



# ST PETER'S BOYS PREP SCHOOL

## SERVING THE FAITH FOR 70 YEARS

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE #956

DATE: 9 July 2020 SENIOR PREP



### FROM THE HEADMASTER

It has been wonderful to welcome so many boys back to school this week. While I have been confined to my home due to being in close contact with a positive case at the beginning of the mid-term, my study overlooks Somerset Field and I have been able to watch the comings and goings of the boys from there. What has become apparent is that the “goings” or pick up of so many boys has reintroduced our carpark traffic woes between 12:00 and 13:00. We do manage to clear the carpark by 13:10 on most days, but I still need to request that parents stick to the drop-and-go procedure and pick up at the correct time for your grade. We have allowed 15 minute gaps between the various grade cohort dismissal times to try to keep a traffic flow between 11:45 and 13:00. Where parents need to park in order to wait for siblings, please park on the outside of the field (if on Somerset) to allow the boys, who have social distance markings in the middle of the field, to gather in the correct space.

There have been some inquiries regarding the management protocols of the COVID-19 virus by both school and parents at this time. We have consulted with our advisory team and would like to share their views regarding some FAQ's:

#### **In light of the recent spike of COVID cases, should St Peter's be open?**

Dr Terri Nunes is on our medical advisory team and her answer is as follows:

*The numbers are definitely increasing in Gauteng but this was always going to be the case as we came out of lockdown. We are definitely traveling uncharted territory and we have to continue to be flexible. We must bear in mind that for children this is fortunately a mild disease. Those children and teachers with co-morbidities should be at home but the rest are at very little risk of severe disease.*

*St Peter's has done everything in its power to ensure a safe school environment for the children and teachers. In my opinion the children are far more likely to catch Coronavirus from their parents who have been at work etc. or from visiting the shops, or playdates, than from the school environment; where they have to socially distance, wear masks and continuously wash their hands and sanitise.*

*It is imperative that on-line schooling continues till the end of the year/end of the pandemic for those children who cannot return to school and for the times when a family member etc. tests positive and the family needs to isolate/quarantine. Parents are aware that it is their choice to send their child back into the actual school environment.*

*It is imperative to ensure the least disruption to the children's schooling during this time bearing in mind that we do not know when this pandemic will end. We are a preparatory school and young children do benefit from the structure of a school day.*

*The great news is that now teachers and pupils at the school are returning to the campus - having recovered from COVID-19, as well as a number of pupils who have self-quarantined for the past 14 days, because either their mom or dad had the virus.*

*In summary I have no doubt that being back in the school environment is in the best interests of the majority of the children but for those who can't come to school due to co-morbidity, quarantine or other concerns, there is still the option of maintaining the academic teaching online.*

**Should parents be testing their children if they have been diagnosed positive?**

The answer to this question is from the Lancet Medical advice booklet:

*Who should have a SARS-CoV-2 PCR test done?*

People with symptoms of COVID-19 disease. It is important to test as soon as possible after symptom onset. Symptoms must be present for less than 14 days. Symptoms include any of the following: Cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of smell, and altered taste, with or without fever, weakness, muscle pain or diarrhoea. Repeat testing after a negative test may be recommended by your doctor under certain circumstances. Pre-admission screen before being admitted to hospital or a long term care facility may be a requirement for admission as recommended by your doctor.

*Please do NOT do a SARS-CoV-2 PCR in the following circumstances or for the following reasons:*

- If you have been in close contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19 but you do not have any symptoms yourself. You must stay at home and complete the full 14-day quarantine period.
- If you've tested positive and completed your 14-day self-isolation period. No de-isolation test is needed to return to work or school.
- If you tested positive for SARS-COV-2 and you do not believe the result. One positive test is sufficient proof of COVID-19 infection, there is no need for repeat confirmatory testing.
- If you are a contact of a contact of someone who has confirmed COVID-19. You are only considered at risk if you had close contact with a confirmed case. Currently no laboratory has the capacity to deal with mass submissions of samples from asymptomatic patients.

Having shared this information in terms of when to test and when not to test. Recent information informs us that, because of the overwhelming demand, testing is only going to be done, going forward, for very specific categories of people.

**Could the school stop all social gatherings outside of school?**

Parents are fully aware of the required protocols and requirements under level 3. Parents are advised not to allow their children to attend social gatherings if they are unsure of whether the required protocols will be in place. Sleep-overs and indoor functions are obviously not legal in terms of current lockdown legislation. The school, however, has no jurisdiction as to whether or not these functions should take place.

**Can my child bring birthday treats for the class?**

Individually wrapped treats are permitted. However, if you as a parent, are not comfortable with this, please advise your child accordingly. Obviously cakes, doughnuts etc. are not permitted.

**Why are we keeping the same holidays?**

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, we are confident that the academic programme has continued as normal, albeit online, during this time. This would have been evident in the comprehensive academic progress report that you received before half term. There is, therefore, no need to catch up any outstanding work. Secondly, our teachers, parents and our boys need a significant break to recover from what has been a challenging Trinity Term. Our teachers in particular have put in a herculean effort to keep our educational process on track for those at school as well as those at home. They need every moment of the August holidays to recover and prepare themselves for the Advent Term.

**COVID-19 Indemnity Forms**

We have been advised by ISASA that these forms need to be filled in by all parents on the return of their children to classroom learning. As such, this is a Council requirement as well. While we have had one or two parents object to filling in the form, we ask that you do complete and return the form in the spirit of our school community undertaking to create as safe and enjoyable a learning environment for your child as possible. If you do have any queries or objections or would

like to discuss it further, please do contact me on 079 439 9980. Alternatively, you are welcome to keep your child at home and continue with the online learning programme. We will be giving hard copies of the form to the boys who have not returned completed documents as part of their screening this week. Please complete the form and send it back to the screening team as a matter of urgency.

### Three reminders:

If your son has been self-quarantining with someone who has tested positive, he may only return to school, if he hasn't had close contact (less than a metre for more than 15 minutes) with the person concerned for the past 14 days. If he has, he is required to self-quarantine for a further 7 days, from the day of the last close contact.

Please, please please do not bring your son to school if he presents with any of these symptoms in the morning: Sore throat, no taste or smell, cough, diarrhoea or shortness of breath. Please also do not send him to school if you are awaiting tests for any family member.

As per the last COVID-19 Update, going forward, we will only be communicating directly with parents when we have reports of positive cases at school. There will, however, be a document available on the Communicator St Peter's with all reported cases from the St Peter's Community, which will be updated daily.

This is certainly a time for adaptation and community partnership. Your support is hugely appreciated in these interesting times.

Have a wonderful weekend.

**Rob Macaulay**







### FROM THE RECTOR

Thank you to those of you who gave appreciative feedback for the articles. Some have asked why the article has not been published in full. Some would rather read the entire piece rather than being drip-fed. My motivation for short pieces was in deference to parents' time constraints. The Marketers assure me that the completed article will be available on the website at the end of the series, so feel free to wait for it then. Also, I concede that I have not finished writing it. Lockdown has limited my free time rather than adding to it.

### *St Peter's – the Difference ...* Part 3

If a school is to adequately prepare its students for a future described more accurately by its *unknowns* than its *knowns*, then it must include 21<sup>st</sup> Century 'survival' skills such as those researched by Harvard's Dr Tony Wagner:

1. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving** – *requires the ability to comprehend and critique, value evidence*
2. **Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence** – *includes the need to understand other cultures and perspectives*
3. **Agility and Adaptability** – *in order to respond to changing demands of audience, task, purpose and discipline*
4. **Initiative and Entrepreneurship** - *the ability to think and act independently*
5. **Effective Oral and Written Communication** – *use technology strategically and capably*
6. **Accessing and Analysing Information** – *exercise judgement and scepticism*
7. **Curiosity and Imagination** – *build strong relevant content knowledge*

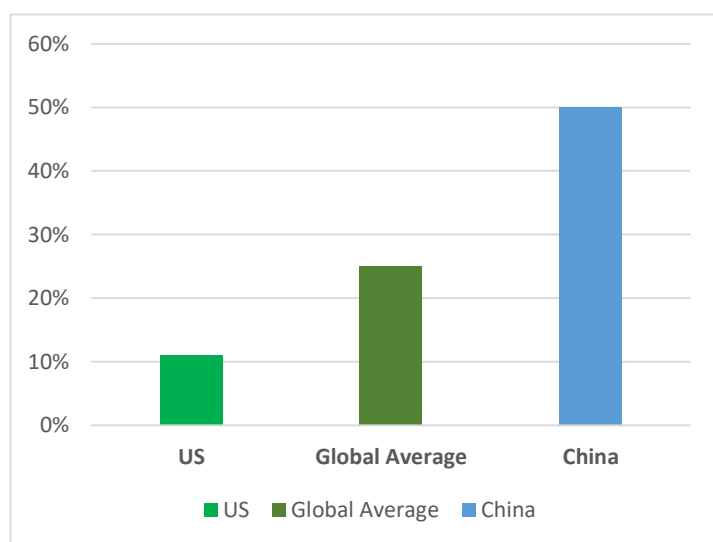
In designing its curriculum and selecting its methodology, schools should have at the top of mind:

- Strategies to encourage pupils to collaborate in seeking solutions
- Helping pupils (and teachers) to understand that there is often no one right answer
- Help children to understand that they are expected to support their views with carefully assessed evidence
- Encourage pupils to take risks and make mistakes – this is when real learning takes place

The last point is one of the most important. It's what we mean when we talk about 'safe space'. It's heart-breaking to see how children learn to take satisfaction out of other's mistakes in order to falsely bolster their own self-image.

The above skills seek to address a future where traditional employment in industries such as apparel manufacturing, textile mills and products, chemical manufacturing (except drugs), oil and gas extraction and steel manufacturing are declining rapidly.

Schools do not currently provide adequate skills for tertiary education or the complexity of the digital workspace. The US Department of Labour asserts that an estimated 85% of current jobs and almost 90% of the fastest, often growing and best-paying jobs now require a post-secondary education. Future employment opportunities will lie in macro robotics, exotic energy, new material science, machine cognition, nano technology and bioengineering. We should also understand that *economic gravity* is shifting from the West to the East:



### Science/Engineering/Tech Degrees

In developing children, schools have the following elements at their disposal:

1. **Curriculum** – *what is taught*
2. **Methodology** – *how it is taught*
3. **Staff** – *who does the teaching*
4. **Environment** – *physical (shape, design and interiors of buildings, open spaces; ethos – the conscious and subliminal messages to which children are exposed while at school)*

#### 1. Curriculum

All subjects have a **core curriculum** for languages and Maths. In addition to the prescribed topics in the other subjects, there are **themes** such as the environment, human rights and social transformation (*Apartheid*, slavery), conservation of natural resources and so on. The core curriculum content serves to ensure that the children have the foundational knowledge on which to develop the more complex concepts introduced with further secondary and tertiary study.

There is also a **curriculum** of dozens of **skills** including, e.g.

- identifying the main idea
- problem-solving
- various IT skills
- presentation skills, and so on.

The combination of themes and skills give teachers the freedom to allow children to choose topics closer to their areas of interest. We want children to remember what they learn and this happens when they are interested in the material. Providing children with a list of facts to be memorised and then regurgitated is a test of only memory, just one part of what makes up intelligence. Moreover, in most cases, the 'facts' are quickly forgotten. After all, who remembers what they learnt in History in Standard Five, Seven or even Eight?

### Curriculum - Thinking Skills

***Why is the teaching of 'thinking' allocated periods on the timetable from Grade 0 – 7 at St Peter's?***

***Would this time not be better spent on Maths or languages?***

The teaching of thinking techniques was introduced to the St Peter's curriculum nearly 30 years ago in the 1990s. At that time, the Girls Prep had not been opened and the Head of the Boys Prep had been peripherally involved through the de Bono Foundation in a project involving labour at the Lonrho Platinum mines in the Rustenburg area. Miners had been trained in some of Dr Edward de Bono's thinking techniques with impressive results. Miners began to exhibit better decision-making in spending their monthly salaries. For many, the salary began to last until the end of the month, reliance on loans decreased, alcohol consumption declined as did domestic violence.

The renowned Dr Edward de Bono, the father of Lateral Thinking' was visiting South Africa. He had heard of the St Peter's thinking programme and asked to visit the school. The Head persuaded him to lecture to the staff and he eventually spent a day at the school. At the time, de Bono held professorships at both Cambridge and Harvard and had consulted to some of the world's largest corporations, at a cost of \$13 000 - \$18 000 per day. The boys were so excited that they grabbed anything to hand for him to autograph – two even presented their boxers!

St Peter's teachers had long realised that children (and many adults) often responded to challenges and other opinions with very *narrow* thinking. They sometimes saw only the positive or the negative in a situation. They were quick to stereotype or responded emotionally in anger, fear or contempt. Like most of us, they would seek information which confirmed their belief and ignore contrary facts. Decision-making based on limited thinking can have dire consequences for individuals, families and societies. Examples abound: buying an expensive car to the detriment of one's daily living expenses; some of the Lockdown regulations; not practicing safe sex, surrendering to peer pressure to experiment with drugs.

More latterly we have realised that with access to information and the instant transmission of news and opinions that social media allows the need for discernment and judgement, had become more critical than ever.

Over the past two decades, the cognitive education (Thinking Skills) curriculum at St Peter's has grown substantially. Initially, rooted in de Bono's Six Hats, PNI (Positive, Negative and Interesting), it now includes David Hyerle's Thinking Maps. The programme has two chief objectives. Firstly, it teaches the ability to group, sequence, compare and analyse information. Secondly, it encourages pupils to think about an issue or problem from more than one standpoint. That is, the beneficial, cautionary, creative, emotive, factual and analytical.

The obvious benefits have become increasingly apparent over time and are evident in class discussions and test answers. What we had not anticipated, however, was the feedback from senior schools following the Grade 7 interviews for application to their preferred senior schools. Staff at these schools report a high level of confidence and maturity in St Peter's student's responses. Some go as far as to say that they are able to identify a St Peter's child merely on meeting him/her without seeing the uniform.

**Next week: Methodology, Staff and Environment**

Greg Royce



**Dr de Bono lecturing to St Peter's staff.  
The Headmaster's dog is equally fascinated**



## COMMUNITY SHARING

For the past few months we have been compiling a register of the professions and businesses of St Peter's Prep Schools parents in order to provide business opportunities for our community.

Participation is entirely voluntary. The objective of the following form is to help connect people in business to hopefully assist with additional revenue streams and expand business networks during this unexpected pandemic.

<https://forms.gle/j92Bn5mSd4HQSUp67>

If you wish to share your details, please complete the google form by 13 July. St Peter's Prep Schools will then share the information via email to all parents at St Peter's on 17 July. If you have already submitted your details, there is no need to resubmit as the list builds from the previous submissions.

Diane Fraser (Marketer)

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

We know that there must be so many stories and memories of your time spent at St Peter's Boys Prep, whether a parent, a pupil, an old boy or a member of staff, past or present.

Whether your story or memory is from fifty years ago or last week, we would love you to share them with us! We have created an email address for you to send your story and a photo to. We will, in due course, share these on our Website and social media pages.

We would love to hear from you as sharing our stories is what makes us part of the St Peter's Family.

Please send photos, stories and memories to: [70yearsofmemories@stpeters.co.za](mailto:70yearsofmemories@stpeters.co.za)

Diane Fraser (Marketer)



## LOOKING FOR A ROOFING SPECIALIST

We are looking for a parent who specialises in roofing.

Should you be able to assist, please contact our Operations Manager, Cecilia Neto, on [cneto@stpeters.co.za](mailto:cneto@stpeters.co.za)



*"Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom."*

— **Nelson Mandela**

Our current world has never been challenged like it is being right now, for people to stand together as communities and to support each other. This is the challenge all our St Peter's children will invest in. The privilege of noticing other people and how they can honour them in their own actions. Our children will notice at all levels, from those people who are close to them to communities that support them and that they could support. This helps us as St Peter's in becoming a great generation as we learn how to honour people in our lives. **For 67 minutes we will recognise all who need to be honoured in our lives as we decide on strategies on how to honour them. Love in action.**

Furthermore, in not only challenging our character we are also going to challenge ourselves in how we respond to our communities in giving and assisting them. **Honour in action.** As Nelson Mandela stated, especially now with the added pressure of COVID-19, poverty can be dealt with. St Peter's is supporting an organisation called Ikemeleng Soup Kitchen that is taking soup into Diepsloot to feed the hungry mouths of children at schools and crèches.

**We will be celebrating Mandela day on Friday, 17 July. We are asking for non-perishable food items, to be used in making the necessary soup, to be dropped off in the week of the 13 to 17 July.**

The drop off points are as follows:

- Chapel carpark
- Boys JP: entrance to reception
- Boys SP: collection field for Grade 3 & 4
- Girls JP: entrance to reception
- Girls SP: Grade 7 drop off zone

We are a generation who can blossom as we remember all the people in our communities and how we can help enrich their lives.

Love and Blessings

**The BigFutures Team**



### GARDEN MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING SERVICES

The two BEE companies which St Peter's Prep Schools set up to manage the grounds and clean the School will lose 50% of their business at another institution at the end of this month.

**Muchachari Garden Services** (MGS) and **Ntjilo's Cleaners** have been contracted to the School for over 15 years. Both have provided a standard of service which easily outmatched that of the larger companies which they replaced. Ntjilo's now also provides expert **Covid-19 sanitising**, while MGS not only manufactures high-grade compost, but also provides expert treatment of **Shot Hole Borer**.

If you are able, please help them to save the jobs of the workers that they will be forced to retrench at the end of the month. Their services and contact details are below.

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**083 381 0809**  
mmuchachari@stpeters.co.za



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082 777 6637 or [intjilo@stpeters.co.za](mailto:intjilo@stpeters.co.za)

## READY MADE MEALS



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ST PETER'S  
PREP SCHOOLS

READY MADE, FRESH AND DELICIOUS MEALS  
PREPARED BY OUR VERY OWN STAFF IN THE  
ST PETER'S KITCHEN.  
ORDERS TO BE PLACED ONLINE AND  
TO BE COLLECTED BETWEEN 12:00 AND 13:30  
FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK, KITCHEN  
DELIVERY ENTRANCE.  
[srabalal@stpeters.co.za](mailto:srablal@stpeters.co.za) or 011 377 6631