

27 May 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

I trust that this communication finds you and your family in good health.

Thank you for all that you continue to do in support of your children during these difficult times. The combination of your investment of time and effort in your child's learning along with the ongoing commitment and enthusiasm of our teaching staff has helped to create a productive and meaningful term and has resulted in our children making great progress despite the challenges of distance learning. We are delighted with the manner in which our children have been able to adapt to the new programme and workflow.

For a window through which to view some of the wonderful teaching and learning moments we are experiencing during this the Oakhill@Home or Oakhill online programme please go to the school website or follow this link [The Joy of Learning continues](#).

Our teaching staff are currently busy with the preparation of the mid-year academic reports which will be distributed at the end of term on the 19th of June. While the report will be slightly amended for our current circumstances, taking into account the distance learning, they will be thorough and will reflect the year to date. As would normally be the case, we will be reviewing each child's performance and supporting those that require additional assistance going forward.

As a community we need to be aware that Covid-19 is still a reality even with the lockdown restrictions slowly being lifted. This has been emphasized by recent information received by the school of a College student's family member that has tested positive for the virus with everyone currently in isolation. All of us will need to constantly reflect on how our behaviour can contribute to the spread of the virus. Thus, it is imperative, when students and staff return to campus, that they comply with the Covid-19 protocols and procedures that form part of the school's Health and Safety compliance strategy and workplace plan for Covid-19 that has been developed over the last month.

We continue to prepare for the phased-in return of children to school from the 1st of June when the Grade 7 children will return to our school campus. We will continue to apply our current timetables and starting times until the end of this term at least. This phased-in approach is intended as a cautious yet deliberate plan to restart our schools in a responsible and safe manner.

While the first phase of this plan has been communicated, to some extent, by the Department of Basic Education, the timeline for the reopening of the other grades and phases remains uncertain and we share your frustration in this regard. As an independent school and based on our relatively small size we will exercise some independence in how we approach the phasing in with the possibility of expediting this process should we be able to meet all the requirements and protocols expected of us. We are, therefore, looking forward to welcoming the majority of children back in a staggered approach at the start of Term 3.

The schedule for the phasing in of additional grades will be shared with you following further consultation with ISASA, health officials and the Education Department.

As certain grades are brought back to school we will be communicating with the relevant parents to outline the process and determine, via a short survey, which children will be returning and which families will keep their children at home initially. As was confirmed by the Minister of Basic Education and our President, it is a parent's prerogative to keep their child at home should they be concerned about comorbidity factors or if their family circumstances require this. As we will be adopting a dual approach of onsite and online facilitation during the phasing in period, children will still be able to engage meaningfully in the learning programme from home should this be required.

Detailed information regarding the procedures and protocols will be shared with parents ahead of the return of their child's grade. Children will undergo a Covid-19 orientation or induction briefing on arrival at school in which the protocols will be explained and safety procedures stressed. During this briefing children will be given information regarding:

- Measures to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus
- Practicing good hygiene and following regular hand washing regimes
- Wearing of cloth face masks throughout the school day and the use of hand sanitisers
- The screening process each morning and during the day
- Physical distancing requirements
- School venues and classroom procedures and protocols
- Physical distancing during breaks and the use of the bathrooms

In addition to these measures on campus children and parents are requested to adhere to the following:

- Wear cloth masks to and from school
- Practice physical distancing
- Ensure that children have their own personal hand sanitiser for their work space (the school will provide hand sanitisers for all other key points of entry or high contact areas)
- Enter the school via the main gate and be screened at the designated screening area
- Parents are requested to remain in their vehicles for drop off unless directed otherwise when it comes to managing younger children
- Parents are asked to enter the campus by appointment only and following the mandatory screening process

These procedures are going to require some adaptation and we will deliberately assist all parties to develop the appropriate safety habits so that we can mitigate risks as far as possible. We will insist on complete compliance from all children.

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Our school term dates remain as published and aligned with ISASA for now. Term 2 will end on the 19th of June and Term 3 will start on the 14th of July. Our Academic Directors report that our children are progressing appropriately and are keeping pace with where we should be at this time in the academic year. We will be continuing with our programme during the public holiday on the 16th of June so as to make the most of the last week of term and regain another teaching day ahead of the holiday.

I am exceptionally proud of what our children have been able to achieve during this distance learning phase and would like to once again thank our wonderful parents and our hard-working staff for helping us to make the most of these very difficult circumstances.

Stay safe and stay happy.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Cross", written in a cursive style.

James Cross
Head of Prep