pressure, as pressure makes them suffer from eating disorder.' Miss Chan, a social worker shared her experience at the talk 'Health and Beauty'. 'It was a terrible experience to me.' Miss Wong, an ex-patient said.

Dr. Peter Tong is an experienced doctor who is an expert in eating disorders. He said that to prevent eating disorder, we should keep a balanced diet and keep doing regular exercises. If we have enough nutrition, we will not suffer from eating disorders easily. Besides, he said that if someone does not have enough carbohydrates or protein, he/she would also suffer from other serious diseases easily. Also, he said that many teenage girls are eager to have a perfect body shape like models and actresses. However, they do not want to do exercise. So they just take some pills which are claimed to lose weight. Dr. Tong said it is dangerous as many girls even do not notice the ingredients before swallowing them which may harm their health.

Miss Emily Chan, a social worker who worked at Social Welfare Department and works at Prince of Wales Hospital, said that people should keep fit and release pressure in a proper way. Some of her patients want to release pressure at first. But when they have to face more and more pressure, they may easily fall into the trap of taking slimming pills. Besides, many teenagers are not mature enough to define what kind of keep fit centers is reliable. It will also let them suffer from eating disorders easily. Moreover, there are plenty of so-called 'Keep fit recipes' on the internet. Many people will try to follow those recipes without due consideration, so it will also make people suffer from eating disorder.

Miss Mary Wong, an ex-patient who suffered from eating disorders, is a Year 1 student studying at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She said that she was gullible enough to be misled by the advertisement. The medicine harmed her health so much. She lost appetite and had insomnia every day. She did not recover until she went to see a doctor. Thus, she told us that if we get sick, we should go to clinic or hospital to have a body check quickly.

In short, the medical doctor, social worker and ex-patient shared many useful experience and expertise with us. There is no shortcut to be fit.