

10 April 2020

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Guardians, Staff and Students

I hope that you have been enjoying this time over the last two weeks reconnecting as a family despite the constraints of the lockdown. With its extension to the end of April, it is certainly going to be even more challenging and further impact family life ('cabin fever' is real!), especially with the commencement of Online Distance learning next week. Our teachers have been very industrious over these holidays as well as the end of last term preparing for this eventuality and are rearing to go, ensuring the best possible learning experience for our students. It is without saying there will be some teething problems and we request parents and students to be adaptable and patient as we will all be learning together!

Oakhill Online

The College online offering will commence on **15 April at 8:00** with a streamlined timetable with longer lessons but less per week to facilitate optimum online learning. Please note that a Mentor group session is scheduled for Tuesday **14 April 10:00 - 11:00** dedicated to reconnecting with each other; to do some online training and administration as well as receiving the new timetable. This will also provide our technical support team with the opportunity to troubleshoot any issues. Students are to ensure that they are online for this session as well as the start of the online programme on 15 April.

Please see the attached documents for further information on how distance learning will look in the College as well as information on the Oakhill Online Hub. Please click on the following link: <https://www.oakhill.co.za/learning-continues/> to access. This curated hub provides additional resources and a platform to log an online issue or to book a session with our technical support team. As we roll out the online offering, things may change and we will communicate any issues via Google classroom and emails.

Please be reminded, to make up for some of the contact teaching time lost at the end of the term as well as now in the extended lockdown, we are considering adjusting the calendar and this will more than likely entail shortening the **June/ July holiday** and implementing holiday academic programmes for the Matrics later in the year. We will communicate this information as soon as all stakeholders have been consulted. As online learning will be a new experience for the majority of our students, we encourage them to remain focused, limit distractions and to take ownership of their online learning right from the beginning of term and exercise self-discipline in their endeavours.

Matric Q&A for students and parents

Recognising that the extended lockdown may raise concerns around the matric programme, a **matric student Q&A session** has been scheduled for **9:00 Tuesday 14 April**, with myself, Mrs Brown and Mrs

Cloete to give matrics an opportunity to ask any questions. Please note that we may not have all the answers yet as the IEB, due to the long weekend, will most likely only send out communication in the latter part of next week regarding any possible changes to dates, portfolio requirements etc. A Google Meeting link will be sent out on Tuesday morning via email and WhatsApp groups.

A Q&A for **matric parents** is scheduled for **17:00 Tuesday 14 April**, for any questions that may have not been answered in the morning's session. A Google Meeting link will also be sent out on Tuesday morning via email and the Matric Parent's WhatsApp group.

Online sporting programme

Our College Sports department is very cognisant that it has been very difficult for our students to undergo any training or exercise and even perhaps lacked motivation during this time. They too are busy curating an online sports programme to enhance the sporting skills of our students for the upcoming winter sporting season (after the lockdown) as well as to promote a healthy lifestyle. Please see their attached letter and request to fill in a Google Form to get a better understanding of the needs of our students.

Challenging times

It goes without saying that these are challenging times especially with the lockdown being extended. It is very difficult not to escape the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 on the economy of South Africa and globally. It is impossible to predict with certainty when society can return to 'normal' or as close to it, or what economic consequences this period of lockdown will really have. Please be assured that the leadership team, as well as the Board of Oakhill School, are doing everything that they can ensure, that despite ending the term a little sooner, as well as the lockdown being extended till the end of April, and the possible economic impact on the school community, the excellent quality of education your children receive at Oakhill will continue.

Please also be reminded that Ann van Zyl, our school counsellor, is available online for the Oakhill community if they need any counselling assistance during this lockdown. Her email is: a.vanzyl@oakhill.co.za

To our families who are celebrating Easter this weekend, we wish you a blessed and joyous time and we look forward to reconnecting with our students next week Tuesday.

Warm regards



Wayne Purchase
HEAD OF COLLEGE