



**ST PETER'S
BOYS PREP SCHOOL**
**SERVING THE FAITH
FOR 70 YEARS**

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

DATE 04 June 2020

JUNIOR PREP

Most loving God, and Lord of all, we thank you for your spirit that sustains us during these uncertain times of COVID-19. For we are not people of fear: we are people of courage. We are not people of despair but people of comfort. We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbours' safety. We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity, for we are people together in this community. We thank you for our St Peter's family and the generosity which is always given. We also thank you for our humility, for not being too proud to ask, but to live in true fellowship. We are your people Lord God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs, we are committed to being people who live in the spirit of Ubuntu.

**So continue to guide us most gracious Saviour as we find peace in the faces of those around us, now and forever.
Amen**



Dear Parents,

FROM THE HEADMASTER

As we negotiate the swamp of school reopening, I cannot help but chuckle at the Rector's nickname for me – Swampy. I can only applaud the resilience and adaptability of our community in these uncertain times and I thank you for your understanding as our goalposts are shifted regarding school reopening dates. You will have noted from the Rector's Covid-19 update that, until we can secure a visit from a Department official, we are bound by the Gazetted reopening dates published by the DBE. Hopefully, things will change and we can reopen according to our own timetable soon.

In the meantime, I thank all those parents who responded to our survey regarding your decision to send your boys back to school or to remain online. In general, the response has been around 68% planning to return and 20% opting to stay at home, with the remainder choosing not to reply. Interestingly enough, despite the last minute changes made to the Government statement on Sunday, we had 59 out of a possible 74 Grade 7 boys return on Monday morning. They have been superstars and have adapted to the very different environment with aplomb. I have to confess that the social distancing requirements have made the old "boy behaviour" more difficult and we all look forward to the jossle and impromptu football matches of the past returning to our campus. Nevertheless, the opportunity to share stories with classmates and teachers has been one of the highlights of the return. We have realised that we have made aspects of the day too structured and are looking at increasing the opportunity for social banter in next week's timetable. We are certainly on a learning curve. I hope you enjoy the pictures below.



Our aim going forward is to get back to face to face schooling for all grades as soon as possible, but our paramount concern is for the health of the boys, teachers and the broader St Peter's community. We continue to consult with specialists in the medical profession to this end and will make sure that we have taken every possible precaution to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 on the campus, while also bearing in mind the very important factor of the social

and emotional health of our boys. As soon as we have been able to secure the necessary legal approval to continue our phased reopening of the school we will let you know. In the meantime, I cannot express how proud I am to be a part of this amazing three-legged pot called St Peter's Boys Prep.

Have a good weekend.

Rob Macaulay

FROM THE JUNIOR PREP

HOW TO MANAGE MELTDOWNS

A number of parents have contacted either their son's class teacher or myself about their child's current attitude towards completing the online work or to participate in Zoom Sessions. A number of the boys are experiencing meltdowns and becoming either withdrawn or defiant.

I do believe there are a number of reasons for this change we are seeing; many of which are out of our control. The "new reality" is settling in and the novelty of the lockdown situation and remote learning has worn off. I know a number of adults are also feeling very overwhelmed, tearful and tired for many of the same reasons. Today is day 70 since the country entered lockdown and although the country opened up on Monday many of us are beginning to realise everything is changing and the world as we know it remains uncertain.

I found an excellent article written by a psychologist, *Lisa Damour*, on assisting our children to manage meltdowns and which I believe will also assist the child who is displaying defiance right now! The idea is to pause between each step and not move forward too quickly and only if necessary:

1. **Listen carefully without interrupting.**
2. **Offer sincere empathy** – *I am so sorry that happened, I can understand why you are feeling like this.*
3. **Validate distress** – *You have every right to feel angry/sad/upset or a good cry will help you to feel better.*
4. **Support coping** – *Is there anything I can do that won't make you feel worse? Would you like a cold drink of water? Should we play a game for a while instead?*
5. **Express non-dismissive confidence** – *I know this is tough, but so are you. As hard as this feels right now I do think we can find a way to work through it. You have been working so hard I know you are tired so let's just do a little bit now and some more later.*
6. **Offer to help solve the problem** – *Do you want some help to tackle this activity? Can you think of some ideas that may assist you right now?*
7. **Divide problems into buckets** – *Things that can change, things that can't change and things that will change soon.*
8. **Brainstorm possible solutions to the things that can change.**
9. **Support acceptance of what cannot change** – *throughout our lives there are things we are going to have to live with, let's focus our energy on ways we can make a difference, let's talk about everything we are grateful for.*
10. **Visualise the things that will change** – *discuss what it will look like when you can visit friends, go on holiday or go back to school. Find the positives in these situations.*

I do hope the above offers some assistance to you as parents during this time. I believe the change in lessons to a more project based approach will also allow our boys more freedom and give them a more creative outlet. After much discussion we have decided not to have Zoom sessions during the course of next week to allow our little ones to overcome a sense of "Zoom Fatigue." Support will be available and this will be communicated on Friday when the work for 8-12 June is posted.

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

All Grade 0-2 teachers will be conducting Parent Consultations during the course of next week. Due to the remote learning process the questionnaire needs to be returned to your son's teacher by this afternoon. The teachers need an understanding of how your son is managing from your perspective, to guide you as to how to proceed, as well as to assist him on returning to school or even as remote learning continues.

Please ensure you have booked a time for your Parent Consultation, if you are experiencing difficulties please contact your class teacher either via email or a WhatsApp message. It is vitally important that the teachers meet with every parent next week as throughout this process you have been a team and your understanding of your child's progress and attitude will prove invaluable.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING PROGRAMME (FLP) WEEK

The boys will be involved in an FLP week from **8-12 June** - they have been set tasks around their current Unit of Enquiry to complete. Many of these tasks have a creative aspect, develop thinking skills and allow for investigation into the topic set.

Every morning a short video will be posted explaining the task for the day, but detailed explanations of the topics covered in each Grade will be posted on **Friday, 05 June**, in the late afternoon, so that parents are able to review the week ahead over the weekend. Due to the nature of the week we have created a pack with a variety of materials included. Please could **all parents** collect a pack from the Chapel Car Park on **Saturday, 06 June between 9:00 and 12:00**? The work for **17 to 19 June** will be included in this week's packs.

I hope that our boys will enjoy a week with a changed format and find the work interesting but fun. Together with the teachers, I look forward to seeing the completed products at the end of the week. Should you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me on email: kmelvillsmith@stpeters.co.za or via WhatsApp 082 872 5455.

A MESSAGE FOR THE BOYS

I know many of you were looking forward to possibly coming back to school, especially to spend time with your friends and to see your teachers. I know that some of you are feeling disappointed that we needed to change the dates and that we cannot even let you know when you will be back. This is a time for all of us to show both grit and determination; by overcoming our disappointments and looking for the positives in each new challenge.

A MESSAGE TO OUR PARENTS

Mental Health is sooooo important for you too.

If you need a day, take a day.

Find something to relax you.

Bubble Bath, nature, writing, painting etc.

Just do it.....

Adam Danyal

Thank you once again for all the birthday spoils and messages – despite celebrating my birthday in lockdown I felt so spoilt by the St Peter's community!

Warm regards,

Kenda Melvill-Smith

FOOD DRIVE: FEEDING FAMILIES IN DIEPSLOOT

Thank you for the awesome response to date, our collection continues

The following items are needed:

- 12.5kg mielie meal; cans of: mixed vegetables, bully beef, sardines, pilchards; 2kg sugar; cloth face masks; shoes and clothes

Collection point: in front of chapel.

It costs R600 to feed a family of four for a month, and if you prefer to make a contribution of any amount, please deposit into:

St Peter's Foundation, Standard Bank, Acc: 422 057 533 (Section A18 tax certificates can be issued).

Father Richard and Monica Sloane





70th CELEBRATIONS

The first swimming pool was a concrete reservoir situated in Rob Macaulay's garden beside his house, close to the current carpark. The water was habitually tinged a deep green by the algae that flourished in its depths and we know that boys from visiting schools such as St John's, also swam in it. It was common for the boarders to skinny dip in this pool and this became a dare after hours. Another boarder tradition in the early days lasting into the 80s was to sneak out of the boarding house after lights out and do a lap or two of Newlands, sometimes dressed but usually not.

During the tenure of the last Housemaster of Founders, a group of boys exited via the windows in the downstairs Dining Room to undertake their dare. One boy, who was rather generously built, was too big to make it through the burglar bars and was stuck fast. If I recall correctly, he was the son of a politician. The Housemaster was alerted to his subdued cries for assistance. His flat adjoined the boarding house. He slipped downstairs and was confronted by a pair of buttocks protruding from the window. He assisted the boy to pass through to the other side with a whack of his cane. The rest of the groups were equally rewarded on their return.

Greg Royce

