



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

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE #947

DATE: 1 May 2020

Grade 1

WELCOME
BACK
TO
SCHOOL
WITH A DIFFERENCE ...

FROM THE HEADMASTER

I extend a hearty welcome to our community as we begin our Trinity Term under what can only be described as unusual circumstances. Covid-19 has had a major impact on all sectors of our country, not least of all on education. As I wrote in my newsletter at the end of last term, I can only applaud the agility and reactivity of our boys, their parents and our teachers as we put a successful online learning programme in place to cope with lockdown demands. I believe that we do need to acknowledge our privileged position and, as we have seen from our survey results, we are extremely fortunate that the vast majority of our families were able to work online. This was even more visible in our Upper School, where the BYOD programme allowed the boys to have their own devices on hand, without needing to share parents' access to work-from-home resources.

Thank you to the parents who completed the online learning survey last term. It has given us useful data that we have used to improve our practice as we go forward. In survey terms, the project was well supported with the following number of responses from each class contributing to our data:

Grade 0: 44 responses; **Grade 1:** 60 responses; **Grade 2:** 56 responses; **Grade 3:** 38 responses; **Grade 4:** 41 responses; **Grade 5:** 57 responses; **Grade 6:** 40 responses; **Grade 7:** 41 responses

Each Grade will be sent a copy of their survey findings and the adjustments that have been made to the online programmes to accommodate common requests. Specific programmes will come to you via your Grade online communication platforms. I also remind you that the channels for two-way communication are open and you can feel free to contact the teacher, grade head, phase head or one of the management team should you be experiencing difficulty during the programme.

We will work to ensure that core skills are still covered through the online programme to ensure that academic progress continues throughout the lockdown period. While we would all prefer to be interacting face to face, I believe that there are also valuable life lessons being learned during this time. My assessment of the development in the 21st Century skills that the boys have experienced during lockdown is that we could never have replicated this learning platform artificially. It is technologically rich, interest and needs driven, relevant, self-managed and self-assessed to a large degree. As the period of online learning continues, so the boys, parents and teachers will become more adept and "future learning" will become seamless. We are, however, aware that there are people who are experiencing higher levels of anxiety within their families during these challenging times. Should you or your child wish to speak to our counsellor, Wendy Wentzel or to the Chaplain, Father Richard, you are welcome to contact them:

Wendy Wentzel: 082 892 5889

Father Richard: 082 332 9855

Wendy has written a piece regarding the need for structures and routine during lockdown, which I have attached below:

As we return to school after a holiday like no other before, I thought that I would share a few ideas as we move into the new term. Undoubtedly the old order has changed and we have arrived at a time when we are able to make choices. We can bemoan the loss of all that was familiar or we can view this time as a “rite of passage” enabling us to move into a new phase of our lives. We can continue to feel disempowered and allow ourselves to be the victims of “emotional contagion” or we can embrace what is ahead of us, create our own story or narrative and emerge enriched.

It is very easy to be philosophical in times like these but it is more useful to share practical suggestions as families battle with the “new normal”. Along with some of my colleagues I have tracked a few families during the five weeks of lockdown. Overall I found that families that maintain a regular routine are able to cope more effectively with the challenges of the times. Especially as school returns with on-line learning in place emulating a routine similar to that needed when attending school is most beneficial. It simply boils down to waking up at a regular time, changing out of pyjamas (even into a casual tracksuit), eating a proper breakfast and not opting to delay this for a snack later to set the tone for a productive day. Engaging in a variety of different activities during the day, as would be the case if the child was at school enables the child to remain both mentally and physically alert. Limiting leisure screen time, given the amount of visual input now needed for on-line learning, is essential although perhaps the hardest to implement as many parents grapple with many different roles. So too is maintaining the bedtime we had in place when we anticipated hitting the early morning traffic. It is so easy to fall into the trap of “just a little longer” because we do not feel we are at school but it is important to remember that learning is continuing every day, just the format is different.

There is much that I could write but at this time I would like to wish you strength as we embark on yet another new adventure. I would also like to remind you that I am available to offer tele-consultations to any parent or child who feels they need emotional support. There is no cost for these consultations. My telephone number is 082 892 5889; my email is wwentzel@stpeters.co.za.

My thanks go out to **Catherine Steenhoff** and **Kenda Melvill-Smith** for the grade-specific information that follows in your version of this Keyhole edition:

Dear Grade 1 Parents

As we grapple with new technology... Zoom, SeeSaw, Whatsapp Video Calls, Google Classroom and many others, we are discovering that even our little children can continue learning and making progress with some adult support from home. It is tremendously exciting to see the creativity of our amazing teachers pioneering the possibility of education on-line. As we all know, early development and establishing a strong foundation of perceptual and conceptual skills is critical to future academic success. All our children need to be nurtured during this time with teachers and parents working together as a united and supportive team as never experienced before.

The challenges we appear to have in common are the accessibility of the programmes on home devices, parent time available to supervise learning, parents balancing many new roles within their home environment, cost of data and band width, longer hours for staff, the uncertainty and anxiety of how long on-line learning will last, the impact on the long-term social, emotional and physical development of children, wellbeing of children at home, staff wellness and how we will manage the recovery period after the pandemic has subsided.

I would like to thank you for the feedback received at the end of last term in our Parent Surveys. These have assist us to make changes to improve what we are offering our boys with regards to on-line learning. I would, however, like to stress that a time of on-line learning cannot and should not immolate the morning spent at school. A typical school day is broken up with specialist subjects as well as breaks. Our young boys are only able to concentrate for short periods of time and our teaching times and zoom sessions will reflect this.

From the Gr 1 survey and comments the following were the main points identified which we needed to address:

Parent feedback	How it has been addressed.
Too many posts in one day	The week has been divided into very specific posting schedules and the weekly timetable will indicate the "must do" activities and the optional activities. Tabs have been created on Google Classroom to assist with managing the work. A check list has also been provided to assist you with ensuring the work required to be turned in has been completed.
Time for children to connect with their teacher and peers	Individual Whatsapp Video calls will take place weekly, set small group zoom sessions will be hosted by class teachers and every Friday a directed social zoom session will be hosted for each class.
Understanding learning intentions	Activities posted will indicate the learning intention of that activity. Focus will remain on the core subjects particularly at Gr 1 level. Please understand that this is an early stage of formal learning for our boys and some skills will be more developed than others. All our boys will get their at their own natural pace; as teachers we make allowances for this.
Submitting completed work	All work can be submitted on Google Classroom or via whatsapp, downloading camscan will allow the work submitted to be clear and easy to read. Once work has been submitted and marked the class teacher will provide feedback. A video explaining how to post completed work will be sent to parents via Google Classroom

As mentioned by Wendy in the Keyhole it is important for the boys to follow a routine and structure. Please can we ask that they are ready to start their day at 08:30, where they can watch the morning greeting videos from the class teacher, organise their work for the day and get ready to start activities. We know that parents have their own demands that they need to meet but the younger child will need more guidance from adults. Never-the-less this is also a great opportunity to develop some responsibility and independence within your son.

The teachers have been working hard during the holidays in preparing the online lessons and look forward to offering and teaching 'a different', but definitely not a 'lesser' academic programme.

In Gr 1 we will be focussing on our core essential subjects – Reading, Phonics, Writing and Mathematics to ensure boys master these skills in this critical stage. Involvement in the Afrikaans and IsiZulu sessions is encouraged at this level the focus is on developing a basic vocabulary in these two languages. The other subjects, Science, Art, Sport and Music will be optional for the boys. If you have the time we recommend boys do participate in these lessons. Catch up Friday is a good time for these sessions to take place, but we understand that some weeks may run better than others.

The following will also be put in place:

- A weekly timetable together with a covering letter and PDF packs will be posted every Friday afternoon to assist in preparing for the week ahead. A check list with each activity for the week will also be included.
- Teaching will take place from Monday to Thursday. Friday is a day that boys can catch up on work, complete tasks and take part in the optional subjects and the class social.
- The zoom schedule and whatasapp video calls will remain at the same time for your son each week to assist with planning. Zoom sessions will be recorded and placed on Google Classroom for further reference or to assist if your son could not attend a session. You will need to download the “Zoom cloud meetings” app, which is free, on your phone or device your son is using. Please don’t worry if the first week of the Zoom sessions seems a bit chaotic or if your son doesn’t make a session. It will take a few days to get used to. Please read through the zoom etiquette which will be posted on Google Classroom and explain it to your son.
- Work has been coded to assist parent’s priorities the requirements; this is also included in the video being posted:
 - Green – an essential must do activity that will be marked by the class teacher
 - Orange – application of the core activity that will allow for consolidation of skills/content. Afrikaans and IsiZulu is included in this section.
 - Red- extension and/or other work or subjects that are optional for our boys to complete. This will include Sport, Music, Art and Science.
- Please ensure all work is finished and sent to the teachers by 10:00 on Friday morning. Once work is finished it would be appreciated if you please send it through earlier to help teachers keep up to date with marking.
- Callan Cronin and Melani Fouche will be joining the Gr 1 team to provide support to the teachers and to host the Friday Social Session.
- Wendy Wentzel who heads up our Academic Support team will be following up with boys in our Academic support programme.
- Boys who are in the Middle Room will also be supported by Tracy Backman and Lindiwe Radebe.

On Monday, 4 May the class teachers will video call each Gr 1 boy and his parents to connect and touch base before the term commences. After ten days of the second term your class teacher will host a parent conference with you to discuss our findings in the first term as well as gain an understanding of your experience with on-line learning. A video explaining the weekly timetable and zoom sessions will be posted on Google Classroom; as will the work set for Tuesday, 5 – Friday, 8 May.

We understand that managing younger boys comes with its own challenges when trying to complete written activities and remain focussed. I would suggest that “munch and crunch” be available as well as water in a “sippy bottle”. I am also including a link to assist you with “brain break” ideas should your little boy need time away from the activities that have been set. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/brain-breaks-for-busy-kids-1257211>

Please take comfort in knowing that your children are in the safe hands of their teachers; we understand that these are anxious and uncertain times but if we journey this path together our little boys will come through it with flying colours. I know that a number of Gr 1 parents feel very concerned as it is so early on their son’s formal learning journey. I can assure you that every boy will make progress this year and when classes return to “normal” teachers will be able to support and remediate any difficulties. For now, the emotional well-being and strong self-esteem of every boy needs to take priority. Please know I am available via either email kmelvillsmith@stpeters.co.za or cellphone 082 872 5455.

I will teach you in a room.

I will teach you now on ZOOM.

I will teach you in your house.

I will teach you with a mouse.

I will teach you here and there.

I will teach you because I care.

So just do your very best.

And do not worry about the rest.

Wishing you a very happy first week at "school"

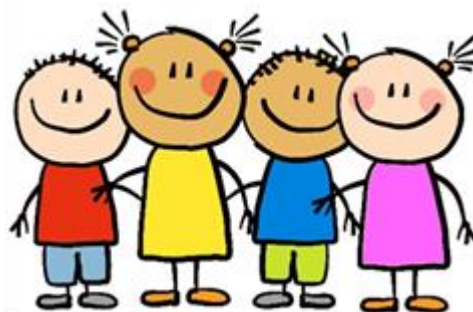
Kenda Melvill-Smith

FROM THE PRE-PREP

Applications for St Peter's Pre-Prep

At the beginning of this year, St Peter's opened up a Pre-Prep catering for Grade 00 and Grade 000 children. For Grade 00 children are 4 turning 5 in the year that they start and for Grade 000, the children are 3 turning 4 in the year that they start.

We are in the process of contacting parents whose children have been accepted for the start of the 2021 year. If you currently have a child in either the Boys or Girls Prep and would like to take up the opportunity for a younger sibling to attend the Pre-Prep, please contact our Admissions Officer, Nonhlanhla Majokane via email: nmajokane@stpeters.co.za



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 Mid 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>



SIMPLE STEPS FOR IT SUPPORT

ITHELPDESK@STPETERS.CO.ZA



1 LOG A SUPPORT TICKET

Email: IThelpdesk@stpeters.co.za
Please include a clear description of your problem and your telephone contact details. A Ticket number will be sent to you by return email.



2 YOUR TICKET WILL BE ASSIGNED

Your request will be reviewed and assigned to one of the IT Staff.
You will receive this information automatically via return email.
Please keep this email.



3 UPDATING YOUR TICKET

All communications need to be done by replying to the automated email. Please, do not change the subject or remove the Ticket Number as these help us.



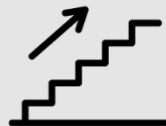
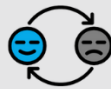
4 IT WILL CONTACT YOU

IT will contact you, either via the Support Desk email or telephonically.
Telephonic conversations will be added to the Support Ticket.



5 CLOSING YOUR TICKET

When your issue is resolved, your Ticket will be closed by the Support Desk and you will be notified via email.
If you are unhappy with the solution or if your matter has not been resolved, please respond to this email and your ticket will be re-opened and escalated.



6 ESCALATION

Unresolved and re-opened Tickets will be escalated to a Senior IT person.



7 UNABLE TO LOG A TICKET

Please contact the following IT members, telephonically or via WhatsApp
Dieter Gloss +27 72 625 9163
Connor Fraser +27 72 626 9517

WE ARE UNABLE TO SUPPORT ISSUES RELATING TO SLOW OR FAULTY FIBRE/ADSL (INCLUDING MOBILE, 3G/4G/LTE). PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER DIRECTLY