



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

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

DATE 14 May 2020

JUNIOR PREP

Dear Parents,

### **FROM THE HEADMASTER**

With the possibility of schools opening in the near future looking more promising, we are excited about the prospect of welcoming the children back to school. Our Ops Team, under the leadership of Mr Maharaj and Mrs Neto are drawing up the protocols and site plans for access and egress to and from the various teaching and learning areas. These procedures will include a number of required Covid-19 safety measures such as screening and sanitation. As we gain further clarity on how we will be allowed to proceed from the DBE, these plans will be tested and then adopted. Mr Porter is drawing a classroom plan that will allow us to accommodate the children while ensuring that the strictest social distancing requirements are adhered to. The Sports Department are doing research into how we can facilitate physical and team activities within the Health Department and Education Department requirements. All in all, a very excited and active management team are enjoying the opportunity to prepare our campus and curriculum for a return to school.

Notwithstanding the above, it has been great to see communication from so many parents listing the positive effects of the slower lockdown mentality. The later start to the day and the ability to take time to share meals, with the resultant conversations as a family, have been amongst the most positive observations. We have also noted small improvements on the school front, such as better handwriting in the junior classes and more time being spent on creative activities higher up. This makes one wonder about the balance between quantity and quality in our pre-lockdown lives. Could it be that we were so busy rushing to fit everything in that we never made use of the opportunity to enjoy the actual activities and to produce quality products? Was our motivation to cram every possible opportunity into a day at the expense of really using the opportunities that were on offer? These communications have certainly got us thinking. It would be great to get feedback from the broader community regarding these thoughts. There may be a call for a change in the structure of our school day; not one that is Covid-compliance driven, but one that is more informed by best educational practice. It is important to note here that I am not predicting a complete change in structures, but am rather trying to stimulate thought and debate that will inform our strategic imperative of continuous improvement in the months and years to come.

As we ponder the hoped for return to school and economic activities, let's consider some lessons learnt during lockdown. In addition to saving many lives, there may be a possibility that it has provided a window into a better future for all of us.

Have a great week.

**Rob Macaulay**

### **FROM THE JUNIOR PREP**

#### **PARENTS WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT:**

- **Communication:** Please could I ask you to limit communication to teachers between 8:00 and 16:00 unless there is an emergency. AllWhatsapps or emails sent later than this will be responded to the next morning. Weekends will start at **16:00 on Friday until 8:00 on Monday**. Teachers have other commitments that they need to meet and are struggling at times to reach these areas of both their professional and home lives.
- **Zoom/Whatsapp Session Etiquette:** Zoom sessions are an unusual format for our boys to learn and we are requesting parent support to assist teachers with this:

1. Please ensure your son has watched the video posted before his small group Zoom session and before he completes the written tasks. This is the teaching part of the lesson.
  2. Please help your son to be ready for his session and prepared for the time online with his teacher (toilet time, maybe a snack before a session starts).
  3. Parents please leave your son on Zoom with his teacher; he may need some technical support but the learning is not as effective when a parent is involved as the child looks to his parent for support.
  4. Parents please can we ask you to assist the teacher by encouraging your child stay involved for the entire Zoom session; this is teaching time and boys need to be focused and considerate of their peers.
  5. Please try to keep external noise down during your boy's session.
  6. No toys, eating or drinking during the session unless it forms part of a lesson.
  7. Please ask your sons not to annotate on the screen during sessions as this distracts other boys in the group.
- **Hard Packs for collection:** As per the Whatsapp sent this morning, please complete the Google Form should you wish to collect a pack for your son. These packs will contain the work for the next two weeks; all worksheets will be available on your class learning platform and many have an online activity which do not require a hard copy.  
Packs will be ready for distribution from the Chapel Car Park on Saturday morning using a drive through process. Please drop off the completed hard packs from last term if you are collecting this week.  
Please could all work be submitted through the learning platform so that marking and feedback can be immediate. By remaining on this platform your son's teacher can monitor his progress and completion of tasks.
  - **Parent Consults:** Due to the online learning process we are drawing up a very different parent consult for our parents in Grade 0-2. We realise this needs to be a time of collaboration and shared support. This process is almost completed and within the next week you will receive a booking sheet for a Zoom Session with your child's class teacher. These sessions will take place during the last week of May and beginning of June. Please bear with me as we get this new, revised process to allow for effective feedback and conversations with regards to Term 1, online learning and assisting with preparing our boys for their return to school.

### **PEACHINKING – IS LIKE PARENTING, TEACHING AND WORKING (ONLY IT IS NOT!)**

**By Dr Isabel Tarling**

If you've been parenting, working and having little people around since lock-down began, we all know that being locked up is not the worst that can happen. Add to that children having to learn online, getting links to open and calls to connect on time, worksheets to scan or send, let alone meets to join and docs to share, and being locked up doesn't sound so bad after all. They don't allow the dogs, guinea pigs and kids into the 4 x 6 do they?

This blog is for everyone who has to be a parent, a teacher and who is trying to hold down a job during lock-down. How can this possibly be made easier, you ask? Is there hope? Let's find out!

Peachinking is a mashup word. It's much like that peanut butter sandwich the toddler mashed into your carpet for the cat to eat. This was while you were trying to act professional during the Zoom call, being oh so grateful to blur the background and not show the horror of unwashed dishes, drying washing and the cat's latest present from the outside world, dead and gutted on the windowsill. 'Yes, Mr Williams, I'll have that proposal tomorrow morning.' You groan, knowing a night of no sleep lies ahead, and turn to help the 7 year old find her Google Meet link to join the Maths class. Peachinking is like mashing parenting, teaching and working, only, it's not.

#### **What is Peachinking?**

When we're not in lock-down, our roles are often more demarcated. We know when we are parents, when we leave to become providers or when we care for our elderly parents or those we love. Most often, we leave our children's education to trained experts, those magnificently blessed, halo-wearing, angel-winged superheroes that float through school corridors. (Remember how great it felt to smile and wave as you walked away and left the kids in their care?) These roles are defined by spaces and times, by us going somewhere or leaving, by contexts and people.

During lockdown this has of course all changed. We've seen first-hand what our children do *in class* each and every day. We saw the first few days of frustration with getting the tech to work. Thank goodness these made way for them knowing their way around Meets and Hangouts, Zooms and Group chats. Our kids have learnt to use Voice-to-Text to type,

they've watched hours of their teachers' presentations and have completed worksheets and assignments. Going anywhere means walking a few steps. They're so over it. Everyone's so over it.

You find yourself waking later and later. Where once you had them ready for school 15 minutes before time, they now arrive in PJs a few minutes late or you tell them to wait for the recording. Most of the night was spent catching up on the work you missed out while feeding the toddler, explaining Weather systems and the bones of the body, hanging out the washing, soothing the toddler and making lunch, hunting the toddler and taking two calls, and finally answering a few urgent emails while bathing the toddler. You feel exhausted and now have a full proposal to complete before 8am!

### **How can we make the most of Peachinking?**

All is not doomed. Quite the opposite. Peachinking as Aristotle said, means our whole is greater than the sum.

We can take positive and healthy steps to make peachinking work as the last few weeks or months of lockdown and isolation remain in place, following some basic steps and implementing a few fun and easy activities.

### **The hardware and software**

In our world, distance and online learning are two different things. I say this to help parents understand that most teachers have had to crisis-manage. What they've been doing the past few weeks and months have been done on the fly, late at night and after their own children have gone to bed. Did you see the teacher's face when his dog let off that almighty gas explosion? The kids almost fell off their chairs and the toddler screamed with laughter. If recordings sound echoey, it's probably because the only quiet room is the bathroom.

Why raise this point? It's important to note teachers would never normally be this unstrategic and unprofessional. They take exceptional pride in their professionalism. Under normal circumstances every lesson and every learning task is carefully structured and chosen to build one on the other. They spend hours before each term starts to plan how each week's learning will unfold, then hours before each week starts to micro plan the specific learning based on your child's progress. This type of planning has not been possible but our teachers have done incredible lessons online!

Teachers introduce topics like rungs on a ladder. As your child learns to climb each step of the ladder, they introduce ever more difficult tasks and concepts to make them climb a little higher. By the end of a unit, your child has climbed the entire ladder. This is what we call scaffolding and it's something teachers do every day.

Teaching during lockdown has looked very different. Teachers have used 'hardware' and 'software' in online and offline ways. They've taught with books and pens, or computers – let's call all of this hardware; or they've used online tools and digital resources, or worksheets and packets of resources which we'll call software. They've had little or no way to gauge where learners are on the ladder so scaffolding could not adapt to the individual needs of learners. Normally teachers would gauge where learners are at and then adapt their lessons to scaffold the learning tasks. Now this was not possible so learning is generally more generic. Possibly more video-watching and worksheet completion, and perhaps less differentiated than would normally happen.

### **1) What can you do?**

Don't take this to be the norm. This isn't what happens in classrooms. If your child gets frustrated, help them focus on what they can do. If they get overwhelmed, focus on ONE task, ONE thing at a time.

Do what makes sense and what you and your children love and understand. If it causes tears, stop. If it's tears to manipulate you to stop, that's a different story and address that. But if the hardware and software causes the tears, take it easy. When they're back at school, their learning will once again be scaffolded. They'll once again be guided up their ladders and you'll be off the hook.

Till then, make every moment of learning at home as joy filled and happy as you can. Pick your battles without being a pushover. Pay attention to their learning but let them do for themselves as much as they can.

Always remember that teachers can fix a lot, but the hardest things to fix are a hatred of learning and a broken spirit.

### **2) Carve out space and time**

Learning ALWAYS happens in a particular space and place, and most likely at a particular time. Where and when we learn is important. If where we learn and when we learn, is no different from where we play and relax or when we eat and sleep, then learning is not segregated as a distinct activity.

***If you can demarcate learning, it opens the door to demarcate work space and time too.***

Oh yes, I hear the purists! Hold your horses. Of course learning is supposed to happen everywhere. That's not the point.

***We're talking about learning during lock-down for school-related matters.***

A clearly demarcated space and time helps everyone know that learning has started, and when it ends. This helps you plan your day and structure when you can block out work-time.

If you have a room for learning, or a space where it can happen, use this. If you don't have this space, use a special blanket or chair that they can sit on when they learn. Create a special ritual that starts the learning session. Get the kids to dress in specific clothes before school or let THEM set the timer and write their times in a prominent place for when their learning starts and ends. A wonderful tool to use is the Pomodoro Method – google it! They only have to focus for 25 minutes at a time. It helps them chunk their learning time.

### 3) The learning

Our children have different learning preferences. Some children prefer learning while they move, others like to learn by listening while others prefer to read visual texts and images. Others prefer learning through music. Your child's teachers could probably tell you quite easily what their learning preferences are.

In the past few weeks, they've probably had an overdose of watching videos and completing worksheets. Perhaps you drew a chalk obstacle course outside and it worked quite well? The kids loved it, but after the toddler ate the chalk and the kids screamed at the dog for pooping on the bunny hops, you haven't tried this again?

Everyone, including our children need balance in their lives. Sitting still and watching a screen all day is never ideal. We need to keep their little minds active and stimulated to create and make, invent, take risks and experiment within safe, secure boundaries. As much as possible, create opportunities for this. Challenge each other to create at least one invention a day. It can be anything, from something to eat to a thought experiment. Share it over dinner but put the challenge out there.

### 4) Build and show resilience

A gratitude diary is a wonderful way to get everyone in the family focused on the positive. Everyone can be part of it. It can take 5 – 10 minutes every other day to write. You can keep a traditional diary or let everyone write what they are grateful for on notes that they put in a jar, then open it once a week to share with each other. Your jar can become your lockdown time capsule that you keep for years to come. Here are some tips to keeping a Gratitude Diary:

1. Be as specific as possible.
2. Be detailed about a particular person or thing.
3. Think of things you are grateful for being in your life, and for NOT being in your life.
4. Good things are 'gifts' to bank for hard days. Relish and savour these for those days.
5. Don't overdo this – only write a maximum of 3 x a week.

### 5) Read across distances

We're all in this together. Some realize this more than others. Some of us love the solitude and isolation and are pretty comfortable without rushing to school pick-ups and soccer practices, rehearsals and meetings in between work commitments. Others are going stir crazy in the absence of people. They need people to get their energy fixes.

Here's a thought: let the kids make gratitude bouquets or send happy cards on their phones or computers to family and friends who they miss. Set up cooking challenges on HangOuts or Zoom. Have a family Game night or music quiz on Skype. Use the 'office' tools to reach across the distances.

### In conclusion

May your week be peachy as the Peachinking heroes you are!!

### GRADE 0 FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT SESSIONS

As from next week **Monday, 18 May**, Grade 0 boys will start their live Biokinetic sessions with Mr and Mrs Cronin. Each Grade 0 class will have their session on a different day (Monday – Thursday) with 10 boys allocated to a 30 minute time slot to ensure the effectiveness of the session.

The sessions will focus on posture, overall body strength with a specific focus on core strength, balance and co-ordination. It is hoped that, in addition to providing a necessary break to online learning, these sessions will aim to benefit mental, emotional and physical health by reducing stress, preventing weight gain and boosting the immune system through an interactive Zoom exercise session. Please encourage your boys to attend the weekly sessions. Look forward to seeing you all there!

The schedule is as follows:

- Monday's @ 12:00 and 12:30(Grade 0 Fietze)
- Tuesday's @ 12:00 and 12:30 (Grade 0 Pickering)
- Wednesday's @ 12:00 and 12:30 (Grade 0 Dickson)
- Thursday's @ 12:00 and 12:30 (Grade 0 Molefe)



A breakdown of which boys will attend each session will be posted on SeeSaw with your weekly timetable on Friday. Please use the following link to access the zoom meeting/exercise session (the link will stay the same for each week). **Callan Cronin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Topic: Callan Cronin's Personal Meeting Room**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/8161845642?pwd=cGtTOHVPUjNFWGh0Mm82SjZJaHBXdz09>

**Meeting ID: 816 184 5642**

**Password: JPBoys**

### **EXPERI-BUDDIES IS GOING ONLINE!!!**

Experi-buddies has been part of the JP Boys curriculum at St Peter's for a number of years and we are delighted that our boys can still experience these classes as part of their online learning. We are excited to announce that they have formulated 8 new and unique lessons that will ONLY be available online. These video lessons will be released weekly.

The idea behind the lessons is to make it easier for parents to stimulate their children's enquiring minds. We are convinced that some of your older children will also learn something new!!!

During these lessons we are able to do more experiments than in a normal class situation, therefore the children have even more unforgettable learning experiences to look forward to.

The unique feature of Experi-Buddies lessons is that we use various experiments to explain scientific concepts within a certain theme – the online lessons follow the same principle.

You will also receive a letter, posted on your class learning platform, outlining what will be covered in the online lesson and there will be detailed instructions for easy experiments that can be done at home.

Children of this age have a limited attention span, therefore we have tried to vary the lesson content, making use of animations, experiments and other demonstrations.

You have the option of viewing the lesson in either English or Afrikaans. As a St Peter's JP Boy there is no cost involved and all the members of your household can share in this learning experience.

**Herewith the procedure to access the online videos:**

1. Ensure that I have the cell phone number that you would like the sms pin to be sent to.
2. You will then receive an automated sms with the link that you will use every week to access the videos – thus ensure that you keep this sms or link.
3. If you open the link, you will be asked to re-enter your cell phone number and then you will receive a sms with a unique pin for that session.
4. The video lessons will be released weekly, and I will inform you as soon as the new lesson is loaded onto the platform. The link will remain the same.
5. You can choose to view the video in either English or Afrikaans and you can view it unlimitedly while you are logged in and your browser remains open.
6. A maximum of 3 logins per video will be allowed.

7. You will receive a letter posted on your class learning platform, briefly outlining the content of the lesson. This will also include one or two experiments that can be done at home.

8. As parents you will not have to prepare anything for the lessons.

After 10 years in this industry, this is a totally new venture for us and we are super excited to bring Experi-Buddies to your home!

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or queries.

Experi-Greetings

**Susan Barkhuizen**

Cell: 082 336 9221

E-mail: [susan@experi.co.za](mailto:susan@experi.co.za)

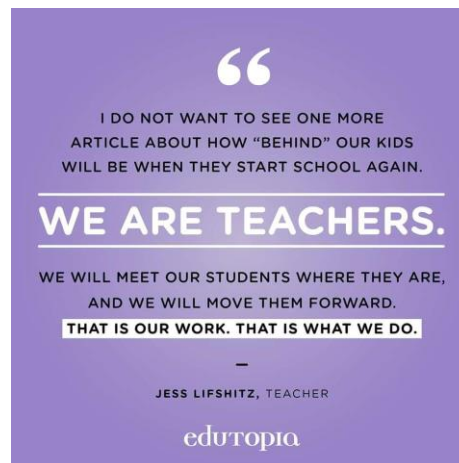
Website: [www.experi.co.za](http://www.experi.co.za)

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### WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS:

Lorin Hauptfleisch is providing activities weekly for family wellness during this time. The first one will be posted on Friday for next week for table conversations as a family in the week. All activities will be based on mindfulness and growing a positive, resilient attitude. I am sure you will find them most beneficial during these uncertain times.



Wishing you a happy week.

Warm regards,

**Kenda Melvill-Smith**

### COMMUNITY SHARING FOR BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Please note that the google form link is open again. Please complete your details if you HAVE NOT done so before. An updated contact list will be shared 18 May.

The link and original letter explaining the objective can be found on the Communicator under Resources: BOYS/GIRLS: General Information.

Here is the link to the form: <https://forms.gle/j92Bn5mSd4HQSUp67>

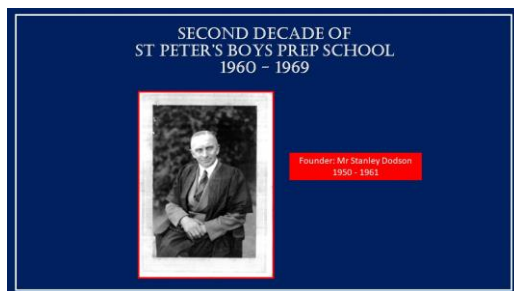
**HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES**

**Isaiah 41:10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**FROM THE ST PETER'S FOUNDATION**

Good luck to our dear interns who start their UNISA exams on Monday. Despite the various challenges they have faced during lockdown, and there have been many, we have all the confidence that they will do their best.

**GOOD LUCK!**

**THE DECADES OF ST PETER'S IN ACTION**

Here is the second of seven videos that will be released throughout the year in celebration of 70 years of St Peter's Boys Prep School.

Here are the 60s:

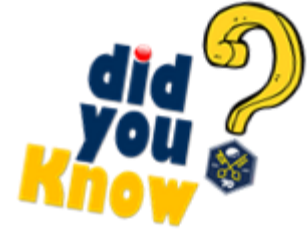
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLCUZehKtaU>

## 70<sup>th</sup> CELEBRATIONS



We have been told by an international Bell Ringing Association that St Peter's is one of only two stand-alone prep schools in the world with its own *ring of bells*. This is the name given to a set of bells hung for English full circle ringing. Bells have always been a feature of St Peter's life, with the Letty Bell signaling the change in teaching periods, the boarders' bell summoning the latter to dinner or showers, the dining room bell preceding grace and the small bells in the Chapel rung during the Eucharistic Prayer.

There was never an intention to install the big bells in the Chapel. A new Director of Music, Vaughan van Zyl, formerly from the Drakensberg Choir School, arrived in 2006. Vaughan is an instinctive musician. He shared the Rector's passion to place an organ in the Chapel. He began a fund with choir parents and set about seeking an instrument. Vaughan ultimately located the current organ in a church in Port Elizabeth which was to be demolished.



The transaction was conducted, and the organ installed. What it did need was a sound box in which the organ pipes could be located. We were faced with a problem of positioning an ugly square concrete structure the size of a garage, jutting out from somewhere in the Chapel. When the optimum position was located, the idea to transform the box into a Bell Tower emerged.

Quotes were arranged and Council shuddered at the cost. They would reluctantly build a Bell Tower but there would be no money available for the bells.

Everyone was captivated by the completed Bell Tower and at one Council meeting, Lindsay Clur, an outstandingly loyal parent and governor, announced his intention to donate R25 000 and challenged the other governors to do likewise, or better this. In a matter of minutes, the cost of more than one bell was covered. The word spread and further donations of money, as well as a whole bell, were made. All but two bells remained outstanding and one was donated by the Keltek Trust in the UK with whom we had had no contact but who had heard of our venture and wished to support it. The final and largest bell was cast in a foundry in Whitechapel, London, which has been in operation since the time of Charles Dickens.

**Greg Royce**